

Task-specific rubrics are helpful for assessments that require specialized performance criteria, making it difficult to use the same rubric across many different assessments. A task-specific rubric allows the teacher to clearly articulate the different criteria that will be involved in identifying the student’s level of performance. For example, a music teacher may regularly ask students to take quizzes or perform as a group to demonstrate understanding of course content. However, as a summative evaluation, the teacher may ask each student to prepare and deliver an individual performance. Because the teacher will be evaluating student performances along several criteria, she may choose to create a task-specific rubric that outlines clear, detailed evaluation criteria for this particular performance assessment.

The following rubric is an example of a task-specific rubric for a high school social studies performance assessment. The rubric has been created specifically to address criteria the teacher wishes to evaluate in the student performance.

Should We Sign the Treaty of Versailles? Rubric

| | Not Yet | Yes But | Yes | Yes And |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Synthesize information from primary and secondary sources | Has listed information but not synthesized it. | Has synthesized information weakly so that it doesn’t flow smoothly. | Synthesizes information from primary and secondary sources into an integrated whole. | Synthesizes information from primary and secondary sources into an integrated whole and includes original commentary. |
| Poster: | | | | |
| Presentation: | | | | |
| Describe, explain, and support the arguments for your position. | Not all of the key arguments for the position were mentioned. Those that were mentioned were not clearly described, explained, or convincingly supported. | All of the key arguments for the position were mentioned, but not all were clearly described, explained, or convincingly supported. | All of the key arguments for the position were clearly described, explained, and convincingly supported. | All of the key arguments for the position were clearly described, explained and convincingly supported. Also refuted possible counterclaims or other positions. |
| Poster: | | | | |
| Presentation: | | | | |
| Answer questions about your position | Answers to questions demonstrated an incorrect understanding of the information. | Answers to questions did not demonstrate a thorough understanding of the information. | All questions were answered accurately and demonstrated understanding of the information. | All questions were answered in detail and demonstrated an understanding of the larger context of the historical period. |
| Poster: | | | | |
| Presentation: | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Correctly cite valid information from primary and secondary sources | Only some textual evidence is correctly cited. | Most textual evidence is correctly cited. | Cites specific textual evidence to support analysis attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. | Cites specific textual evidence to support analysis. Also includes some annotated bibliography items that relate to the topic. |
| Poster: | | | | |
| Presentation: | | | | |

Notice that in both the generalized rubric and the task-specific rubric examples, a few details have been included in the performance level cells to expand upon the rubric’s criteria. These details, referred to as *Descriptions of Performance* or descriptors, are often helpful because they spell out what is expected of students for each level of performance. Descriptors also help teachers distinguish among varying levels of student work.

Both types of rubrics make the teacher’s expectations clear and show students how they can meet those expectations, which can result in marked improvements in the quality of student work and learning. A rubric can help define and communicate quality and can also encourage students to be more thoughtful judges of their own work.

Regardless of the type of rubric that is used, teachers should provide the rubric to students as they embark on the task so that students can use the rubric to assess their own work rather than having the teacher use it only at the end of the assessment process to review the final product.