Rubrics- Helpful Hints

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a set of specific evaluation criteria used to assess students’ work. When shared with students before an assignment begins, a rubric acts as a guide, with expectations and point values clearly defined.

Rubrics are generally set up as tables, with each criteria listed as a separate row, and the evaluative scale or achievement levels listed horizontally across the top as separate columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Levels of Achievement</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Incompetent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Article Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Points: Article summary is accurate, well-organized, coherent and written.</td>
<td>3 Points: Summary is accurate but organization could be improved.</td>
<td>2 Points: Summary is reasonably accurate, minor errors and/or organization is poor.</td>
<td>1 Points: Summary is inaccurate and contains several errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Points: Student makes insightful connections between article and knowledge gained in chemistry or other science courses.</td>
<td>3 Points: Student makes connections to scientific knowledge.</td>
<td>2 Points: Student alludes to connections to scientific knowledge but is not explicit. Student makes connections to life experiences not based in science.</td>
<td>1 Points: Connections are not coherent or are incorrect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics and Formatting</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 Points: All grammar/spelling is correct and very well-written. All sections in order, well-formatted, very readable.</td>
<td>3 Points: Less than 3 grammar/spelling errors, mature, readable style. Formatting generally good but could still be improved.</td>
<td>2 Points: Occasional grammar/spelling errors, generally readable with some rough spots in writing style. Formatting is rough but readable.</td>
<td>1 Points: Frequent grammar and/or spelling errors, writing style is rough and immature. Organization poor, sloppy formatting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why should I use a rubric in my course?

- Promotes consistency in grading. This is especially helpful if one or more TAs is assigned grading responsibilities.
- Communicates clear expectations to students. Students use rubrics to guide them while completing their assignments.
- Promotes self-reflection, self-assessment among students. This often results in higher quality work from students.
- Promotes formative assessment. Use the results of a previous assessment to guide the objectives of the next assessment.
- Saves time. Rubrics reduce the need for assignment and grading clarification since the expectations are clearly outlined at the time the assignment begins.

Considerations when creating a rubric:

- Determine the learning objectives of the assessment
- Keep the rubric short and simple (4-15 items)
- Each rubric item should focus on a separate skill (i.e. grammar, neatness, etc.)
- Review the rubric and revise if necessary
Blackboard Rubrics:

• Rubrics can be used with the following Blackboard tools: Assignments, Tests, Discussion Board Forums and Threads, Blogs, Wikis, Journals, and Grade Center Columns.
• Blackboard rubrics are interactive – instructors and TAs can use them during the grading process to grade assignments and provide feedback to students, making grading faster and more efficient.
• Students can view rubrics as they complete an assignment and also in the MyGrades tool, after an assignment has been graded.
• If using the ‘import’ feature, only rubrics created in Blackboard may be imported.
• Negative points can be applied to a rubric to subtract points from the total when grading an assignment.