*As we move toward improving the quality of our assessments, we must first understand the cognitive demands of each objective within a standard (i.e.DOK), then make sure the cognitive demands of each assessment item is aligned with the objective it is intended to measure. Therefore, types of assessments, or types of assessment items within a single assessment will vary. Those items often referred to as performance tasks or real-world tasks may best be assessed by a rubric.*

**Rubric Recommendations**

**What is a rubric?**

A rubric is a scoring guide that is used to evaluate the quality of students’ constructed work/responses to a task prompt. It has three essential features: evaluative criteria, definitions of quality, and a scoring strategy.

Rubrics can be *holistic*, where the scorer takes all of the evaluative criteria into consideration and then aggregates them to make a single, overall quality judgment. Or, the can be analytic, where the scorer gives criterion-by-criterion scores that may or may not be aggregated into an overall score.

**What types of tasks can I use a rubric for?**

* Performance tasks
* Written essays
* Authentic (real-world) tasks
* Lab write-ups
* Science Projects
* Oral presentations
* Portfolios

**What are some rubric DOs?**

* Share the rubric with students *before* they complete the performance task. This gives them a target.
* Involve students in making the rubric
* Focus on the *skill* you are expecting students to learn, not the *test* or performance task you are using to test the skill.
* Keep it to 3-5 evaluative criteria
* Make sure each evaluative criterion represents a key attribute of the skill/content being assessed
* Be as concise as possible
* Make sure that the relative importance of each criterion agrees with its relative importance to the quality of the task
* Make sure the rubric is tiered to students’ readiness level

**What are some rubric DON’Ts?**

* Don’t make the rubric too detailed and/or excessively long - this will make it difficult to use. With rubrics, less is more.
* Don’t make the rubric too general.
* Don’t include trivial or unrelated features
* Don’t just make a checklist. Rubrics are used to evaluate the *quality* of the work.

**Characteristics of quality rubrics:**

* Bears direct relationship to the content standards and learning targets it is intended to measure
* Covers all essential features that create quality in a product or performance
* Leaves out all trivial or unrelated features
* Concise and organized into a usable form
* Number of levels appropriate for the learning target and intended use
* Clearly understood by teachers, students, others
* Levels are well defined and parallel

Popham, James W. (1997). *Special Topic: What’s Wrong - and What’s Right - with Rubrics.* Educational Leadership, volume 55, number 2, pages 72-75.

*Creating and Recognizing Quality Rubrics* CD. (2006). Educational Testing Service.