

## Holistic versus Analytic Evaluation

In holistic evaluation of student writing, the assessor looks at the work as a whole, judging its success according to a predetermined scale. Advanced Placement Examinations, for example, are scored in this manner.

This is an example of a rubric that might be used to assess student writing holistically.

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### Fairfax County Public Schools PALS: Performance Assessment for Language Students

#### Writing Tasks - Holistic Rubric

##### 1 - Does Not Meet Expectations

<b>Task Completion:</b>	Minimal completion of the task and/or content undeveloped
<b>Comprehensibility:</b>	Text barely comprehensible
<b>Level of Discourse:</b>	List of discrete sentences, some repetitive; few cohesive devices
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary
<b>Language Control:</b>	Emerging use of basic language structures

##### 2 - Almost Meets Expectations

<b>Task Completion:</b>	Partial completion of the task; ideas somewhat developed
<b>Comprehensibility:</b>	Text mostly comprehensible, requiring interpretation on the part of the reader
<b>Level of Discourse:</b>	
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	Somewhat inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary and too basic for this level
<b>Language Control:</b>	Emerging control of basic language structures

##### 3 - Meets Expectations

<b>Task Completion:</b>	Completion of the task; ideas adequately developed
<b>Comprehensibility:</b>	Text comprehensible, requiring minimal interpretation on the part of the reader
<b>Level of Discourse:</b>	Emerging paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	Adequate and accurate use of vocabulary for this level
<b>Language Control:</b>	Control of basic language structures

#### **4 - Exceeds Expectations**

<b>Task Completion:</b>	Superior completion of the task; ideas well-developed and well-organized
<b>Comprehensibility:</b>	Text readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation on the part of the reader
<b>Level of Discourse:</b>	Paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices
<b>Vocabulary:</b>	Rich use of vocabulary with some idiomatic expressions
<b>Language Control:</b>	Control of basic language structures with occasional use of advanced structure

A holistic rubric is different from an analytic rubric. An analytic rubric breaks the writing task down into smaller components and evaluates each independently.

This is an example of an analytic rubric.

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#### **Writing Tasks - Analytic Rubric**

##### **Task Completion**

- 1 -- Minimal completion of the task and/or content undeveloped
- 2 -- Partial completion of the task; ideas somewhat developed
- 3 -- Completion of the task; ideas adequately developed
- 4 -- Superior completion of the task; ideas well-developed and well-organized

##### **Comprehensibility**

- 1 -- Text barely comprehensible
- 2 -- Text mostly comprehensible, requiring interpretation on the part of the reader
- 3 -- Text comprehensible, requiring minimal interpretation on the part of the reader
- 4 -- Text readily comprehensible, requiring no interpretation on the part of the reader

##### **Level of Discourse**

- 1 -- Lists of discrete sentences, some repetitive; few cohesive devices
- 2 -- Variety of discrete sentences; some cohesive devices
- 3 -- Emerging paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices
- 4 -- Paragraph-length discourse; variety of cohesive devices

##### **Vocabulary**

- 1 -- Inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary.
- 2-3 -- Somewhat inadequate and/or inaccurate use of vocabulary and too basic for this level.
- 4-5 -- Adequate and accurate use of vocabulary for this level.
- 6 -- Rich use of vocabulary, with some idiomatic expressions.

### **Language Control**

- 1 -- Emerging use of basic language structures.
- 2-3 -- Emerging control of basic language structures.
- 4-5 -- Control of basic language structures.
- 6 -- Control of basic language structures with occasional use of advanced language structures.

Both styles of evaluation have their advantages and disadvantages. Many think that holistic evaluation can be done more rapidly than analytic evaluation, and, therefore, is a handy tool for an overloaded teacher. Others feel that analytic evaluation is much more helpful to student writers because it specifies exactly where a student needs to focus when revising. Most also feel that it depends on where in the writing process the writer is: a holistic rubric might be most useful in evaluating a final draft, while an analytic rubric might be best used during the steps before a final draft is written.

What do you think? Which kind of rubric do you use at different points in the processes of writing?