An analytic rubric for elementary: one example in three grade bands

Peabody blog · Teaching · updated 2026-10-30

What an analytic rubric is, shown with one real example, a math problem solving rubric, written for K–2, 3–5 and 6–8. Free to print, copy and change.

An analytic rubric scores each part of the work on its own row: criteria down the side, performance levels across the top, and a description in every cell. Here is one, Peabody Teach's free math problem solving rubric, in all three grade bands. K–2 has three levels and no points; 3–5 and 6–8 have four levels with points, and the strategy row counts twice. It is free to print, copy into Google Docs or open in the rubric maker, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Every cell below is copied from that rubric's page as it stood on 30 October 2026. It was written for Peabody and checked by a person, with no standards codes.

Analytic or holistic?

A holistic rubric gives one score for the whole piece. An analytic rubric gives a score for each part. The analytic kind takes a little longer to mark, and it tells a student which part to work on. When a child gets the right answer with no work shown, an analytic rubric can say both things at once.

Grades K–2: three levels, no points

The youngest band uses three levels a child can hear and understand: Wow!, Yes and Not yet. It has no points by default.

- Criteria: I know the question · Wow!: I tell what the problem asks and what numbers matter. · Yes: I tell what the problem asks. · Not yet: I am not sure what the problem asks yet.
- Criteria: I show my work · Wow!: I show my work with a picture, numbers or counters, and it matches the problem. · Yes: I show some of my work. · Not yet: I only write an answer.
- Criteria: My answer · Wow!: My answer is right and I checked it. · Yes: My answer is close or has a small mistake. · Not yet: My answer does not fit the problem.
- Criteria: I explain · Wow!: I tell each step of how I solved it. · Yes: I tell one thing I did to solve it. · Not yet: I cannot tell how I solved it yet.

Notice the cells are in the first person. You can read a row aloud to a six-year-old and ask, "Which one sounds like you?"

Grades 3–5: four levels, 20 points

From third grade the levels become Exceeds (4), Meets (3), Approaching (2) and Beginning (1). Strategy counts twice, so the most a student can earn is 20.

- Criteria: Understanding · Exceeds (4): Restates the question, picks out all the needed information, and notes any extra information. · Meets (3): Restates the question and finds the needed information. · Approaching (2): Understands part of the problem or misses needed information. · Beginning (1): Does not show understanding of the problem.
- Criteria: Strategy (×2) · Exceeds (4): Chooses an efficient strategy, shows every step clearly, and labels the work. · Meets (3): Chooses a strategy that works and shows the steps. · Approaching (2): Strategy only partly works, or steps are missing. · Beginning (1): No strategy shown, or it does not fit the problem.
- Criteria: Accuracy · Exceeds (4): All computation is correct, the answer is labeled with units, and it is checked. · Meets (3): Computation is correct, with a labeled answer. · Approaching (2): Small computation errors lead to a wrong answer. · Beginning (1): Many errors; the answer is wrong or missing.
- Criteria: Explanation · Exceeds (4): Explains each step and why it works, using math words such as total, equal groups or difference. · Meets (3): Explains the steps in order. · Approaching (2): Explanation is partial or unclear. · Beginning (1): No explanation.

Because strategy is doubled, a student with a sound method and one slip in the arithmetic still scores well. That is a choice the rubric makes on purpose, and you can change it in the maker.

Grades 6–8: five criteria, 24 points

Middle school keeps the same four levels and adds a fifth row, checking. Strategy and reasoning still counts twice, for 24 points in all.

- Criteria: Understanding · Exceeds (4): Identifies the question, relevant quantities and constraints, and defines any variables used. · Meets (3): Identifies the question and relevant quantities. · Approaching (2): Identifies some quantities but misreads part of the problem. · Beginning (1): Misunderstands the problem.
- Criteria: Strategy and reasoning (×2) · Exceeds (4): Chooses an efficient strategy, such as an equation, table or model, and justifies why it fits the problem. · Meets (3): Chooses an appropriate strategy and carries it out. · Approaching (2): Strategy is inefficient or partly flawed. · Beginning (1): No workable strategy.
- Criteria: Accuracy and precision · Exceeds (4): Accurate computation, correct notation, precise units and sensible rounding throughout. · Meets (3): Accurate computation with correct units. · Approaching (2): Errors in computation, units or notation. · Beginning (1): Many errors; the answer is wrong or missing.

- Criteria: Explanation · Exceeds (4): Justifies each step with precise math language and explains why the answer is reasonable. · Meets (3): Explains the steps clearly with some math language. · Approaching (2): Explanation describes steps but not why. · Beginning (1): No explanation.
- Criteria: Checking · Exceeds (4): Checks the answer with a second method or an estimate and interprets it in context. · Meets (3): Checks that the answer is reasonable in context. · Approaching (2): Mentions checking but does not show it. · Beginning (1): No check; the answer may not make sense.

What changes from band to band

- The goal stays, the demand grows. "Show my work" in K–2 becomes "shows every step" in 3–5 and "justifies why it fits" in 6–8.
- The voice changes. K–2 cells say "I"; the older bands describe the work.
- Points arrive in third grade. Our K–2 rubrics have no points by default. There is more on why in grading rubrics for elementary students.

Make it yours

On the rubric's page, each band has Print, "Copy for Google Docs", "Print the 'I can' checklist" and "Open in the maker". In the maker you can rename a level, change its points, set any row to ×1, ×2 or ×3, add up to eight criteria, or switch the whole rubric to single-point. Nothing is sent to our server, and there is no sign-in.

Peabody is also a free reading site for kids: the stories your students can read at home are in the library.

Questions

What is an analytic rubric?

A rubric that scores each part of an assignment separately. Criteria run down the side, performance levels run across the top, and each cell describes what that level looks like for that criterion. The scores for each row add up to a total.

What is an example of an analytic rubric for elementary students?

The math problem solving rubric above: understanding, strategy, accuracy and explanation, scored on four levels in grades 3–5, with strategy counting twice for a total of 20 points. Its K–2 version uses three levels, Wow!, Yes and Not yet, with no points.

Is this rubric free to use?

Yes. You can print it, copy it into Google Docs or Word, or change it in the rubric maker. Peabody Teach needs no sign-in, shows no ads and is free through the end of 2026.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/analytic-rubric-for-elementary