A rubric for presentation: free, printable, in three grade bands

Peabody blog · Teaching · updated 2026-10-30

A free presentation rubric for grades K–2, 3–5 and 6–8: message, organization, voice and eye contact, visuals, and in 6–8 answering questions. Print or edit it.

A good rubric for a presentation scores four things: a clear message, a beginning-middle-end structure, a voice the room can hear with eyes on the audience, and a visual that helps. Peabody Teach's free presentation rubric does exactly that in three grade bands, makes the message count twice in grades 3–5 and 6–8, and adds "answering questions" for middle school. You can print any band, print it as a student "I can" checklist, copy it into Google Docs, or open it in the rubric maker to change a cell. Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

This post walks through what the rubric says in each band, so you can decide whether it fits before you open it. It was written for Peabody, not copied from a district or a publisher, and it carries no standards codes.

The three bands at a glance

- Levels · K–2: Wow! / Yes / Not yet · 3–5: Exceeds / Meets / Approaching / Beginning · 6–8: Exceeds / Meets / Approaching / Beginning
- Points · K–2: None by default · 3–5: 4 to 1 · 6–8: 4 to 1
- Rows · K–2: My message, Loud and clear, Eyes on friends, My picture · 3–5: Message (×2), Organization, Voice and eye contact, Visual · 6–8: Message and evidence (×2), Structure, Delivery, Visuals, Answering questions
- Most points · K–2: Not scored · 3–5: 20 · 6–8: 24

Grades 3–5: four rows, message counts twice

Message (counts twice). The top cell asks for a main idea stated early and supported with "three or more accurate, interesting facts." Meets is a clear main idea with two or three accurate facts. Approaching is an unclear main idea or facts that are few or partly wrong, and Beginning is no main idea at all.

Organization. Exceeds has "a hook to start, points in a logical order, and an ending that sums up the message." Meets is a clear beginning, middle and end with points mostly in order. Below that, points jump around, then the talk is hard to follow.

Voice and eye contact. The top level speaks loudly, clearly and at a good pace and looks at the audience almost all the time. Meets can be heard and looks up often. Approaching is sometimes too quiet or too fast and reads from notes most of the time; Beginning is hard to hear and rarely looks up.

Visual. Exceeds is neat, readable from the back, and makes a point clearer. Meets is readable and fits the topic. Then hard to read or loosely connected, then no visual or one that doesn't help.

Grades 6–8: five rows, evidence and questions

The middle school band asks the same things of an older speaker, and adds one row.

Message and evidence (counts twice). The top cell is "a precise central claim, supported with accurate, well-chosen evidence and cited sources." Meets names most sources. Approaching is a vague claim or evidence that is thin, partly wrong or unsourced.

Structure. Exceeds has an engaging opening, points that build on each other with clear transitions, and a conclusion that returns to the claim. Beginning is "the audience loses the thread."

Delivery. This is where 6–8 parts from 3–5. The top cell asks the student to speak "to the audience rather than the slides," with varied pace and tone and steady eye contact. Approaching reads much of the talk aloud. Beginning reads the whole talk or can't be heard.

Visuals. Exceeds: uncluttered, readable from the back, adding data or images the talk explains. Approaching: crowded, mostly text read aloud, or loosely connected. The "I can" line says it well: visuals that support the points "without repeating them word for word."

Answering questions. From answering accurately and adding detail beyond the talk, down through most questions, some questions with help, to not being able to answer questions about the topic.

What changes in K–2

The youngest band keeps the same four goals but writes them so a child can follow them read aloud, and it scores in words, not points. "My message" runs from "I tell what my talk is about and share two or more things I know" to "It is hard to tell what my talk is about." "Loud and clear" is about every friend hearing every word. "Eyes on friends" is looking up, not at the floor or the paper. "My picture" tops out at a picture that matches the talk and that the child points to.

If your school wants a number for K–2, open it in the rubric maker and turn on the score column.

Using it for peer feedback

The rubric page suggests that classmates score one row each, "so every listener has a job." One row is also easier to hold in mind while listening than a whole grid.

1. Before the talks, print the "I can" checklist for your band. In 3–5 that is four lines, such as "I can give my talk a beginning, a middle and an end."

2. Split the audience into groups, one per row: message, organization, voice, visual (and questions in 6–8).
3. After each talk, each group gives one thing the speaker did that matched their "I can" line and one thing to try next time.
4. You score the full rubric yourself. Peers give feedback; they don't give the grade.

Try it tonight

- Hand it out with the assignment. The page's own advice to students: say the one thing your talk is about in your first two sentences, practice out loud at least twice, and look at three different parts of the room.
- Practice to the rubric. Pairs rehearse and check one row each, then swap.
- Change one cell for your assignment. "Open in the maker" under the band you teach loads it into the rubric maker, where you can reword cells, change a weight or switch to a single-point rubric.
- Copy it into your unit plan. "Copy for Google Docs" pastes the band as a table with borders.

If the presentation is a book talk, Peabody's free stories for kids can give a younger class something to read and talk about. There is also an essay rubric built the same way, and a post on the rubric maker itself.

Questions

What should a presentation rubric include?

A clear message, organization, voice and eye contact, and a visual that helps. Peabody's presentation rubric scores those four in every band, and grades 6–8 add answering questions. The message counts twice in 3–5 and 6–8.

Is there a presentation rubric for middle school?

Yes. The grades 6–8 band of the presentation rubric asks for a claim backed by cited evidence, a talk given to the audience rather than read from slides, uncluttered visuals and accurate answers to questions. It is worth 24 points.

Can I edit the presentation rubric?

Yes. Press "Open in the maker" under any band and every cell, level and weight can be changed. You can also copy it into Google Docs and edit it there.

Is it free?

Yes. The presentation rubric and the rubric maker need no sign-in and show no ads, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/rubric-for-presentation