A rubric for a project, group or solo: free, in three grade bands

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A free rubric for any project: task, content, planning, quality and sharing, in K–2, 3–5 and 6–8, plus how the group work and poster rubrics pair with it.

A good rubric for a project scores five things: whether the student did every part of the task, what they learned, how they planned and used their time, the quality of the finished work, and how well they share it. Peabody Teach's free project rubric does exactly that for any project, solo or group, in three grade bands, with content counting twice in grades 3–5 and 6–8. For a group project, the group work rubric scores what each student did, and for a poster, the poster rubric scores the product in more detail. Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

This post walks through what the project rubric says, then how to put it together with the other two. All three were written for Peabody, not copied from a district or a publisher, and none carries standards codes.

The 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: I did the job, What I learned, Neat and finished, Sharing · 3–5: Task, Content (×2), Planning and time, Quality, Sharing · 6–8: Task and purpose, Content and evidence (×2), Process, Craft and quality, Reflection
- Most points · K–2: Not scored · 3–5: 24 · 6–8: 24

Grades 3–5: content counts twice

Task. Exceeds completes every part of the directions "and adds a thoughtful extra that fits the goal." Meets completes every part. Approaching is missing one or two parts.

Content (counts twice). The row that matters most is what was learned. Exceeds shows "accurate, detailed learning and explains how the ideas connect." Meets shows accurate learning with some detail. Approaching has thin or partly wrong facts. A project that looks wonderful but shows little learning can't reach the top on this row, and this row is worth eight of the 24 points.

Planning and time. The top cell follows a written plan, meets every checkpoint and uses work time well without reminders. Approaching plans loosely and needs reminders. Beginning has no plan.

Quality. Exceeds is complete, neat and carefully made, "with labels or titles that are easy to read." Approaching is partly finished or rushed in places.

Sharing. The top cell explains the project clearly, tells what was learned, and answers questions well. Approaching explains with help or leaves out what was learned.

What changes in 6–8

Middle school asks for purpose, evidence and revision. Task and purpose makes the purpose clear, with choices that serve it. Content and evidence (counting twice) asks for in-depth content supported by evidence, sources cited, and ideas connected to the big question. Process asks a student to keep a plan and a log and to revise after feedback "with clear changes." Craft and quality asks for polished work suited to its audience. Reflection replaces sharing: specific strengths, "a real setback and how it was handled," and a clear next step. The lowest reflection cell is general, such as "it went well."

What changes in K–2

The youngest band has four rows in a child's words, three levels and no points by default. "I did the job" tops out at doing every part and adding something extra. "What I learned" runs from two or more things to "My project does not show what I learned yet." "Neat and finished" and "Sharing" round it out, with the top sharing cell being "I tell about my project and answer a question."

If your school wants a number for K–2, open the band in the rubric maker and use its points switch.

Group or solo: adding the group work rubric

The project rubric scores the project. In a group, every member would get the same project score, which tells you nothing about who did what. The group work rubric fills that gap: it scores what each student does, "never personality."

In grades 3–5 its rows are fair share (counting twice), listening, contributing ideas, staying on task and respect. Contributing ideas counts "spoken or written," and the page suggests telling students that quiet ideas count: they can write an idea on a card and pass it to the group. In 6–8, respect becomes handling disagreement, and focus includes tracking the group's progress against the deadline. The K–2 band has four rows: I do my part, I listen, I share ideas, I stay on task.

- Project type: Solo project · Score the product with: Project rubric · Score each student with: (not needed)
- Project type: Group project · Score the product with: Project rubric · Score each student with: Group work rubric

- Project type: Solo poster · Score the product with: Poster rubric · Score each student with: (not needed)
- Project type: Group poster · Score the product with: Poster rubric, or project rubric for a longer unit · Score each student with: Group work rubric

One simple way to combine them: give the group one project score, and give each student their own group work score. Report both, rather than adding them into a single number that hides which is which.

Adding the poster rubric

When the product is an informational poster, the poster rubric looks closer at the thing itself. In 3–5 it scores title and main idea, content (counting twice: five or more accurate facts "in the student's own words, grouped by subtopic" for the top cell), layout, pictures and labels, and neat and correct writing. In 6–8 it asks for purpose and audience, cited sources, design, graphics that add information, and conventions.

A poster made as part of a longer unit can use the project rubric for the unit (task, planning, sharing) and the poster rubric for the poster. Each rubric page links to the others under "Related."

Steps for a project that runs longer than a lesson

1. Hand out the project rubric on the first day. The page's advice: so students "plan toward the top column, not just the due date."
2. Add the group work "I can" checklist if students work in groups, and let each group pick one row to work on, as its page suggests.
3. Set checkpoints. The planning row scores meeting them, so put the dates on the board.
4. Halfway through, have students score their own work in progress on the project rubric and pick one row to improve.
5. At the end, score the product with the project (or poster) rubric and each student with the group work rubric.
6. Change any cell first if you need to. "Open in the maker" under any band loads it into the rubric maker to reword a cell, change a weight or switch to a single-point rubric.

A reading project is a good first one for younger classes: students pick a book from Peabody's free stories for kids and make a poster about it. If the project ends in a talk, the presentation rubric covers that part, and science projects have their own rubric.

Questions

What should a rubric for a project include?

Meeting the task, content and what was learned, planning and use of time, the quality of the finished work, and sharing it. Peabody's project rubric scores those five in grades 3–5, with content counting twice; 6–8 adds evidence and swaps sharing for reflection.

How do you grade a group project fairly?

Score the product once with a project rubric, then score each student on what they did with a group work rubric: fair share, listening, contributing ideas and staying on task. Peabody's group work rubric scores actions a student controls, never personality.

Is there a project rubric for kindergarten?

Yes. The K–2 band has four rows in a child's words, three levels (Wow! / Yes / Not yet) and no points by default.

Is it free?

Yes. The project, group work and poster rubrics 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-project