

## P-1: Create or obtain assessments

### Grading Systems

#### Why have a grading system?

- It allows the test to provide data about the exact skills students are mastering and struggling with
- It makes actually grading tests quick and easy (E-6)
- It prevents you from lowering expectations when grading or from grading with bias (E-6)

#### What makes a quality grading system?

What it does:	What it doesn't do:
<p><b>details how students perform on individual objectives</b> shows scores for all parts of the test</p>	<p><b>Give a generic, overall score</b> 75% on top of the test</p>
<p><b>distinguishes specific degrees or levels of mastery</b> shows student progress on objectives or learning goals (3 out of 5 points, 60% percent mastery)</p>	<p><b>Give you black and white picture</b> Tells you either 'mastery' or 'non-mastery' on specific learning goals</p>
<p><b>provides a clear vision of what levels of mastery look like</b> uses sample student responses ('anchor papers') and rubrics to define what different proficiency levels are like (see below for examples)</p>	<p><b>Provide no vision for what mastery looks like</b> or only outlines a "good response"</p>
<p><b>assigns points proportionately</b> prompts with more parts are assigned more points</p>	<p><b>Assign points disproportionately</b> a three part short answer prompt has the same value as one multiple choice question</p>

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### How do I develop a grading system?

- **To determine an accurate standard for success, first establish what it looks like for students to achieve on your grade level.**

*To do this:*

- **Consult a variety of sources**, including samples of exemplary student work, veteran teachers, state standards, district curriculum guides, resources on the Internet, professional organizations, textbooks, standardized tests, and online assessment banks (Teach For America corps members and alumni are encouraged to visit the Resource Exchange in the Teaching and Learning Center on [www.tfanet.org](http://www.tfanet.org)).
  - **Complete the assessment yourself with a full credit response** – this will help you establish a clear standard for the rigor of a high quality response, and help you begin to create your grading system
- **Determine what type of grading system matches your assessment**
    - For more open-ended prompts (essays, short answers, performance tasks, etc.) you will need a rubric with anchor responses to define the criteria for success (for more on rubrics and anchor responses, see below)
    - For multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc. you will need to have an efficient way to record how well students are doing on particular parts of the test (e.g., have space on the assessment to write scores for student performance on individual objectives)
- **Create or obtain your system**
    - Review the qualities of an effective grading system above - use these to evaluate existing resources or create your own
    - If you need a rubric (and anchor responses), look at existing ones to meet your needs, using the resources listed above
    - Establish how many points each item will be worth, in proportion with the complexity and importance of the task
- **Revisit your initial vision and double check your criteria**
    - Remember, you began the process of developing criteria for success earlier when you interpreted your learning goals and decided what prompts students would need to complete in order to show mastery. Revisit the “define mastery” page.
    - Make sure to double check your grading criteria with this initial vision:  
Does your rubric, anchor paper, or other grading system match your initial ideas about what students would need to do? If you notice any differences, adjust your criteria to align with this vision.

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### Rubrics and Anchor Papers

Rubrics provide criteria to evaluate and distinguish different levels of student responses

Anchor responses are samples of student work. The best grading systems contain sample student responses on all different proficiency levels

#### Example 1:

**Question: Why did the colonists in Massachusetts rise up against the British in the 1770s?**

Anchor responses	Rubric criteria
"To be free." "To protect their families." "To prove their strength."	1—These responses are not relevant because they do not address the particular historical issues at play, focusing instead on generalities.
"They were angry about the tea tax." "They felt mistreated by King George." "Because they were taunted by the British army."	2—These responses are of higher quality than the first set because they apply a relevant fact to their answer.
"They were being taxed on tea without getting representation in Parliament." "They felt threatened when the British shut down the Boston harbor and installed a royal governor."	3—These responses are even better because they consider two facts and make a logical connection between them.
"The British made a number of political gestures that compromised the growing autonomy of the American colonies, including the imposition of taxes, the regulation of trade, the installation of troops, and the appointment of a royal governor."	4—This response is of a higher quality than the previous ones because the student refers to a number of relevant facts and synthesizes them into a complete explanation.
"This question presumes that all colonists rose up against the British, which is not the case. Colonists in America were divided into loyalists and rebels, the former group finding security and/or economic benefit in their association with King George. The rebels, on the other hand, found the crown's tightening financial and military grip on the independent colonies a great burden, resenting the taxes on stamps and tea..."	5—This response is more abstract and complex than all of the others. It challenges the generalization implied by the question by referring to a case in which the generalization may not be true. The student goes on to answer the question as intended with a lengthy, extended response.

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### Example 2:

<b>Maine Holistic Rubric for Mathematics Open-Ended Items</b> <b>Source:</b> Maine Department of Education <b>Subjects:</b> Mathematics <b>Grade(s)</b> Not specified	
<b>4</b>	A correct solution and an appropriate strategy are shown or explained and the solution is shown with correct label or description if necessary.
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A complete, appropriate strategy is shown or explained but:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an incorrect solution is given due to a simple computational or other error</li> <li>or</li> <li>- no solution is given.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A correct solution is given with no solution strategy or explanation shown.</li> <li>• A correct solution and appropriate strategy is shown or explained, but not labeled correctly when necessary</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parts of an appropriate strategy are shown or explained, but some key elements are missing.</li> <li>• Some parts of an appropriate strategy are shown or explained, along with some inappropriate parts.</li> <li>• Appropriate strategy shown or explained, but implemented incorrectly.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some work or explanation shown beyond re-copying data, but work would not lead to a correct solution.</li> <li>• One or more incorrect approaches attempted or explained.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No work or solution shown or explained.</li> <li>• Incorrect solution and no work shown or explained.</li> <li>• Some data from the problem copied over, but no evidence of any strategy is shown or explained.</li> </ul>