# Research Paper

This rubric was developed by Albert Dudley & Natalie Gibb for assessing Research Paper. The rubric can assess anything from *basic topic selection with sources* to *a final draft*. Please keep in mind that if your goal is to provide feedback, use more criteria to assess students.

Consequently, a criteria-laden rubric with many analytical traits (e.g., more than one criteria) ought *not* to be used for a final assignment with grade. These large rubrics play a stronger role in guiding students to better performances with the provisions of formative feedback. Consequently, the students will be ready when submitting their final paper when grades are a critical factor.

# Assignment instructions

These will depend on the criteria you have selected.

The generic criteria below represent optional criteria that may be used when building a rubric for a research paper:

* Topic selection (Introduction)
* Explanation of topic
* Clarity of expression and arguments
* Analysis and critical thinking
* Sources and evidence
* Conclusion
* Taking risks
* Writing mechanics
* Writing style and diction
* Integration of references
* Works cited/bibliography
* Format and length

# Research Paper Rubric Template

This rubric template has been developed for assessing a research paper. It provides some general criteria for assessing students and can be customized to reflect the specific elements of your assignment. If you would like to attach this rubric to your assignment in Blackboard, rather than using the Blackboard rubrics tool, you can download and customize this template.

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| **Criteria** | **Level 4**  **(Excellent)** | **Level 3**  **(Good)** | **Level 2 (Fair)** | **Level 1**  **(Unsatisfactory)** |
| **Topic selection**  **(Introduction)** | Identifies a focused, manageable research topic that is appropriate to the field of study. Explains why the topic is interesting or meaningful to study. | Identifies a focused, manageable research topic that is appropriate for the field of study.  Justification for the choice of the topic requires further elaboration to pique the attention of readers and establish the importance of the topic. | Identifies a research topic that is mostly focused, manageable, and appropriate for the field of study.  Justification for the choice of the topic is superficial, opinion-based, or absent. | Research topic is unclear, too general or too narrow to be manageable, or inappropriate for the field of study. |
| **Explanation of topic** | Issue is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | Issue is stated, described and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions. | Issue is stated, but description leaves some terms undefined and/or background information unknown. | Issue is stated without clarification or description. Key terms are not defined and background information is missing. |
| **Clarity of expression and arguments** | Complex and sophisticated main ideas are well articulated and presented. Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought. | Main ideas are sophisticated, and clearly identified and presented. Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought. | Main ideas are identified, but some of the details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing. | Main ideas are ambiguous, poorly presented, or lacking. |
| **Analysis and critical thinking** | Report is imaginative and may go beyond the obvious and predictable. Report provides an integrated view of the topic, taking into account the complexities of an issue.  The author takes and justifies a position based on a review of the multiple perspectives on the topic. | Takes into account the complexities of the topic.  The author takes and justifies a position based on a review of the multiple perspectives on the topic, but the position and its justification may be simplistic. | The author mentions multiple perspectives on the topic. No clear position is evident. Connections between ideas are illogical or unclear. | Offers a simplistic analysis of the topic. No recognition of the multiple perspectives on the topic. |
| **Sources and evidence** | Consistently uses credible, relevant sources to develop and support the main ideas of the research paper.  Integrates facts, details, examples, principles, and other forms of evidence in order to justify the author’s position. | Uses mostly credible, relevant sources to develop and support the main idea of the research paper. Supporting details and information are relevant and sufficient to justify the author’s position. | Some of the sources used to develop and support the main ideas of the research report are credible and relevant. Several key issues lack evidence based support, and connection to the course. | Sources are lacking in number, credibility, and/or relevance. Supporting details and information are unclear, insufficient to support the main ideas in the research report, or not related to the topic. |
| **Conclusion** | States a conclusion that follows logically from the research findings and discusses the limitations and implications of the research findings. | States a conclusion that follows from the research findings. The conclusion may not address all the main points of the research report, or it may not discuss the limitations and implications of the research findings. | States a general conclusion that may be beyond the scope of the content examined in the body of the research report. Conclusion may introduce new information not examined in the body of the paper. | States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupportable conclusion from research findings. |
| **Writing mechanics** | Minor grammatical, spelling, or mechanical errors. | Few grammatical, spelling, or mechanical errors. | Noticeable grammatical, spelling, or mechanical errors. | Numerous grammatical, spelling, or mechanical errors. The style of writing does not facilitate effective communication. |
| **Writing style and diction** | Appropriate use of active and passive voice  Consistently uses evidence to make arguments, instead of using words that imply judgment (e.g. should, horrible, unfortunately, etc.). | Mostly appropriate use of active and passive voice.  Mostly uses evidence to make arguments, instead of using words that imply judgment (e.g. should, horrible, unfortunately, etc.). | Somewhat appropriate use of active and passive voice.  Sometimes uses evidence to make arguments, instead of using words that imply judgment (e.g. should, horrible, unfortunately, etc.). | Overuse of passive voice.  Uses words that imply judgment (e.g. should, horrible, unfortunately, etc.) instead of using evidence to make arguments. |
| **Integration of references** | Text has an appropriate mix of original writing and paraphrased text. Direct quotations are used selectively and to support the author’s points. | Text includes both original writing and paraphrased text. Effective use of direct quotations, but context or justification may be missing. | Limited use of paraphrasing and overreliance on direct quotations.  Quotations are cited and placed within quotation marks, but context or justification for the quotations are lacking. | A substantial amount of the text appears merely copied and pasted from sources without citation. |
| **Works cited/bibliography** | Minor citation errors in the text and in the bibliography. | Few citation errors in the text and in the bibliography. | Noticeable citation errors in the text and in the bibliography. | Numerous citation errors in the text and in the bibliography. |
| **Format and length** | Report follows designated guidelines and is an appropriate length. | Report follows most designated guidelines and is over/under required word count. | | Paper lacks many elements of correct formatting and is inadequate/excessive in length. |