

Principles of Scoring Student Work

1. Know the rubric.

It is your Constitution. Granted, that means it is sometimes hard to interpret, but every score must be an attempt to apply the rubric's language and meaning.

2. Trust evidence, not intuition.

Intuition is a powerful force, but it is also highly subjective (or specific to the individual). Calibration with other scorers requires us to base our judgments on the evidence that everyone can see, not on what a particular person feels.

3. Match evidence to language in the rubric.

A safe rule of thumb: If you circle something on the rubric, be sure you can justify your decision with direct evidence from the student work.

4. Weigh evidence carefully; base judgments on the preponderance of evidence.

Within each scoring dimension, the score must be based on the overall performance as evidenced throughout the student work. Therefore, the score is not based on the student's best or worst moment; rather, it reflects what is generally true about the student's overall performance within each of the scoring dimensions.

5. Know your biases; leave them at the door.

The trick is not to rid yourself of bias; that's impossible. But you do need to recognize what your biases are, and be mindful of how they can trigger first impressions that color all judgments that follow.

6. Focus on what the student does, not on what the student does not do.

Scorers who attend to what is in the student work, rather than what is not tend to score more accurately. That shouldn't surprise us: It is easier to agree on *what is* than on *what could be*. A score is always based on *what is*.

7. Isolate your judgment: One poor element does not equal a low-quality student work sample.

Every student has an area of growth. A partial gap in the student work product should not cloud the other aspects of a student's work. Be mindful that a student's performance in one scoring dimension does not cloud your judgment on the scoring of other, unrelated dimensions.

8. Resist seduction: One good element does not equal a high-quality student work sample.

It also works the other way. You read an insightful and fluidly written paragraph, and after that the student can do no wrong. (This is known as the "halo effect.") One exceptional insight does not cancel out other aspects of the task that the student fails to address.

9. Stick to the rubric.

Don't try to assess what is not being measured in the rubric.