



Criteria Descriptions

Across Levels III, II, and I, your goal for each criterion is to describe what is present in student performance at approximately the A level (or mastery), the B level (or proficiency), and the D level (or passing work) while also ensuring that, for any given passing performance, only one of the three criterion descriptions can be logically true at a time. Another, related goal is for the descriptions of the three levels together to account for the entire range of student performance (above the passing threshold). In other words, the rubric should be written such that for each criterion, there is exactly one level description that perfectly matches the student's work.

Below, you will find several examples and corresponding visualizations of how those examples do or do not adhere to these underlying principles.

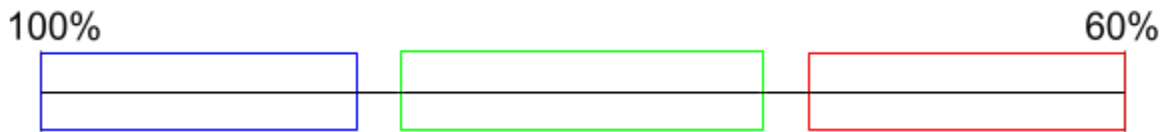
Example 1: Does NOT account for the full range of passing student performance

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Use of Outside Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles• Describes limitations of the research• Synthesizes research with original ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discusses 1 peer-reviewed journal article• Describes some limitations of the research• Synthesizes some research with original ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not discuss any peer-reviewed journal articles• Describes few limitations of the research• Synthesizes little research with original ideas

In this example, the descriptions do not cover the full range of passing work that a student could submit. If, for instance, a student cited three peer-reviewed articles and discussed the limitations of the research but did not synthesize it with original ideas, they would fall somewhere between levels. Or, if a student discussed just two peer-reviewed articles but fully described the limitations of the research and synthesized it with original ideas, there would be no level that exactly matches their work.

Although individual faculty can override the system and award some number of points in-between the three levels, we've now introduced ambiguity. Each faculty member will make their own decision about how to resolve this, and those might not be the same, resulting in a loss of reliability in our assessment.

Below, you will see a way to picture how these levels are constructed for this example. Because every bullet point is stepped down from level to level, each level does not abut the next; instead, there are many permutations of student performances that can fall between the gaps.



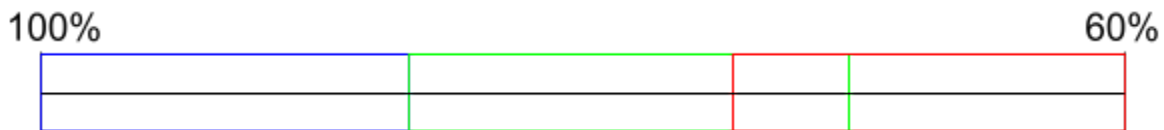
Example 2: Criteria descriptions for each level are NOT mutually exclusive

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Use of Outside Research	All of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles Describes limitations of the research Synthesizes research with original ideas 	Two of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles Describes limitations of the research Synthesizes research with original ideas 	Any of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not discuss any peer-reviewed journal articles Does not describe limitations of the research Does not synthesize research with original ideas

In this example, the descriptions for Level II and Level I are not mutually exclusive. If, for instance, a student cited three peer-reviewed articles and discussed the limitations of the research but did not synthesize it with original ideas, both the Level II and Level I descriptions would be true of that student's work.

Obviously, most faculty members would award the highest level that is true (Level II), but perhaps not all would. With this rubric format, faculty are not asked to award the highest level that describes the student work; they are asked to award the one level that describes the student work. Also, leaving a rubric in this form would open the possibility of student complaints if a faculty member gave the student a Level I score.

Below, you will see a way to picture how these levels are constructed for this example.



Examples 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7: Account for the full range of passing student performance and criteria descriptions for each level are mutually exclusive

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Use of Outside Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles Describes limitations of the research Synthesizes research with original ideas 	One of the following is true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles Describes limitations of the research 	None of the following are true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles Describes limitations of the research

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizes research with original ideas
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	Level III	Level II	Level I
Use of Outside Research	<p>All of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<p>Two of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<p>One of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Use of Outside Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 2 peer-reviewed journal articles • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 1 peer-reviewed journal article • Describes limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 3 peer-reviewed journal articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 2 peer-reviewed journal articles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discusses 1 peer-reviewed journal article
Analysis and Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes all major limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<p>One of the following is true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misses a major limitation of the research • Original ideas are not related to the research 	<p>Both of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misses a key limitation of the research • Original ideas are not related to the research

	Level III	Level II	Level I
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References 3 sources (including one from a peer-reviewed journal) • Provides a brief summary of each source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • References 2 sources • Provides a brief summary of each source 	<p>Any of the following are true:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not reference 2 sources • Does not provide a brief summary of each source
Analysis and Synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes all limitations of the research • Synthesizes research with original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes all limitations of the research • Does not synthesize research with original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes some limitations of the research but ignores others • Does not synthesize research with original ideas

In these examples, there are few or no passing performances that could fall between the descriptions of the three levels, and the three levels themselves cannot possibly overlap. The steps down from Level III to Level II and Level II to Level I are clear and based strictly on what is present or absent in the student work.

As you will notice, there are a number of ways to describe performance on this criterion. Each example prioritizes the different elements differently. Something that separates Level III from Level II in one example might separate Level II from Level I in another. This reflects the flexibility in this rubric format.

