Proficiency-Based Learning
Design Guide for Scoring Criteria

GREAT SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Traits of Scoring Criteria	Stronger Scoring Criteria	Weaker Scoring Criteria
1. Scoring criteria articulate a clear progression of learning.	• Align to a taxonomy of thinking skills (Webb's, Bloom's, etc.) consistently. • Describe a logical sequence of increasingly challenging thinking skills, often on a 4-point scale, aligned with the performance indicator and taxonomy. • Show progression through a change in the cognitive demand of verbs at each proficiency level or in the depth and detail to which a student completes a task of similar cognitive demand.	• Define progressions that result solely in more or longer work products by applying the same skill repeatedly. • Don't describe *distinguished* work. • Describe progressions with large leaps in thinking skills between levels of performance.(e.g., requiring **description** at the *developing* level and **evaluation** at the *proficient* level.) • Equate the highest performance level to perfection or 100% accomplishment. • Exclude some students from being able to demonstrate *distinguished* performance on an assessment.
2. Scoring criteria describe the quality of student work at each performance level.	• Use precise, specific language and objective descriptions of the evidence students produce at each proficiency level. • For the *proficient* and *distinguished* descriptions, include all elements of the performance indicator. • Include specific, technical expectations (number of pages, number of sources, types of graphs, etc.) in a supplemental checklist or assignment requirements rather than in scoring criteria.	• Use the number (e.g., "I can include 3–5 [elements]") or frequency (e.g. "rarely," "sometimes," or "always") of an element of performance. • Use vague descriptors (e.g., poor, excellent, high-quality, visually appealing). These are difficult to evaluate consistently and don't clarify expectations.
3. Scoring criteria describe affirmatively what students can do at each level of performance.	• Are written from the student's point of view starting with "I can…" or "Students can…" • Use positive, specific language and an asset-based approach that focuses on what students can do to foster continual improvement.	• Use deficit-based descriptions and framing or statements that articulate undesirable learning outcomes (e.g. "I cannot [do something]"). • Use negative language that may reinforce unhelpful mindsets and emphasize learning deficits (e.g. "weak use [of something].."
4. Scoring criteria are task neutral; they can be applied to a variety of learning experiences and products.	• Are written for each performance indicator and used to assess a variety of learning experiences or products. • Are used to create rubrics for any assessment or assignment by combining scoring criteria for the relevant performance indicators.	• Apply only to specific lessons, units, courses, projects, or assignments (e.g. "I can write a report that evaluates risk factors and prevention strategies related to smoking.")