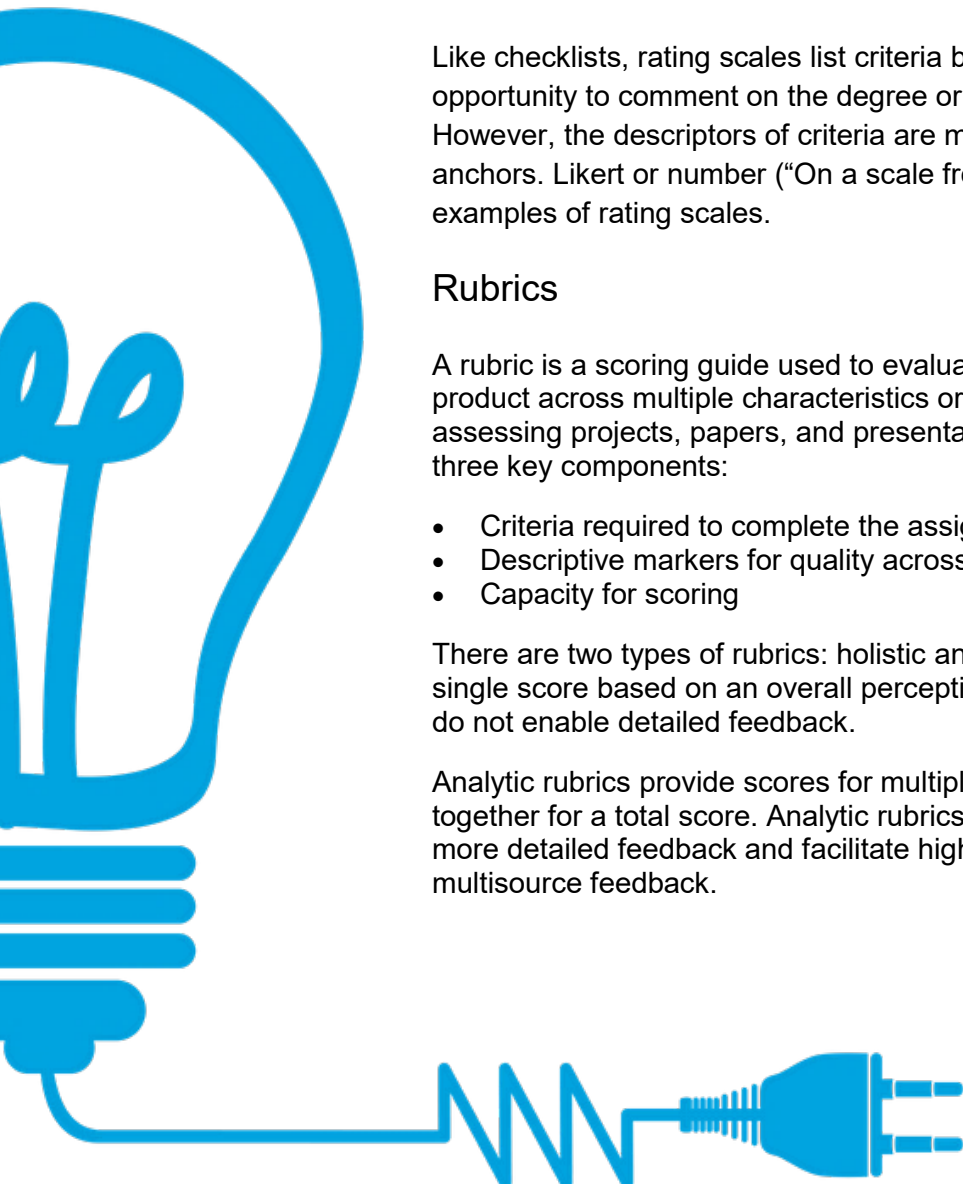


# Assessment tools

Assessment tools are the evaluation forms (e.g., rubrics, checklists) used to collect data about student performance on an assessment. The best assessment tools are well aligned with the purpose and elements of the assessment, easy to use and interpret, and provide appropriate levels of actionable feedback. This page reviews three commonly used assessment tools: checklists, rating scales, and rubrics.

## Checklists and rating scales

Checklists contain a list of required criteria and space for an assessor to indicate whether or not students met those criteria. Unlike rating scales or rubrics, checklists are generally binary: Either the criterion was met or not. As a result, they are not as effective for providing formative feedback to students as other forms of assessment.



Like checklists, rating scales list criteria but also offer the evaluator an opportunity to comment on the degree or frequency of the behavior. However, the descriptors of criteria are much more meaningful than the scale anchors. Likert or number (“On a scale from 1 to 10 ...”) scales are common examples of rating scales.

## Rubrics

A rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of a performance or product across multiple characteristics or dimensions. Often used for assessing projects, papers, and presentations, rubrics contain the following three key components:

- Criteria required to complete the assignment
- Descriptive markers for quality across each criterion
- Capacity for scoring

There are two types of rubrics: holistic and analytic. Holistic rubrics provide a single score based on an overall perception. They facilitate quick grading but do not enable detailed feedback.

Analytic rubrics provide scores for multiple criteria and are then added together for a total score. Analytic rubrics take more time to use but provide more detailed feedback and facilitate higher inter-rater reliability in cases of multisource feedback.

## Comparing assessment tools

Choosing the right assessment tool is an essential part of designing an assessment. While your learning architect or instructional designer will be able to assist you, the chart, below, outlines and compares the basic features of each tool.

	Checklists	Rating Scales	Rubrics
Easy to construct and use	+	+	+/-
Easy to align with performance and learning objectives	+	+	+
Establish expectations for students before the assignment is completed	+/-	+/-	+
Provide clear and comprehensive feedback in a systematic fashion	-	-	+
Clearly communicate a student's current status and what they need to do in order to improve	+/-	+/-	+
Identify areas for remediation and enrichment for student cohorts and individuals	-	-	+
Useful for sharing information with other stakeholders	+	+	+
Useful in peer and self-assessment	+	+	+

## Practice examples and resources

Select the following links to access examples of assessment tool development guidelines and examples that have been created and published by educators and educational institutions:

- Brandeis University: [Sample holistic rubric](#)
- Brown University: [Grading rubrics: Sample scales](#)
- Carnegie Mellon University: [Creating and using rubrics](#)
- Edutopia: [Tame the beast: Tips for designing and using rubrics](#)
- Edutopia: [Five tips for a more meaningful rubric](#)
- Pennsylvania State University: [Sample analytic rubric](#)
- State University of New York (OSCQR): [Assessment criteria](#)
- Vanderbilt University: [Sample rubrics and spreadsheets](#)
- Yale University: [Creating and using rubrics](#)