CRITICAL THINKING

CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC

Fostering the North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate Durable Skills – Adaptability, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Learner's Mindset, and Personal Responsibility – is imperative for student success.

The North Carolina Durable Skills rubrics are tools that help educators teach the durable skills throughout their systems of teaching and learning and assess them, when appropriate. The master set of North Carolina Durable Skills rubrics addresses grade bands K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 in each of the North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate Durable Skills.

These rubrics are designed with formative assessment of student work in mind, but they can be used in many ways. The rubrics are designed to:

- Define the criteria associated with each of the North Carolina Durable Skills.

- Define important skills and dispositions associated with each of the North Carolina Durable Skills.

- Support the design of learning experiences in which students practice and apply targeted North Carolina Durable Skills.

- Illustrate a continuum of performance, including exemplary performance that exceeds expectations, for each criterion.

- Provide a common vocabulary for stakeholders regarding the North Carolina Durable Skills.

All North Carolina Durable Skills rubrics can be used to support student self-assessment and teacher assessment for the purpose of planning and providing feedback. The Critical Thinking rubric can also be used to support:

- Peer assessment of the durable skill.

- Teacher assessment for the purpose of demonstrating progress within a performance task.

How does this rubric define Critical Thinking?
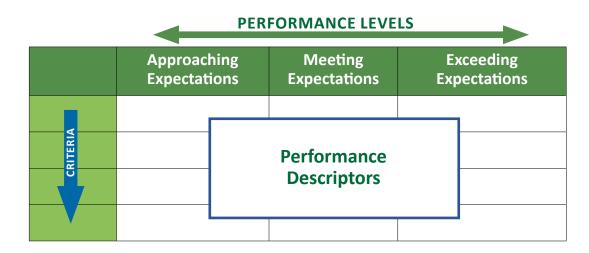
North Carolina Graduates...

• Analyze, assess, and reconstruct personal thought processes.

• Apply thinking that is clear, rational, and evidence based.

• Evaluate and prioritize solutions to difficult or complex problems.

• Employ creative improvements to systems, processes, and organizations.

What do the performance levels mean in the rubric?

The North Carolina Durable Skills rubrics are intended to support student progress with the durable skill. We offer the following descriptions of each performance level:

• **Approaching Expectations:** Describes student performance that is approaching proficiency.

• **Meeting Expectations:** Describes a "proficient" level of student performance.

• **Exceeding Expectations:** Describes student performance that is exemplary and exceeds proficiency.

Rubric Terminology and Structure

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
CRITERIA			
		Performance Descriptors	

CRITICAL THINKING: GRADES 6-8

Criteria	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Information, Discovery, and Research	Defines the problem, investigation, or challenge, but explanation lacks clarity. Some details are missing or inaccurate. Seeks clarity and understanding at times, but sometimes moves forward without sufficient understanding. Asks general questions to learn information about the broad topic of investigation. Conducts research but gathers a limited amount of information that is insufficient to answer the scope of investigation/ research questions. Examines whether the information found in a source matches the topic of investigation and addresses questions. Proceeds with research without consistently evaluating sources based on all provided criteria.	Clearly defines the problem, investigation, or challenge. (For example: What is the actual problem or issue? Where is the problem or issue appearing? Who is impacted? How will we know if we are successful?) Creates a set of questions closely related to the problem, investigation, or challenge. Revises questions and identifies a prioritized set that is most important or helpful to address the problem, investigation, or challenge. Questions provide a foundation for investigation. Conducts research and gathers relevant, sufficient information from multiple sources related to investigation/research questions. Examines whether the information found in a source matches the topic of investigation, addresses questions, and is credible, accurate, and reliable.	Clearly defines the problem, investigation, or challenge, including details about the context and goals. (For example: What is the actual problem or issue? Where is the problem or issue appearing? Who is impacted? What will happen if we do not address this problem or issue? How will we know if we are successful?) Continuously seeks clarity and understanding. Identifies questions clearly and precisely; engages in an open-ended thinking process to develop an initial set of questions related to the problem, investigation, or challenge; refines the initial set of questions; and identifies a key question or prioritized set of questions on which to focus. Questions lay a solid foundation for ambitious investigation/research. Conducts research and gathers relevant, sufficient information from multiple diverse sources (For example: Books, articles, websites, interviews, surveys, etc.). Examines whether the information found in sources addresses questions and is credible, accurate, and reliable. Considers whether the viewpoint is objective or biased and supported by evidence.

CRITICAL THINKING: GRADES 6-8

Criteria	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Reasoning, Analysis, and Interpretation	Documents learning with minimal organization, prioritization, and analysis of notes/data. Formulates conclusions based on a quick (non-thorough) analysis of information/data.	Clearly documents learning. Organizes and prioritizes notes/data and identifies similarities, differences, and/or patterns. Forms valid inferences from information. Formulates and clearly articulates logical conclusions from researched information, observations, and inferences. Clearly explains how different perspectives or accounts were considered.	Uses advanced categorization skills to organize and evaluate information/data. Formulates logical, valid inferences from information. Formulates and clearly articulates logical conclusions from researched information, observations, and inferences. Clearly cites specific details upon which the conclusion was drawn. Clearly explains any shifts in thinking about the problem/issue.
Solution Finding (When Problem Solving)	Identifies a small number of solution ideas, some of which are directly related to the problem and are feasible. Uses provided criteria to select a solution to test. Tests solutions using a provided process and criteria. Collects information that is not sufficiently clear to be used to make revisions/improvements. Analyzes the relative effectiveness of proposed solutions or approaches, but the process is not sufficiently thorough and shows minimal insight.	Identifies a sufficient number of solution ideas. Uses provided criteria to select an effective solution to test that is directly related to the problem and feasible to implement. Effectively tests a solution using a provided process and criteria. (For example: Presents an overview or a storyboard of a solution idea to a small group impacted by the problem and invites participants to submit a survey.) Collects clear information. Analyzes the effectiveness of proposed solutions. Uses the evaluation to determine the need for further work on the problem. Clearly describes the outcome.	Creates relevant and appropriate criteria to analyze solutions. Uses criteria to select an effective solution to test that is directly related to the problem and feasible to implement. Designs and implements a process to effectively test a solution and collect clear information. Analyzes, with precision and accuracy, the relative effectiveness of proposed solutions. Uses the evaluation to determine the need for further work on the problem. Clearly describes the outcome.
Justification	Provides a non-specific and vague claim about the problem or issue. Supports claim with reasons not always supported by relevant facts and details.	Provides a clear, knowledgeable claim about the problem or issue. Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence.	Makes a convincing claim. Shows awareness of multiple perspectives by clearly acknowledging alternate or opposing claims. Incorporates insightful/clever reasoning and compelling evidence to fully/thoroughly support the claim.