NORTH CAROLINA

PORTRAIT of a GRADUATE

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...

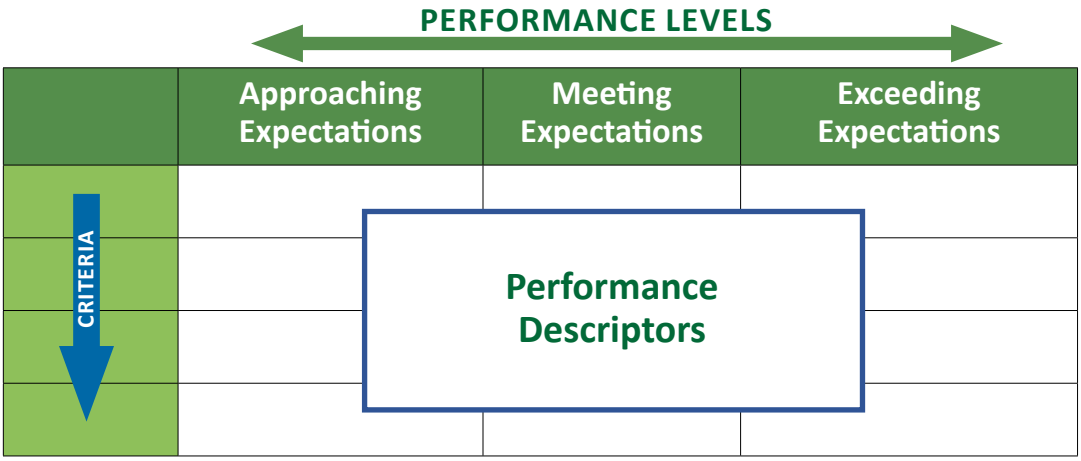
- Analyze, assess, and reconstruct personal thought processes.
- Apply thinking that is clear, rational, and evidence based.
- Evaluate and prioritize solutions to difficult or complex problems.
- Employ creative improvements to systems, processes, and organizations.

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



CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC: GRADES 9-12

Criteria	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Information, Discovery, and Research	Provides a partial description of the problem, investigation, or challenge. Seeks clarity and understanding at times, but sometimes moves forward without sufficient understanding. Is beginning to formulate clear questions related to the problem, investigation, or challenge, but questions are limited and provide a framework for limited 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, addresses questions, and is reliable. 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? 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 inquiry 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 provide a solid foundation for investigation. Conducts research and gathers relevant information from multiple authoritative sources (For example: Books, articles, websites, cases, interviews, surveys, etc.) related to the topic and questions. Examines whether the information found in sources matches the topic of investigation, addresses questions, and is reliable. (For example: Does it answer my questions? Is it credible, accurate, and reliable? Is the viewpoint objective or biased? How is the source supported by evidence? Does it agree or disagree with other sources?) Compares information across sources and clearly justifies which sources will provide the most useful information.	Provides a detailed explanation showing understanding of the problem, investigation, or challenge; Includes implicit/less obvious details. Identifies important relationships between people, organizations, systems, etc. that are critical to analyzing the issue or problem. Explains how own biases might influence the investigation. In addition to factual questions, includes thought- provoking questions that are open-ended. Carefully phrases questions to influence the depth, quality, and value of the information they will obtain through investigation. The quality of questions allows for in-depth inquiry. Is consistently cautious and discerning when selecting information. Gathers relevant information from multiple authoritative sources related to the topic and questions. Selects information from a diverse set of sources representing different contexts, disciplines, and cultures. Explains any bias or fallacy recognized in sources. Provides a well-developed examination of sources and clearly justifies which sources will provide the most useful information.

CRITICAL THINKING RUBRIC: GRADES 9-12

Criteria	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Exceeding Expectations
Reasoning, Analysis, and Interpretation	Documents learning with minimal organization or categorization of notes/data. Draws inferences from partial/incomplete information. Formulates conclusions from incomplete/limited information, observations, and inferences.	Organizes notes/data and identifies similarities, differences, and/or patterns. Formulates logical, valid inferences from information. Clearly explains logical conclusions drawn from researched information, observations, and inferences. Clearly cites specific details upon which the conclusions were drawn. Clearly explains any shifts in thinking about the problem/issue.	Expertly and appropriately organizes and prioritizes notes/data and identifies relevant and important similarities, differences, and/or patterns. Formulates logical, valid inferences from information. Clearly explains the implications of conclusions.
Solution Finding (When Problem Solving)	Creates solution ideas that do not address the problem directly. Solutions show minimal understanding of the problem. Uses criteria to evaluate solutions but identifies some options that are not plausible. 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.	Creates relevant and appropriate criteria to analyze solutions. Identifies a sufficient number of solution ideas that are feasible to implement. Evaluates solutions and selects an effective solution to test that meets all criteria. Designs and implements a process to effectively test a solution and collect clear information. (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.) 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.	Creates a wide variety of solution ideas that are unique, innovative, efficient and feasible to implement. Provides a thorough assessment and selects an effective solution to test that meets all criteria. Designs and implements multiple thorough processes to test solutions. Through testing, develops and clearly communicates an in-depth understanding of the problem and ways to address it.
Justification	Provides a somewhat clear claim that reveals a vague position. Presents limited evidence related to the claim and counterclaims or lacks counterclaims.	Provides a clear, knowledgeable claim about the problem or issue. Distinguishes it from opposing claims. Thoroughly supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant evidence. Clearly and convincingly addresses counter arguments.	Provides a compelling claim that takes a purposeful position on the problem or issue. Provides convincing and relevant evidence to support the claim. Skillfully addresses counterclaims and biases about the argument.