

Assessing Writing: Approaches to Scoring

Unit 4: The aims of this unit are:

- to get to know different scoring methods
- to compare these methods and discuss their advantages and disadvantages in the Austrian school context
- to practice using assessment scales and thus improve your rater reliability

Assessment from the point of view of the learner

What is your experience with assessment? Which scoring methods do you know?

From the point of view of the student, what would you want assessment to be like? Approaches to scoring

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Read one of the info cards (Hyland 03:226ff) about types of scoring methods. Discuss the information with your team-mates. Then cross-group and find out about the other methods. Discuss the pros and cons of each method and collect the salient facts in the table below.

	pros	cons
Holistic scoring		
Analytic scoring		
Trait-based scoring		

Look at the following examples of rating scales. Decide whether they are holistic, analytic or trait-based and discuss in what circumstances they might be useful.

Evaluating the Radio Shows

(criteria collected by 3b)

Clear introduction: Do we know where we are, who is speaking, clear typical format... what is the problem...	1/2/3	Comments
Interesting, new facts and information		
Clarity: Do we always know who is speaking, where we are...		
Language: Good expressions, mystery words, correct grammar		
Sound quality and good pronunciation		
Fun and special effects		
Sum		

THIRD GRADE WRITING RUBRIC

<http://classroom.jc-schools.net/read/rubric/3rd.htm>[2009, October 26].

4 Mature The writing is focused on a topic and supported with details and/or examples. The writing shows a clear beginning, middle, and end with ideas separated into paragraphs. Author's voice/personality contributes to the writing through effective word choice and varied sentence structure. Sentences are complete, and surface errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation) are minimal.

3 Capable The writing is focused on a topic and includes details. The writing shows a beginning, middle, and end; the writer may attempt to separate ideas into paragraphs. Author's voice/personality is evident through use of descriptive words and simple and compound sentences. Sentences are complete, and surface feature errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation) don't interfere with understanding.

2 Developing Topic is presented but not developed; focus may wander. There is an attempt to organize ideas, but writing may lack connections. The writing may show limited vocabulary and/or simple sentences structure, but surface errors may make understanding difficult.

1 Emerging Writing shows minimal focus on topic or is too limited in length. The writing shows little direction or organization. Vocabulary is limited and sentences are simple. Minimal control of surface features (spelling, grammar, punctuation) makes understanding difficult.

Assessment Scale for Written Work in *Lower School* (Steiermark)

	Maximum Score	100	30
Task Achievement	and Organization	30	10
Excellent to very good:	Considerable variety of ideas, all content points elaborated Independent treatment of topic Relevant to assigned topic Valid ideas organized clearly	30 29 28 27	9
Good:	Several valid ideas, Most content points elaborated Adequate treatment of topic , Relevant to assigned topic Valid ideas organized clearly	26 25 24	8
Average:	Some valid ideas Some content points elaborated Somewhat choppy but main ideas stand out	23 22 21	7
Fair to Poor:	Limited variety of ideas Hardly any content points elaborated Choppy, loosely organized, Main ideas not always clear	20 19 18	6
Poor to very poor	Insufficient treatment of topic, No content point elaborated Non-fluent, ideas often confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing	17 15 13 11-0	5 4 3 2-0
Range of	Grammar and Vocabulary	35	10
Excellent to very good:	Wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures Ambitious attempts at complex language	35 34 33 32	9
Good:	Good range of appropriate vocabulary and structures Ambitious attempts at complex language	32 31 30 29 28	8
Average:	Adequate range of structures and vocabulary	27 26 25 24	7
Fair:	Limited range of vocabulary and structures	23 22 21	6
Poor to very poor:	Narrow, inadequate range of structures and vocabulary	20 18 16 14-0	5 4 3 2-0
Accuracy of	Grammar, Vocabulary and Spelling	35	10
Excellent to very good:	Accurate word/idiom choice; confident handling of appropriate constructions; hardly any errors	35 34 33 32	9
Good:	Language is generally accurate, a few errors, mainly in areas that have not yet been taught	32 31 30 29 28	8
Average:	Well-formed sentences; generally accurate expression; a number of errors may be present but they do not impede with communication	27 26 25 24	7
Fair:	Frequent errors of vocabulary, grammar or spelling Errors may obscure communication at times	23 22 21	6
Poor to very poor:	Frequent errors distract the reader Frequent errors obscure communication	20 18 16-0	5 4 3-0

Elisabeth Pölzleitner's suggestions for assessing written work in lower school (2008)

Schulnoten (100 pts): 1 (100-90), 2 (89-80), 3 (79-70), 4 (69-60), 5 (59-0)

Schulnoten (30 pts): immer Prozentsatz für die Schüler angeben: zB: 27/30 =90%

Assessment Scale for Written Work

Bauer/Pölzleitner

		Maximum Score	100	40
Task achievement			30	10
Excellent to very good	All content points fully dealt with; wide range of ideas relevant to task Meets text type requirements including specified length Register and format consistently appropriate	30 29 28 27		10 9
Good	All content points dealt with; ideas relevant to task Some inconsistencies in text type requirements Register and format on the whole appropriate	26 25 24		8
Average	Most content points dealt with; sufficient valid ideas Several inconsistencies in text type requirements Reasonable, if not always successful, attempt made at appropriate register and format	23 22 21		7
Fair to Poor	Some content points dealt with; few valid ideas and/or repetitive Most content points mentioned; barely meets text type requirements Attempts at appropriate R/F are unsuccessful or inconsistent	20 19 18		6
Poor to very poor	Hardly any relevant content points dealt with Hardly any or no valid ideas Does not meet text type requirements	17 15 13 11-6		5 0
Organization and Cohesion			20	10
Excellent to very good	Valid ideas organized effectively Variety of appropriate linking devices	20 19 18		10 9
Good	Valid ideas organized clearly Suitable linking devices	17 16		8
Average	Mainly valid ideas organized adequately Some simple linking devices	15 14		7
Fair to poor	Choppy; ideas organized inadequately Communication or purpose of writing sometimes obscured; repetitive Rare or incorrect use of linking devices	13 12		6
Poor to very poor	Confusing; ideas disconnected; lacks logical sequencing No appropriate linking devices	11 10-4		5 0
Range of Grammar and Vocabulary			20	10
Excellent to very good	Wide range of appropriate vocabulary and structures to express valid ideas efficiently Ambitious attempts at advanced, idiomatic language	20 19 18		10 9
Good	Good range of appropriate vocabulary and structures Ambitious attempts at advanced language	17 16		8
Average	Moderate range of structures and vocabulary	15 14		7
Fair	Limited range of vocabulary and structures; very simple Evidence of direct translation; interference from mother tongue	13 12		6
Poor to very poor	Inadequate range of structures and vocabulary Lack of vocabulary obscures communication; essentially translation	11 10-4		5 0
Accuracy of Grammar, Vocabulary and Spelling			30	10
Excellent to very good	Accurate word/idiom choice; confident handling of appropriate constructions to communicate efficiently and concisely Hardly any errors	30 29 28 27		10 9
Good	Language is generally accurate Possibly some errors but errors do not impede communication Demonstrates mastery of basic grammatical structures	26 25 24		8
Average	Well-formed sentences; generally accurate expression Possibly a number of errors but errors do not impede communication	23 22 21		7
Fair	Frequent errors of vocabulary, grammar or spelling Errors may obscure communication at times	20 19 18		6
Poor to very poor	Frequent errors distract the reader Frequent errors obscure communication	17 15 13-6		5 0
Schulnoten bei:100pts: 1(100-90), 2 (89-80), 3 (79-70), 4 (69-60), 5 (59-00)				
Schulnoten bei 40 pts: immer Prozentsatz für die Schüler angeben: zB: 32/40=80%				

The following rating scale was developed in 1986 and has been widely used in Austria. This scale was designed for assessing essay-type texts, which were the only text-type that seemed relevant at that time. Due to the new Matura and the different text-types that are now taught in our schools, the scale is now being replaced by the previous ones, where TASK ACHIEVEMENT has been defined more openly.

You might still find this scale in use in many schools. If you need a perfect printout of this scale, you'll find the master file in our Moodle course under Assessment Scales.

Assessment Scale for Written Work

E.Fleischmann, R.Huber, E. Pölzleitner, R. Vaupetitsch, K. Weiffenböck

Adapted from: Jacobs, Holly L. et al., *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach*, Newbury House, Rowley 1981

Please use according to the instructions on the reverse side

Content	20-18	Excellent to very good: Excellent to very good knowledge of subject; considerable variety of ideas or arguments; independent and thorough treatment of topic; relevant to assigned topic; accurate detail.
	17-14	Good to Average: Adequate knowledge of subject; variety of ideas/arguments above average; adequate treatment of topic; some detail, mostly relevant to topic.
	13-10	Fair to Poor: Knowledge of subject is hardly adequate; limited variety of ideas/arguments; sufficient treatment of topic; lacking detail or extraneous material included.
	9-6	Very Poor: Knowledge of subject too little; hardly any or no variety of ideas/arguments; insufficient treatment of topic, or not enough to evaluate.
Organization	20-18	Excellent to Very Good: Fluent expression; ideas clearly stated and supported; well organized; logically sequenced (coherent); connectives appropriately used (cohesive).
	17-14	Good to Average: Somewhat choppy but main ideas stand out; logically sequenced; connectives sometimes used inappropriately.
	13-10	Fair to Poor: Choppy; loosely organized; main ideas are not always clear; connectives often used inappropriately.
	9-6	Very Poor: Non-fluent; ideas often confused or disconnected; lacks logical sequencing or development.
Vocabulary	25-23	Excellent to Very Good: Wide range of vocabulary; accurate word/idiom choice and usage; appropriate register.
	22-18	Good to Average: Adequate range of vocabulary; occasional errors of word/idiom form; choice and usage but meaning not obscured; register not always appropriate.
	17-13	Fair to Poor: Limited range of vocabulary; frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice and usage; meaning confused or obscured; inappropriate register.
	12-8	Very Poor: Range of vocabulary too limited; essentially translation; meaning confused or obscured; or not enough to evaluate.
Language	30-27	Excellent to Very Good: Confident handling of appropriate constructions; hardly any errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning never obscured;
	26-21	Good to Average: Well-formed sentences, but constructions not always appropriate to task (register); some errors of agreement, tense, number, word order, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning sometimes slightly obscured
	20-15	Fair to Poor: Not sufficient variety of constructions available; problems mainly in complex constructions; several errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning sometimes obscured.
	14-9	Very Poor: Major problems in sentence construction; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions; meaning often obscured.
Mechanics	5	Excellent to Very Good: Demonstrates mastery of conventions; hardly any errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.
	4	Good to Average: Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	3-2	Fair to Poor: Frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting

Table 1: Sehr gut \geq 90%, Gut \geq 80%, Befriedigend \geq 70%, Genügend \geq 60%

The following “Anmerkungen zur Assessment Scale” are still VERY important. The basic approach to marking has not changed. Please note that **students do not lose a certain number of points** for mistakes. When using one of these scales NEVER count the number of mistakes and deduct points for each of them. Each of the categories is seen as a whole where strengths and weaknesses are evaluated and described in words. Only then are these verbal descriptions transformed into points.

Anmerkungen zur Assessment Scale for Written Work

1986

Die vorliegende *Assessment Scale for Written Work* ist das Ergebnis einer mehrjährigen Zusammenarbeit einer Arbeitsgruppe von AHS- und BHS Lehrern sowie Universitätslektoren, die im Anschluß an ein Seminar des BMUK in Zusammenarbeit mit dem British Council (Monitoring Communicative Competence) gebildet wurde. Unser Ziel war es, die auf diesem Seminar vorgestellten Testmethoden auf ihre Anwendbarkeit in der österreichischen Schule zu überprüfen, bzw. prinzipiell geeignete Methoden an unsere Gegebenheiten anzupassen.

Die Vorlage für unsere *Assessment Scale* fanden wir in *Jacobs, Holly L. et al., Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach, Newbury House, 1981*. Das Prinzip einer Rating Scale erschien uns zur Bewertung freier schriftlicher Arbeiten besonders gut geeignet und wir entschlossen uns, eine Rating Scale zu erstellen, die genau auf die Gegebenheiten der österreichischen Schule abgestimmt ist. Wir hoffen, daß uns dies mit der vorliegenden Scale gelungen ist.

Vorteile der Rating Scale:

Ausgewogenheit von Inhalt und Sprache: Die *Assessment Scale* zergliedert eine schriftliche Arbeit in fünf Kategorien: *Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Language* und *Mechanics*

und ermöglicht so eine differenzierte Beurteilung einer schriftlichen Arbeit, die sowohl inhaltliche als auch sprachliche Komponenten berücksichtigt. Damit wird auch der Forderung der Arbeitsgemeinschaft nach Einbindung des Inhalts (Beurteilungsrichtlinien der ARGE) Rechnung getragen.

Transparenz für die Schüler: Durch die Gliederung der Beurteilung in fünf Einzelaspekte wird eine größere Transparenz für den Schüler erreicht. Erfahrung mit der *Assessment Scale* hat gezeigt, daß Schüler, die wissen wo Ihre Schwächen liegen, viel stärker motiviert sind, genau in diesem Gebiet zu arbeiten.

Backwash Effect: Da bei der Beurteilung mit der *Assessment Scale* genau ausgewiesen wird, in welcher Kategorie eine Arbeit Schwächen aufweist, und diese Schwächen für den Schüler durch eine geringe Punktezahl in dieser Kategorie stark spürbar werden, steigt das Interesse des Schülers für eben diesen Aspekt der Arbeit. Vor allem in den Kategorien *Content* und *Organization* ist durch das Bewußtwerden der Schwächen oft schon ein großer Schritt in Richtung Verbesserung getan.

Anwendung der Scale: Für viele Kollegen, die ein gewohntes Schema zur Bewertung von schriftlichen Arbeiten haben, und im Umgang mit diesem Schema sehr geübt sind, ist der Einstieg in die Arbeit mit der *Assessment Scale* etwas abschreckend und mühsam. Mit etwas Übung (wie auch in jedem anderen Beurteilungssystem) ist die Bewertung mit der *Assessment Scale* aber sehr einfach und zeitsparend. In der Folge finden Sie einige Tips für die Anwendung der Scale.

1. Lesen Sie die Arbeit einmal ganz durch, ohne Fehler zu markieren. Anschließend lesen Sie die verbale Beurteilung in den Kategorien *Content* und *Organization*. Suchen Sie nach Formulierungen, die Ihren subjektiven Eindruck von Inhalt und Aufbau beschreiben. Meist finden Sie mehrere passende Formulierungen innerhalb eines Absatzes und einige wenige "Ausreißer" in höheren oder tieferen Absätzen. Jetzt müssen Sie diese verbale Beurteilung in Punkte umsetzen. Haben Sie beispielsweise zwei Formulierungen in der Gruppe *good to average* und eine Formulierung in der Gruppe *fair to poor* gefunden, so würden Sie etwa an das untere Ende der Punkte in Gruppe *good to average* gehen und z.B. 14 Punkte für *Content* vergeben. **Ebenso verfahren Sie mit der Kategorie *Organization*.**

2. Erst jetzt greifen Sie zu Ihrem Korrekturstift und markieren die Fehler in der Arbeit. Bei diesem zweiten Lesedurchgang konzentrieren Sie sich auf die Kategorien *Vocabulary* (Ausdruck) und *Language* (Grammatik). Die Kategorie *Vocabulary* ist eine relativ große Kategorie, die Idiomatik, Flüssigkeit, Register und Stil wie auch einzelne Vokabelfehler umfaßt. In der Kategorie *Language* beurteilen Sie die Sicherheit in der Verwendung geeigneter (auch komplizierter) Strukturen. Auch hier wird eher der Gesamteindruck beurteilt, als einzelne Fehler. Dieser Gesamteindruck verschlechtert sich selbstverständlich mit steigender Fehlerzahl.

3. Ein nochmaliger Blick auf ihre Korrektur hilft Ihnen bei der Einschätzung der Kategorie *Mechanics*. Wie aus der geringen Punktezahl hervorgeht, ist diese Kategorie von relativ geringer Bedeutung.

4. Addieren Sie nun die Punkte und vergeben Sie die Note: 100 - 91 = sehr gut, 90 - 81 = gut, 80 - 71 = befriedigend, 70 - 60 genügend, unter 60 nicht genügend.

Die Schüler sollten vor der ersten Verwendung der *Assessment Scale* in die Beurteilung mit der Scale eingeführt werden und eine Kopie des Schemas bekommen. Mit Hilfe dieser Kopie kann der Schüler dann immer seine Punktbewertung interpretieren. Es hat sich bewährt unter die beurteilte Arbeit die erreichten Punkte für jede Kategorie zu schreiben. z.B:

C: 17

O: 15

V: 22

L: 15

M: 4

Sum: 73 = Befriedigend

Die *Assessment Scale* hat sich auch zur Bewertung von schriftlichen Hausübungen bewährt. Mit etwas Übung sinkt der zeitliche Aufwand beträchtlich. Der washback effect verstärkt sich für die Schüler.

Die Scale wurde auch schon erfolgreich bei der Beurteilung von Maturaarbeiten (sowohl in AHS als auch BHS) eingesetzt. Hier hat sich die verbale Beurteilung der Scale sehr gut als Basis für die geforderte verbale Beurteilung der Maturaarbeit bewährt.

Wir hoffen, daß die *Assessment Scale* auch Ihren Wünschen gerecht wird und sind jederzeit offen für Anregungen und Verbesserungsvorschläge .
die "Error Group"

Common European Framework of Reference Scales

Download the complete package of CEFR scales from Moodle and also have a look at the scales for assessing speaking, listening and reading.

Production Written

OVERALL WRITTEN PRODUCTION	
C2	<i>Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical structure which helps the reader to find significant points.</i>
C1	<i>Can write clear, well-structured texts of complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</i>
B2	<i>Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his field of interest, synthesising and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.</i>
B1	<i>Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest, by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</i>
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like “and”, “but” and “because”.
A1	<i>Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.</i>

Note: The descriptors on this scale and on the two sub-scales which follow (Creative Writing; Reports & Essays) sub-scale have not been empirically calibrated with the measurement model. The descriptors for these three scales have therefore been created by recombining elements of descriptors from other scales

CREATIVE WRITING	
C2	Can write clear, smoothly flowing, and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.
C1	Can write clear, detailed, well-structured and developed descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal, natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.
B2	Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences marking the relationship between ideas in clear connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned. <i>Can write clear, detailed descriptions on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest.</i> Can write a review of a film, book or play.
B1	Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his field of interest. Can write accounts of experiences, describing feelings and reactions in simple connected text. Can write a description of an event, a recent trip - real or imagined. Can narrate a story.
A2	Can write about everyday aspects of his environment e.g. people, places, a job or study experience in linked sentences. Can write very short, basic descriptions of events, past activities and personal experiences. Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences about their family, living conditions, educational background, present or most recent job. Can write short, simple imaginary biographies and simple poems about people.
A1	Can write simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.

Using assessment scales

Go back to the text samples of unit 3. You have already marked all the mistakes and given feedback to the students. Now try to assess these texts using the new assessment scale. (Bauer-Pölzleitner)

Then correct and assess the following learner texts as you would do for a test. Mark all the mistakes in an appropriate way, give constructive and encouraging feedback about content and organization and use one of the rubrics to assess the texts.

1. Compare this text to the last sample text of unit 3. The text is based on the same poem. What are the differences between the two articles? How would you grade them?

What's the story?

Hundreds of girls died in flames

Yesterday, near Washington Square, a fire broke out in a building with ten floors. One hundred and forty-six girls were working in the tenth floor and died in those flames. Girls from the age of seventeen to the age of twenty-five died up there, because they had no chance to flee. The fire broke out at three o'clock and the women could just watch the fire coming.

Lots of mourners were in the street, but the parents and relatives felt worst! We tried to talk with one of the mothers, but none of them were able to say one thing, that's understandable. They did not do anything bad, but their girls just died in those horrible flames and no one could do anything to change it.

The girls worked in the tenth floor of the building in a room with only one door. They were working in an old sweatshop up there and they were sewing shirtwaists all day long. The girls did not get a lot of money for it, but still they had to work very hard. They had no comforts, no fresh air, nearly no light in this big room where they had to sit the whole day.

Every girl did not like the job in the sweatshop, but they did not have other opportunities and now they died there, nearly their second home. It's horrible what terribly things happen every day.

HOMEWORK:

1. Choose one of the new learner texts in the GIBS Moodle courses.

Mark all the errors and **suggest correct solutions** where necessary **or give short tips** where you feel the students might be able to solve the problem themselves.

Then give helpful, encouraging **feedback** to the student and **assess** the texts using one of the assessment scales.

The GIBS students are looking forward to this exchange – please treat them with respect and give them helpful, encouraging (but honest) feedback.

If you have any language questions, post them in our forum. Please check the forum regularly and answer other students' questions whenever possible.

PORTFOLIO

Save and print your corrected texts and feedback for your course portfolio. If you need additional texts go to the section "More learner texts..." in our Moodle course. Choose one or two and mark + assess them. Start now, so you can do the work carefully and conscientiously. If you start working now you can also use our language forum to ask questions.