

## Build a Better Rubric for Summarizing

### Learner Outcome

#### English Language Arts 10-2

#### 2.1.2

c. retell the plot of a narrative, describe its setting, and identify the conflict developed

### THE NON-EXAMPLE

CRITERIA	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate
Retell plot	Includes <b>10 or more</b> events related to the narrative.	Includes <b>7 to 9</b> events related to the narrative.	Includes <b>at least 5</b> events related to the narrative.

An AAC Non-example  
FOR DISCUSSION  
PURPOSES ONLY

#### Let's Talk about It

Teachers might be drawn to rubrics that include an established quantity of facts, sources, events or sentences required to achieve a certain level of performance. This kind of rubric is appealing because assigning a grade is less subjective – no professional judgment required, only counting!

With the above rubric, students receive a score based simply on the number of events they provide. While those events must be “related to the narrative”, there is no requirement that they provide a coherent, concise retelling. It is easy to envision how a retelling that includes just five significant, well-organized events could be of much higher quality than one with ten trivial, poorly sequenced events. Quantitative rubrics can sometimes create a trap where the score awarded (based on the rubric) does not reflect the quality of student work.

### A BETTER CHOICE

CRITERIA	Excellent	Proficient	Adequate
Retell plot	Provides a <b>precise</b> retelling of the plot.	Provides a <b>focused</b> retelling of the plot.	Provides a <b>basic</b> retelling of the plot.

#### Let's Talk about It

The above rubric descriptors are based on the *quality* of the retelling. With a qualitative rubric, it is necessary for teachers *and* students to come to a shared understanding of the qualities of a “precise” retelling. This might involve examining retellings of varying levels of quality to help establish a list of the characteristics of an excellent retelling (e.g. including events crucial to an understanding of the narrative, leaving out unimportant events, sequencing events accurately).

When teachers consistently use rubrics focused on the quality of student work relative to a skill such as summarizing, students develop a better understanding of the skill over time. Students also can become more proficient at applying that skill in their own work across all subject areas.