

Nation Journal Rubric

Grade your students' daily play journals consistently

This rubric assesses daily nation-builder journal entries on 4 dimensions. Designed for grades 6-12. Adapt freely.

Journal entry format

Each daily entry should include: (1) the decision made today, (2) the tradeoff accepted, (3) a prediction of the outcome. 3-5 sentences total.

Rubric

Dimension	Exceeds (4)	Meets (3)	Approaching (2)	Below (1)
Decision clarity	Decision is specific, with context	Decision is clearly stated	Decision is vague	Decision is missing or unclear
Tradeoff awareness	Names cost AND alternative	Names cost or tradeoff	Mentions tradeoff but general	No tradeoff identified
Prediction quality	Specific, measurable, evidence-based	Specified and testable	Vague but present	No prediction
Follow-through	Returns to check prediction results	Sometimes follows up	Rarely follows up	Never follows up

Scoring guide

- **14-16 points:** Exceptional. Student is reasoning like a real policymaker.
- **11-13 points:** Strong work. Continue.
- **7-10 points:** Developing. Coach on tradeoff identification.
- **4-6 points:** Needs intervention. Review what a tradeoff is, model an entry together.

Tips for graders

- Don't grade the game outcome — grade the thinking.
- A failed prediction with strong reasoning beats a correct prediction with no reasoning.
- Look for growth over time, not perfect entries from day one.
- Use entries as conversation starters at parent-teacher check-ins.