Investigation report rubric

A 100-point rubric for the written report that accompanies a forensics or incident response lab. Six criteria, four levels. Weights are suggestions; change them in the right-hand column. Pairs with the short-answer grading the lab itself provides.

CRITERION	EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	BEGINNING	POINTS
Accuracy of findings	Every finding is correct and matches the evidence; no false claims.	Findings are correct with one minor error or omission.	Most findings are correct; one material error.	Several findings are wrong or unsupported.	30
Evidence and attribution	Every claim cites a specific artifact, record and timestamp; extracts are captioned and relevant.	Claims are cited; one or two lack the specific record or time.	Citations are general ("the registry", "the logs").	Claims are asserted without evidence.	20
Method and integrity	Hashes verified and recorded, tools and versions listed, time zone fixed and stated, chain of custody attached.	Method is complete; one element (hash, version, zone) missing.	Method described loosely; integrity steps not evidenced.	No method section or no integrity verification.	15
Reasoning	Observation and interpretation separated; alternatives considered and ruled out; confidence justified.	Reasoning is sound; alternatives mentioned but not tested.	Interpretation stated as fact; confidence not addressed.	Conclusions don't follow from the findings.	15
Timeline	Correct order, single time zone, sources named, gaps called out.	Correct with a minor omission or formatting issue.	Out of order in places or mixed zones.	Missing or unusable.	10
Communication	Executive summary first and plain; sections in the expected order; concise, precise language a non-technical reader can follow.	Clear and complete; some jargon or length that a reader must work through.	Structure present but hard to follow; key answers buried.	Disorganized; the reader can't find the answers.	10

Scoring guide

Exemplary earns full points for the criterion, Proficient about 80 percent, Developing about 55 percent, Beginning 25 percent or less. Record the level and a one-line reason for each criterion; the reason is what the student learns from.

Integrity and collusion

Because every student's evidence differs, a report whose findings match another student's variant rather than their own is wrong on the Accuracy criterion before any academic-integrity process starts. The anti-collusion report in the app lists which pairs to look at.

Teaching note. Return the rubric with the per-criterion level marked and the reason written, then let the student submit a revision for the Reasoning and Communication criteria only. Those two are where a second pass teaches the most, and the facts can't change.

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