

# What Is a Good PBL Problem?



*Institute for Transforming  
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# Good PBL Problems...

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- relate to real world, motivate students
- require decision-making or judgments
- are multi-page, multi-stage
- are designed for group-solving
- pose open-ended initial questions that encourage discussion
- incorporate course content objectives, higher order thinking, other skills



# Rubric to Evaluate PBL Problems

	Descriptors		
Criteria	3	2	1



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<b>Content</b>	Addresses significant conceptual issues; directly related to major content goals.	Encourages superficial rather than in-depth understanding concepts.	Relevance of topic peripheral or not apparent.



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<b>Engagement</b>	Stimulates discussion and inquiry through its relevance and presentation.	Generates limited or superficial discussion; provokes little curiosity.	Lacks a “hook”; obscure or pedantic presentation.



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<b>Complexity</b>	Appropriately challenging; group effort and cooperation required; some ambiguity appropriate; integrates multiple concepts.	Difficult but may encourage a “divide and conquer” approach. Concepts not well integrated.	Solution accessible to most students working alone; focused on single concept.



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<b>Resolution</b>	Open to multiple resolutions or multiple pathways to solution, depending on student assumptions and reasoned arguments.	Resolution is more obvious but allows reasonable opportunity for judgment and discussion.	One right answer is expected; limited opportunity for analysis and decision making.



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<b>Research</b>	Promotes substantive research using multiple resources.	Research limited to textbook material.	Limited necessity for research.