

Second Grade Saints Block

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Saints

Program of Study

Stories of the Christian saints are usually studied in the second grade as a language arts block. Because of this the main emphasis is on writing, illustrating, and retelling stories in your main lesson book of the lives of the particular saints studied, as well as relevant oral recitation and drama exercises. The anthology I am recommending for this unit (Stories of the Saints as retold by Siegwart Knijpenga) contains stories for 37 saints. I have recommended and given specific ideas for twelve. You can, of course, choose whichever saints most appeal to you. Consider especially which stories you feel may help your child in her moral development.

December is a tricky time of year for homeschooling since there tend to be so many family commitments around the holidays. You'll also want to leave plenty of time in your day for making and wrapping gifts, cooking, etc. I have these unit activities arranged without a specific timeframe so that you can print out a monthly grid and fill in which saints you would like to do and for how many days. I recommend spending 2-3 days on each saint. Anything less than two days does not give your child the time to sleep on the story and then retell it to you on the following day. If you homeschool on Saturdays, you might be able to do three saints in a week, spending two days studying each. I think the maximum number of saints you can conceivably do is 12 which is why I have chosen that many to write about. Remember, of course, that quality is more important than quantity so don't be hard on yourself if you only do seven or eight. Donna Simmons' Saints and Heroes block also includes twelve suggestions. They are

1. Genevieve of Paris
2. Kun and Yu
3. Rabia of Basra
4. Nandanar and Lord Shiva
5. Finn MacCool, Hero of Ireland
6. Judah Maccabee and the Temple Miracle
7. Elizabeth of the Roses
8. Hiawatha, Bringer of Peace
9. Martin, Servant of the Christ
10. Francis and Clare
11. Basil the Holy Fool
12. The Baal Shem Tov

Donna also mentions in her book that some families choose to study the saints as an ongoing process throughout the school year. Since each saint has a saint day, this makes sense. It also allows you a back-up plan in case December gets too crazy and you just feel overwhelmed. For a nice resource on what day of the calendar year goes with what saint, I recommend A Calendar of Saints by James Bentley. This is not arranged into stories suitable for telling children (as the anthology I picked is); rather, it is more for parents and includes historical and background information on each saint.

Saints

Choosing Saint Stories

Stories of the Saints contains a comprehensive index to help you choose the saints you want to study. Biographical information for each (page 203), an index of the book's illustrations (page 215), an alphabetical list of the saints (page 217), a list of the saints by date (page 218), the saints and what they are patron of (page 219), and the legends according to each appropriate season of the calendar year (page 220) are all included. Here is the complete list of saints covered in this book:

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Agnes	111	Patrick	93
Ambrose	141	Radegund	185
Antony of Egypt	87	Thomas	97
Barlaam and Josaphat	55	Veronica	131
Beatrice	103		
Benedict	41		
Boniface	121		
Brendan	153		
Brigid	13		
Christopher	75		
Columba	19		
Cuthbert	19		
Dionysius	179		
Elizabeth of Hungary	67		
Emma of Haarlem	107		
Eustace	61		
Francis of Assisi	27		
Francis of Paola	115		
Gall	173		
George	51		
Giles	37		
Gregory the Great	101		
Jerome	47		
Joan of Arc	189		
John the Evangelist	201		
Lioba	135		
Luke the Evangelist	197		
Margaret of Antioch	143		
Martin	81		
Mary	9		
Nicholas of Myra	163		
Odilia	147		
Paschal Baylon	127		

The saint stories I have included in this unit are

- Mary September 8
- Brigid February 1
- Columba June 9
- Francis of Assisi October 4
- Giles September 1
- Jerome September 30
- George April 23
- Elizabeth of Hungary November 17
- Christopher July 25
- Martin of Tours November 11
- Patrick March 17
- Thomas December 21

There may also be additional virtuous people you personally feel strongly about and wish to include. Simply follow the same procedure – tell a story about the life of the person on the first day, allow your child to sleep on it, and then have your child retell the story to you. Have her add it to her main lesson book – remember, the focus here is on composition, so push her to have good sentence structure, proper spelling, and a well constructed summary with a beginning, middle and an end. The life of someone is an easy way to practice this as it is logical to begin with their birth, continue with the events of their life, and end with their death. Additional activities may be doing something that the saint did (like fasting), or something inspired by the lesson that they taught (such as helping others, which could be volunteering at a soup kitchen), memorizing a prayer or famous quote from the person, or acting out a scene from the story you have been learning. For the main lesson book work, choose a variety of illustration techniques including colored pencils, beeswax crayons, watercolor painting, etc.

Saints (and corresponding activities) which are mentioned in All Year Round but not included in this unit are

Andrew (p. 171),
Barbara (p. 190),
John the Baptist (pp. 102, 103, 235, 237),
Michael (pp. 83, 139),
Nicholas (pp. 190, 191, 236),
Stephen (p. 227),
Swithun (pp. 80, 121), and
Valentine (p. 34).

Saints

Planning Pages

To help you plan the unit and customize it to your family and your schedule, I recommend printing a blank December calendar (which may be found online) on which you can write in your family gatherings and holidays and other blocks of time when homeschooling will not be appropriate. Use the remaining days to sketch out a plan for which saints you wish to cover and how long you would like to spend on each.

I have included a blank Saints planning page (next page) where you can do the individual planning for each person studied. I would recommend using a three-ring binder with the monthly overview page as the first page, and then my suggestions for introducing the unit. Place the Saint pages in order behind it. You might be better off planning for more saints than you think you can do so that you are prepared if there is extra homeschool time. Any saints that you don't use you can set aside for a future block or, as Donna suggested, incorporate them throughout the school year. Finally, your plans for concluding the unit and your weekly journaling pages should be placed at the end.

If you find you like having a monthly calendar overview of your unit plan, here is a nice template: <http://www.chartjungle.com/calendars/monthlytaskcalendar.html>

Saint name:

Number ____

Day:

Patron saint of:

Background information & teaching resources:

Story I wish to tell:

Follow-up activities:

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Booklist: Essential Books

<u>Stories of the Saints</u>	Siegwart Knijpenga
<u>All Year Round</u>	Ann Druitt, et al.
<u>Learning About the World through Modeling</u>	Arthur Auer

Other Resources

Resource Guide for Waldorf Teachers by David S. Mitchell recommends the following for

Saints & Legends

<u>Christ Legends</u>	Lagerlof	Floris Books
<u>The Golden Legend</u>	Voragine	Arno Press
<u>Butler's Lives of Eminent Saints</u>	Butler	Christian Classics
<u>The King of Ireland's Son</u>	Colum	Anthroposophic Press
<u>Ten Saints</u>	Farjeon	Floris Books
<u>Francis of Assisi's</u>		
<u>Canticle of Creation</u>	Paul and Joan Allen	Continuum
<u>Celtic Fire</u>	Van de Weyer	Doubleday

English

<u>An English Manual</u>	Harrer	AWSNA Publications
<u>Teaching English</u>	Wilkinson	Steiner College Press

I also think The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum is helpful for the language arts portion of this block.

Find two possible plays for your Saints block in Plays for Grades One through Four by Michael Hedley Burton. The plays are called "Saint Francis and the Wolf" and "Saint Bride of Iona."

Saints

Journaling Page

Week One:

Saints

Journaling Page

Week Two:

Saints

Journaling Page

Week Three:

Saints

Journaling Page

Week Four:

Saints

Introduction

To introduce the idea of saints and virtues, start with reading the 10 Commandments from the Bible (Exodus): <http://gemini.tntech.edu/~dswart/10commandments.gif> (click on the graphic to expand it to full-page size, suitable for printing and posting in your classroom). Discuss what each one means. You can also talk about how the Commandments mostly tell what you *should not* do (this is why they are sometimes referred to as the "shalt nots") but there are ways also to find out what you *should* do. One easy rule of thumb is the Golden Rule: Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You. Discuss what this means. Add the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule to your main lesson book with an appropriate decorative border around each page.

As an additional activity for this unit, instead of having a chapter book for a bedtime story you could read a verse or two of Proverbs each night before going to bed. You can also use online resources to find proverbs from other countries to add to your list. It is not necessary to directly discuss what each means – as with fables, you want the morals to slowly sink into your child. Personally I like to read the King James version of the Bible the best because I think the language is most magical... and it doesn't have to be common English to speak to your child's heart. That's just a personal choice, though.

Saints

Stories & Activities

Mary
September 8

Story: "Thus the temple became her home" page 9

Activities: Make a Holy Family out of magic wool (using dry felting) such as this set
http://www.achildsdream.com/celebrations/christmas_advent.htm

Dry felting is easily done with a needle, unspun wool, and a large sponge to use as a base (to keep from pricking yourself). If you are not familiar with dry felting techniques, I have put several pages of notes from my workshop with Suzanne Down in the notes for first grade on the website:

http://www.waldorfcurriculum.com/Lower%20grades/1st_overview.html

If dry felting is too challenging for your child there are directions for a set of fabric figures (with directions for making a Waldorf doll head) in All Year Round, beginning on page 210. Consider also a series of figures made from modeling beeswax.

For the story of Mary you can also make Mary's star path from All Year Round page 174.

All your family's Advent activities are relevant to the study of this saint.

Note: other stories recommended for Advent in Stories of the Saints are Nicholas (page 163), Boniface (page 121), and Lioba (page 135).

Brigid
February 1

Story: "Have you forgotten me, Bride?" page 13

Activities: Star ladder from All Year Round page 181 or Silhouette transparencies (page 182)

A Christmas play for the family may be found in All Year Round on page 220.

There is also a play for Saint Bride of Iona in Michael Hedley's book which I have listed under Other Resources. Perhaps you can do the play at your church or with a group of homeschooling families.

All your family's Christmas activities are relevant to the study of this saint.

Columba
June 9

Story: "The door sprang open"

page 19

Activities: Have your child memorize the following prayer by Saint Columba of Iona. This makes a wonderful morning verse to greet the day.

Be thou a bright flame before me,

Be thou a guiding star above me,

Be thou a smooth path below me,

Be thou a kindly Shephard behind me,

Today, tonight, and forever.

St. Columba of Iona

You can also follow up on the barley story by planting some barley seeds and watching them grow... or follow up on the crane story by making origami cranes. Find directions for making the cranes here <http://www.sadako.org/foldingcranes.htm>. There is an old Japanese legend that if a sick person folds a thousand paper cranes their wish will be granted and they will become well. Read more about this, and the famous story of one sick little girl, at <http://www.childrenstheatreplays.com/atc.htm> where there is a play for children (see the school play version) on this topic. If you think the story is appropriate for your child you can share it. It is certainly relevant to a study of virtue. She may be too young, however, so use your own judgment. If you decide to try to make a thousand paper cranes I don't know of any place you can send them to. Most of the websites I found have stopped collecting cranes. Perhaps your child would like to do it anyway, maybe even for a sick friend. All Year Round suggests making origami cranes as a New Year tradition -- send a crane to a friend as a good luck symbol or make a series of cranes to form a mobile as shown on page 232. There is also a book called The Paper Crane by Molly Bang which you may enjoy reading.

I also think the boat without a rudder is a powerful story and maybe you can come back to that one in the spring time by making a raft and watching it drift down a stream, being carried by the current.

Francis of Assisi
October 4

Story: "Until the roses bloom again" page 27

Activities: Saint Francis is one of the most famous saints, even among non-Christians. Statues of him are often found in gardens as he is the patron saint of animals and birds and stewardship of the earth. Use your study of Saint Francis to set out a birdfeeder or birdbath in your garden and to make special treats for the birds to keep them fed. Find a Bird food recipe on page 207 of All Year Round.

In addition to retelling and copying a story from the life of Saint Francis in your main lesson book (the anthology gives several), have your child memorize and recite the famous prayer of Saint Francis:

Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen

It is best for you to memorize it also and recite it with her. Hearing voices joined together in prayer is very stimulating for the young child.

There is also a version of the play "Saint Francis and the Wolf" by Michael Hedley Burton included in the book I recommended. Again, you can do it as a family or with a group of other children. This one requires more in the way of props since you will have to make all the animals. Consider wet or dry felting, or sewing the animals out of cloth or wool felt. If you make the animals as finger puppets (except the wolf which should be a hand puppet, so that it can put out its paw) the play will work more easily.

Learning About the World through Modeling gives suggestions for modeling Saint Francis taming the wolf and talking to fishes on pages 59 & 60. Of course, you can also do Saint Francis talking to the birds!

Giles
September 1

Story: "Let us ask the earth" page 37

Activities: Make a snow white angel to hang above your child's bed. Find directions for an Angel cut-out decoration and Angel mobile in All Year Round (page 201).

Jerome
September 30

Story: "Brothers, the lion wishes to stay with us" page 47

Activities: I think the most wonderful thing you can do for this story is to model the huge paw of the lion with the tiny thorn sticking out of it. It makes us realize that even the seemingly smallest things can truly hurt someone. Ask your child to think of a friend who has a thorn which is hurting them and to figure out how she can help pull it out. Encourage her to find someone to help. Meals on Wheels is an excellent opportunity to help people suffering from loneliness – perhaps your family can contribute time to that, or look for other volunteer opportunities in your area.

George
April 23

Story: "And fate chose the King's child" page 51

Activities: Learning About the World through Modeling has suggestions for George and the dragon on page 60. You can also use some of the dragon activity suggestions from All Year Round for Michaelmas, such as Michaelmas candle (page 143), A conker dragon (page 144 – whole chestnuts may usually be found in the produce department of your grocery store at this time of year), Shooting star kite (page 145), and baking dragons out of dough (page 147). There is a nice picture book retelling of Saint George and the Dragon by Margaret Hodges – check to see if it is at your library.

Elizabeth of Hungary (Elizabeth of the Roses)
November 17

Story: "Pure red roses" page 67

Activities: Donna Simmons has this saint included in her book and there she suggests making tissue paper roses. Find instructions here:
http://www.ehow.com/how_16356_make-paper-roses.html

Christopher
July 25

Story: "If you wait long enough" page 75
(I actually prefer the story from Putting the Heart Back Into Teaching for this one)

Activities: I think for this story it is best to make a large mural, with several panes showing Christopher carrying the child on his shoulders and stooping lower and lower each time as he finds the burden heavier and heavier. Due to the scale, poster paints or beeswax crayons would probably be easiest. To help your child understand the weight he is carrying and how it makes his body bend, place objects on her shoulders corresponding to each panel of the illustration directly before working on it. For example, if you divide it into four sections (which is easiest – have your child fold a piece of butcher block paper in half and score it, then in half again), perhaps the first weight could be a nothing at all, then a shoebox, then a chair, then a box of books.

Martin of Tours
November 11

Story: "Aren't you afraid?" page 81

Activities: All Year Round suggests several activities for Martinmas, including Small lantern (page 164), Two simple table lanterns (page 165) and A Martinmas meal (page 166). Perhaps this is the time when you and your child can volunteer at a soup kitchen or do some other activity to feed the hungry (this is the perfect time to begin the cumulative project -- see the Conclusion page for more on this). The story of Martin cutting his cloak in two to help clothe a freezing beggar is what is referenced here, in the Martinmas meal, and of all the saint stories it is perhaps the most inspirational one. Go through your house to find coats to donate to a coat drive, other items of clothing in good condition which may be donated to a charity... in fact, anything which you have that can go on to people in need. After Christmas is an especially good time to look at duplicate books and toys and gather up what you no longer have a use for. If you have books to donate consider Biblioworks: <http://www.biblioworks.org/content/view/38/37/> which is working to bring literacy to poor areas of South America.

This story also lends itself to a lighter treatment – a dramatic reenactment of the story (this is suggested by Donna in her book). Sew a red cloak of two halves fastened together with a strip of Velcro and make a wooden sword. Your child can act out the story of Martin and the beggar and cut her cloak in two with a dramatic flourish.

Patrick
March 17

Story: "Because you did not forget my name" page 93

Activities: I am choosing to end this unit with the stories of Patrick and Thomas which deal with the promise of Heaven. You may wish to cut these out depending on your religious beliefs or whether your child has a fear of death (or, alternatively, you could spend extra time on these to help her get over her fear). If she knows of any friends or relatives who have died you can do memorial activities for them, perhaps to light a candle and say a prayer, or make a memory book. There are many children's books which are suitable for a grieving child; find some suggestions here http://www.amazon.com/books-for-the-grieving-child/lm/RC8VQ6BJF23WW/ref=cm_lm_byauthor_title_full/102-1400508-4044953

If your child has lost a pet, you can also spend time on this. Depending on your religious beliefs, have your child add a picture of what she thinks Heaven looks like to her main lesson book.

Of course, you can also do more traditional St. Patrick's Day activities: <http://wilstar.com/holidays/patrick.htm>. These include making shamrocks and wearing green from head to toe. You can also take this opportunity to learn a little more about Ireland, learn some Irish dances, or make a traditional Irish meal of corned beef, colcannon, and Irish soda bread.

You can also have your child memorize the prayer of Saint Patrick and add it to her main lesson book. It makes a nice blessing before a meal.

God be with me,
God within me,
God behind me,
God before me,
God beside me,
God around me,
God to comfort and restore me.

God beneath me,
God above me,
God in quiet,
God in danger,
God in hearts of all that love me,
God in mouth of friend and stranger.

Prayer of St. Patrick

Thomas
December 21

Story: "Where is the palace?"

page 97

Activities: Again, this is a place where you could choose to talk to your child about Heaven and how, although they aren't always obvious in life, there are concrete rewards for our behavior. The palace that Thomas built was by his spreading the word about his love for God and the death and resurrection of Christ. By his good deeds he did build a most beautiful palace in Heaven. This is a personal choice. I think a drawing of the beautiful palace up in Heaven in the sky up and behind Thomas as he is speaking to a group of men would be the most appropriate main lesson book illustration, but you might also want to follow up on how it was built by his actions, not with building materials, by making a vow to give more to the poor. Thomas traveled and gave away the gold and silver to needy people as he met them. So this is another example of a saint story that you could follow up on by volunteering, giving to charity, or some other good deed.

Note: "More Ideas for Saints and Heroes" (in the back of Donna's book) includes the following. If you are interested in some of them, you may wish to purchase her book

John Henry
Paul Bunyan
Pecos Bill
Chief Seattle
King Canute
Lancelot
King Arthur
Robin Hood
Rogolu
Queen Esther
Boudicca
Rani Durgavati
Ninian
Mungo (or Kentigern)
Johnny Appleseed

She also mentions Lights Along the Path as a resource (this is available from Bob & Nancy's Bookshop www.waldorfbooks.com).

Saints

Conclusion

One of my favorite quotes from Mother Theresa (and one which comes in handy when you start to feel overwhelmed about how much there is to do in the world) is

“If you can't feed a hundred people, then just feed one.”

My suggestion for a cumulative project for this unit would be to get involved with Heifer International: <http://www.heifer.org/>. When you visit their site, request the holiday catalogue which, instead of being full of things for you to buy your child, allows you to purchase animals to be sent to places around the world where they can be of service. The catalogue is full of short stories about how these animals have changed the lives of people and it is very inspirational. Perhaps your child will decide she doesn't want anything for Christmas and that your family should donate the money which would be spent on her gifts to this cause instead. Or, you can give gifts of animal donations, made in the names of people you love, as Christmas presents. If you do this, my idea is that your child would make a Christmas ornament representing the animal you gave as a gift and send that to the recipient along with the card provided by Heifer Int. about the animal purchased, where it will be sent, and how it will help the community. Perhaps you can knit small animals, or make them out of sewn felt (see [Around the World with Finger Puppet Animals](#) by Suzanne Down for an extensive list of patterns). [All Year Round](#) has directions for making bees (several types) beginning on page 106. A hive of bees is one of the least expensive gifts but still a very useful one. You could write a little bee poem and add it to the gift card. Also, instead of making individual Christmas ornaments for each type of animal, you can use the directions for straw stars in [All Year Round](#) (page 195) -- these make a nice general gift and would complement any Heifer International Christmas present.

Animal Ornament Suggestions:

Cow
Sheep
Chick
Duck
Goose
Goat
Pig
Rabbit
Honeybee

9 total

Pattern notes:

Magic wool

Sheep from carded wool	Toymaking with Children	p.58
Pipcleaner sheep	Crafts through the Year	p.106
Pipcleaner sheep	Toymaking with Children	p.59
Goose	Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets	p.49
Honeybee	All Year Round	p.106
Pig	Making Fairy-Tale Wool Animals	p.37
Cow	The Nature Corner	p.72
Cow	Making Fairy-Tale Wool Animals	p.47

Pompom – wool yarn

Honeybee	Making Fairy-Tale Wool Animals	p.74
Rabbit	Crafts through the Year	p.20
Hare	The Nature Corner	p.35
Chick	Crafts through the Year	p.19
Chick	Making Fairy-Tale Wool Animals	p.66

Pinecones, paper, straw, etc.

Honeybee (pinecone)	Crafts through the Year	p.66
Honeybee (catkin)	The Nature Corner	p.49
Goat (straw)	Crafts through the Year	p.52
Chick (origami)	Crafts through the Year	p.35

Hand sewing – wool felt

Chicken	Finger Puppet Animals	p.71
Hare	All Year Round	p.74
Hare	All Year Round	p.76
Hare	The Nature Corner	p.35
Sheep	The Nature Corner	p.37
Sheep	Finger Puppet Animals	p.61
Rabbit	Finger Puppet Animals	p.93
Cow	Making Fairy-Tale Wool Animals	p.54
Cow	Finger Puppet Animals	p.67
Bee	Finger Puppet Animals	p.115
Pig	Finger Puppet Animals	p.63
Duck	Finger Puppet Animals	p.83
Goat	Finger Puppet Animals	p.73

Sheep from sheepskin

Toymaking with Children	p.57
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Alternately, if you've ended up with a lot of focus on Saint Francis and his ecological message, you might want to end the unit with a discussion about taking care of the earth (reading the first chapter of Genesis, where the earth is lovingly created by God and then put into our hands to take care of – not that we are doing a good job at it! – is powerful). Recycling comes into play here and you can put your child in charge of sorting out paper, plastic, glass and aluminum into separate bins and driving to the recycling center each week with your family. Go grocery shopping and look for items made of recycled materials, such as 7th generation toilet paper, whose slogan is “You are making a difference” – a powerful message! If every household in the U.S. replaced just one roll of 500 sheet virgin fiber bathroom tissue with 100% recycled ones, we could save 423,900 trees!!!

If you go this route, you might want to end your main lesson book with a beautifully decorated page containing this statement:

“In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”

from The Great Law of The Iroquois Confederacy

Saints

Assessment

There are several components to the assessment for this unit. These include the main lesson book (which contains an anthology of saint stories), your discussions with your child about these stories and your observations about the impact they have had on her emotionally, her willingness to help in various volunteer and community service projects (I've given a lot of suggestions, I would recommend choose only two or three causes to donation your time and money too – again, less is more here), notes on her artistic abilities, as well as your feeling about her composition skills. Your journaling will be very important here. In this unit you are paying the most attention to the following skills and understandings:

- Does your child know the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, as well as any other prayers or pieces you have asked her to memorize?
- Does your child sit and listen well when stories are told to her?
- Can your child retell stories about the lives of several saints or virtuous people?
- Does your child demonstrate a willingness and enthusiasm to enter into projects which benefit other people?
- Have you observed that your child is having an emotional response to the saint stories – even so far as to potentially give up her Christmas presents?
- Is your child using clear, easy to read script in her main lesson book and paying attention to proper spelling and punctuation?
- Is she able to compose a well-formed sentence, with a subject and a predicate? Do you spend a lot of time rephrasing her sentences for her or does she need little help?
- Does she properly begin each sentence with a capital letter and end it with a period, question mark, or exclamation point?
- Does your child read aloud at a good pace and with a strong voice? Is she able to sound out unknown words using phonics skills?
- Does she show skill in artistic and handwork projects which were assigned to her?

The three aspects of assessment I want you to consider when evaluating Your child are

1. Content/declarative knowledge: how well does the student know the **content**?
2. Quality of the **product**: how well did the student present the work in writing, speaking, etc.
3. Quality of the **application**: how well did the student execute the knowledge application process?