The NACD Buyer Quality Rubric for Resources

Version 2, November 12, 2026. A fast, evidence-based way for teachers to judge an instructional resource before they buy it.

01 HOW IT WORKS

Every resource is scored on six criteria. Each criterion gets a score from 1 to 4, a confidence level, and a piece of evidence taken from the listing, the preview, or buyer reports. The six scores add up to a total out of 24, and the total places the resource in one of four bands.

The rubric scores only what a buyer can see before purchase. When the preview does not show enough to judge a criterion, the score is marked Can't tell instead of guessed.

02 CONFIDENCE LEVELS

Every score carries one of four confidence levels, so a teacher never mistakes a shaky score for a firm one.

HIGH	Direct evidence in the preview, or a specific and recent buyer report.
MEDIUM	Partial evidence, with some reasonable inference.
LOW	The preview shows too little. The score is mostly inference.
CAN'T TELL	No usable evidence. No number is given, and the report says what to look for before buying.

03 BANDS

The six scores add up to a total out of 24.

TOTAL	BAND	WHAT IT MEANS
21 to 24	**Buy with confidence**	Ready to teach, would buy again
16 to 20	**Good, with some tweaks**	Minor gaps a teacher can fix in minutes
11 to 15	**Use only if you need it and can fill gaps**	Real gaps, needs meaningful teacher work
6 to 10	**Skip**	Not worth the money

When criteria are Can't tell: The total becomes a range. Each Can't tell counts as 1 point for the low end and 4 points for the high end. If the range crosses two bands, the report shows both. If more than two criteria are Can't tell, the report gives no band and says the preview is too thin to rate.

04 THE SIX CRITERIA

4 · STRONG	3 · SOLID	2 · THIN	1 · WEAK
01 Standards Alignment *Does the work students do match what the named standards demand?*			
Standards are named. Every visible task demands the full thinking its standard asks for. Page-level labels let a teacher match each page to a standard.	Standards are named and mostly matched. One or two tasks drift, or labels appear on the listing but not on the pages.	Standards are listed, but tasks cover only a slice, sit below the standard's level, or the listing names far fewer standards than the product visibly covers.	No standards, or codes stamped on with no real match to the tasks.
02 Rigor and Student Thinking *Are students reasoning, or filling in blanks?*			
At least half of the visible tasks need students to explain, justify, model, or work through several steps, and students must show evidence.	About a quarter to a half of the visible tasks need reasoning. The rest is practice.	Fewer than a quarter need reasoning. Most tasks are one-answer recall or procedure, with a token reasoning prompt.	Every visible task is recall or procedure.
03 Clarity and Teacher Usability *Could a tired teacher teach this tomorrow with no prep?*			
Clear student directions, a full answer key, a teacher guide or notes, and no reported setup problems.	Clear directions and an answer key. Small prep needed, or no teacher notes.	Vague directions, a partial or missing answer key, or a buyer-reported formatting or setup problem.	No answer key, confusing layout, or unclear how to use it.
04 Content Accuracy and Quality *Is it correct, and is it worth a student's time?*			
No errors found, no buyer reports of errors, and the answer key was visible or verified.	No errors found in what is visible, and no buyer reports of errors. The answer key was not visible.	A buyer reports specific errors, or a reviewer found an error or misleading item, or the formatting is sloppy.	Multiple confirmed errors, or misconceptions taught as fact.
05 Access and Differentiation *Does it work for the range of learners in a real classroom?*			
Built-in supports for multilingual learners and students with IEPs, plus an extension or tiered versions.	Some supports or some extension, but not both, or supports that are generic.	Formats only, such as print plus digital, with no tiers, scaffolds, or extensions.	One-size-fits-all, with dense text or other barriers.
06 Instructional Completeness *Is there a stated goal, enough practice, and a way to check understanding?*			
A stated goal, enough practice to build the skill, and a check for understanding such as an exit ticket, quiz, or scoring guide.	A goal and practice, but the check is thin or missing.	Practice only, with no goal and no check.	A single activity with no goal, progression, or check.

05 TWO GATES

A resource that scores 1 on Standards Alignment or on Content Accuracy, with High or Medium confidence, is capped at "Use with caution," no matter how high its total is. These are the two problems a buyer cannot easily fix. If a buyer reports specific answer key errors, the report flags it even when the gate does not apply.

06 WHAT ELSE EVERY REPORT INCLUDES

FIT CHECK	Who the resource is really for, by grade, purpose, and setting, with a warning if it does not match what the title suggests.
VERDICT	One plain sentence a teacher could say out loud.
BEST FOR AND NOT FOR	One line each.
CHECK BEFORE YOU BUY	The specific things the preview could not show, written as actions.
FLAGS	Any gate flags, listing mismatches, or unresolved buyer reports.
WHAT WAS SEEN	How much of the listing and preview the score is based on.

07 OUR EVIDENCE RULES

- Every score points to something specific: a page, a quoted line, a preview image, a review, or a Q&A post.
- Seller marketing language is a claim, not evidence.
- Buyer reviews and Q&A posts that report a specific problem count as evidence, with their dates. Reviews rated three stars or lower and Q&A problem reports are read first.
- Praise from high-star reviews is not used as evidence of quality.
- Nothing is invented. If the preview shows four pages, the score is based on four pages.
- A low score is never softened for the seller. The buyer is the client.

08 WHAT THIS RUBRIC CAN AND CANNOT DO

This rubric judges what is visible before purchase. It does not replace reviewing the full resource. A strong report means the resource looks good from the outside. A report full of Can't tell scores means the preview is too thin, and the Check before you buy list shows what to look for next.