

Creating Effective Quick Reference Cards for Behavioral Assessments

Purpose of This Guide

This guide provides practical instructions for developing *optional* Quick Reference Cards (QRCs) that observers can carry during training events, exercises, or evaluations when collecting Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS) data. These cards serve as cognitive support tools that help raters apply assessment tools consistently, accurately, and efficiently under time pressure. A template for the QRCs is provided at the end of this document. You will need to enter information specific to your event into the QRC template provided.

Why Quick Reference Cards Matter

QRCs reduce cognitive load, improve inter-rater reliability, prevent common data entry errors, increase observer confidence, and support standardized assessment across observers and events.

Core Components

1. ***(Entered by You) BARS Session Set Up:*** This information serves to align observers and remind them exactly who and what they are observing during the BARS collection. This information overlaps with the BARS Session Parameters that the observers enter into the BARS rubric during collection.
 - a. ***Session Name (may also be called Assessed Activity Name or Time Frame):***
Enter the name of the activity or time frame of the activity under observation. If the activity spans multiple days, and each day counts as an independent observation, “Day” followed by the incrementing day number.
Examples:
 - 1) MCCRE Day 1
 - 2) Offense
 - 3) Defense
 - 4) Range 400
 - b. ***Person(s) Rated (may also be called Unit of Observation):*** Identify the specific individual or group that is being observed (e.g., a platoon, the battalion staff, or a cell within the battalion, etc). Specify the unit identifier at the echelon of observation and any additional detail, if necessary
Examples:
 - 1) V12, 1st Plt, 3rd Squad
 - 2) Lima Co CDR

3) V21 Alpha Command staff

- c. *Rubric Name*: Including the name of the rubric here helps ensure the observers select the correct rubric when entering data into the BARS collection tool (e.g., MS Form, PowerApp, FAS Tablet).
2. ***(Leave as is in the Template) Tips for Rating BARS***: Equips raters with guidance on how to address special circumstances and ensure consistency across raters. The information is also included in the Facilitators Guide.
3. ***(Entered by You) BARS Rubric Item Table***: Servers to align observers and remind them what BARS items they need to focus on during the observation. Enter the individual BARS item names from the approved rubrics.

Building Your QRCs

1. Start with the approved rubric
2. Identify information to enter into the BARS Session Set Up and BARS Rubric Item Table sections
3. Draft the card using the template below (**red text in the template** indicates text that you should update for your specific event)
4. Ensure content listed your QRCs (e.g., rubric items) align with what exists in your BARS collection tool (e.g., MS Form, PowerApp, FAS Tablet)
7. Print, laminate and distribute prior to the event

BARS Session Set Up

IMPORTANT: Enter text exactly as written below.	
1. Session Name	PLANEX Day 1
	PLANEX Day 2
	Offensive Attack 1
	
3. Person(s) Rated	Alpha Cmd Cell. For example, " <i>Alpha Cmd S-4 Shop</i> ". Use just "Alpha Cmd" if observing full staff.
4. Rubric Name	Battalion Staff

Tips for Rating BARS

When making ratings...
Did they perform the behavior? <i>Rate them 1-5.</i>
Did they not have an opportunity to perform the behavior? <i>Do not rate them at all.</i>
Did they have an opportunity but failed to perform the behavior? <i>Rate them 0.</i>
Rubrics are tailored to each event. Most or all items should be rated.
If you observe performance at multiple levels, or between levels, use an average as your rating.
When Adding Comments...
DO NOT hit enter or create a new line.
DO NOT begin a comment with a mathematical operator (such as +, -, or =.)

*insert tables of the rubric you intend to use.

Rubric Name	
KPA 1	KPA 2
Behavior 1	Behavior 1
Behavior 2	Behavior 2
Behavior 3	Behavior 3

Rubric Name	
KPA 3	KPA 4
Behavior 1	Behavior 1
Behavior 2	Behavior 2
Behavior 3	Behavior 3