



Grades

Grades were originally developed to give teachers information about which students needed extra work with a particular concept. Somehow grades have evolved into reflecting somehow on who the student is. They are an artificial measure, yet they also are academic “currency.” Students can use grades to gain entry into college, earn scholarships, etc.

Assigning grades is not required by PA law.

Some diploma programs require grades, while others make it optional.

WHY GRADE?

Sometimes it helps getting into college to have a GPA. Other times it is helpful for financial aid.

HOW TO ASSIGN GRADES?

When students are following a curriculum that provides tests, count those test grades towards an average grade to report.

For English: I break the course into 4 sections, and grade each one, then come up with an average for an overall English grade:

- Grammar/language – B
- Composition (short papers and a long research paper) – B
- Literature – A (wow, 100 books, wow 10 literary classics!)
- Speech – A (wow gave 4 speeches throughout the year at co-op, church, scouts, Awana...)
- Overall A-

Grades for non-textbook subjects is as follows:

- The student does the bare minimum to get by with his assignments, or needs lots of prodding and reminding = C (average)
- The student puts some effort in and really tries, even if still struggling to grasp some part of the lesson = B (above average)
- The student goes for the gold, striving for excellence, going above and beyond the call of duty = A (excellent)

Honestly reflecting a student’s areas of struggles by giving a ‘B’ where due, actually adds credibility to a transcript. Instead of seeing straight ‘A’s as a biased mama giving her student bogus grades, colleges may see an occasional ‘B’ as adding weight to the ‘A’s, showing that they are truly ‘A’ quality.