

Time Saving Tips for Grading



Here are some tips that can help you save time. To utilize them, it helps to first take a look at two key assumptions.



Assumption 1: Grading and Feedback are not the same.

Feedback is an essential element for student learning. Ideally, it should come often and in a variety of forms. These can include, for example, portfolio assessment, going over the homework in class, student self-assessment using rubrics, and/or private conversations between the teacher and the student. **Grading is one type of feedback. It happens to be the least effective and the most time-consuming.** Grades are primarily for parents and colleges. Feedback is primarily for student learning. Let's not equate the two.

Assumption 2: Student's will get the grades they deserve regardless of the grading system used.

The students who deserve A's will get A's, those who deserve B's will get B's, those who deserve C's will get C's, whether we grade everything they do or just few things they do.

Example One:

Once upon a time there was a Social Studies teacher in Northern California who had a system that saved a tremendous amount of time. She did things by the book. Every night, students were required to answer numerous questions from the textbook. Every day in class, the teacher went over the questions. She did not, however, collect the homework each day (though she did stamp homework each day for being on time). Because students received feedback in class, they learned what they needed to learn. Students were required to hold on to their homework until the day of the unit test.

On that day, which came every third Friday, students brought in all their homework stapled together. The teacher wrote on the board, for example, "Please circle in red questions 4, 17C, and 25B" or "Please highlight the following two assignment titles..." The homework was circled or highlighted and collected, and then the test was passed out.

That weekend, the teacher graded the tests and the homework. She only graded three problems or two assignments out of all the student work completed over the three weeks. So, one weekend every three weeks, the teacher knew that she would be at home grading student work. **The rest of the time, she never took student work home.** Because she graded a representative random sample of their homework, the students received the grades that they deserved. And, because she went over the homework in class every day, the students received the feedback that they needed. And, the teacher had a life.

Example Two:

Give the students a "homework quiz." When class starts, students place their homework on their desk, along with a blank piece of paper. Then give them a short time, for example, to "Copy questions 2 and 9 from your homework onto the paper." They get some credit for putting the proper heading on the paper (because they are present at the start of class), some credit for having the questions correct, some credit for showing their work, and some credit for having the correct answers. If you go over the homework in class after collecting the quiz (feedback), you only have to grade two of the homework questions. In truth, you could actually grade only one of them, and over the course of the school year, the students would still get the grades that they deserved.



If parents express concern that you are not grading everything their children are producing, you can respond by showing how you review everything in class. You can also share a metaphor: "The Olympic judge isn't there every time the gymnast practices."

Example Three:

Students can grade each others' work. One way to help ensure that they don't cheat- have them cover their answers with yellow highlighter before swapping papers.