

# Timesaving Tips for Grading: Daily Work

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Grading classwork and homework can be so frustratingly time consuming that many teachers just give up on it. But without any grading, or sense or accountability, students perceive the work to be unimportant and start producing lower quality work. Here are three ways you can save time when grading both classwork and homework, and two assumptions that make these three strategies defensible to skeptics.

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## 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 will get the grades they deserve.** No matter how we grade, or how often we grade, 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, and so on.

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## Three Solutions

**Notebook Evaluation:** Assign homework or class work. Put a stamp on it if it is completed on time. Review the work, but have the students keep their papers in their notebooks, rather than turn them in. Continue with this method until the unit test. On that day, have students bring in all their homework and classwork, stapled together, for a "notebook evaluation." Then write on the board, for example, "Please highlight the

following three assignment titles..." The students highlight the indicated assignments, turn in their stapled packets, and take the unit test.

To grade their work, simply count up the assignments with a stamp on them. Each stamp = 5 points. Completed assignments with no stamp (i.e. late work) get 3 points. Incomplete or missing assignments get 0 points. Then read and grade for quality two of the three highlighted assignments, giving each one a quality grade out of 50. In this way, student work is reviewed and students get the credit they deserve, but the teacher only has to collect, deeply read, and grade for quality two assignments per student per unit. Keep in mind, this is only for simple daily classwork and homework assignments. Other assignments, such as multi-day projects and such, will be graded separately.

**Homework Quiz:** 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, some credit for writing the correct questions on to the paper, 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."

**Peer Grading:** Have students swap homework or completed classwork papers, then review the answers and have them grade each others papers. One way you can help ensure that they don't cheat is to have them cover their answers with yellow highlighter before swapping papers.