

# Grading Policy:

## West 19-20



## Mindsets and Policies

**The Purpose of Grading at YES Prep:** Above all else, a student's grade is an important reflection of his or her ability to demonstrate achievement on course content.

We prioritize data-driven instruction as a key driver in preparing students for college. As a campus, we use **Standards Based Grading** (SBG) practices to ensure that students' grades accurately reflect their level of mastery. As a result, the grade book is an ongoing, accurate representation of a student's current achievement in the course, and it serves to facilitate dialogue and connection between teachers, students, and their families. This allows for all stake-holders to be informed in a timely manner of students' progress in mastering rigorous academic content. It also gives teachers and instructional leaders the targeted information they need to implement effective interventions and enrichment opportunities. SBG is a comprehensive approach to grading, and as such, teachers engage in ongoing professional development in order to ensure they are skillful practitioners.

### A. Gradebook Set Up

#### 1. Achievement-Based Grades vs. Effort-Based Grades

Because at YES Prep West we prioritize data driven instruction, West is a standards based grading campus. As such, at least 90% of a student's grade will be a reflection of achievement. Teachers may include an effort-based category that weighs no more than 10% of the student's over-all grade.

#### Per the YES Prep Expectations for Academic Reporting:

Examples of achievement-based grades	Examples of effort-based grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Common Assessments</li><li>• Objective/Standards-Based tests and quizzes</li><li>• Writing assignments with a rubric that is objective/standards-Based</li><li>• Projects/presentations/labs/performance tasks with a rubric that is objective/standards-based</li><li>• Aligned formative assessments</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participation grades</li><li>• Homework</li><li>• Classwork</li><li>• Anything graded for completion</li><li>• Credit/points for effort/completion on quizzes, tests, projects, presentations, labs, etc.</li><li>• Group work where students are working collectively on an end product</li></ul>

#### 2. Minimum Number of Grades

In alignment with the YES Prep Expectations for Academic Reporting – by the end of each six-week grading cycle, every teacher should have at least 8 achievement-based grades recorded in the gradebook. By the end of the first three weeks of a grading cycle, every teacher should have at least 3 achievement-based grades recorded in the gradebook. The grades entered should be an accurate representation of the student's achievements in the during the grading cycle.

It is highly recommended that teachers meet the following minimum requirements for achievement-based grades entered in the grade book by week of the grading cycle:

- Week 1: 1+ achievement-based grades
- Week 2: 2+ achievement-based grades
- Week 3: 3+ achievement-based grades

- Week 4: 4+ achievement-based grades
- Week 5: 6+ achievement-based grades
- Week 6: 8+ achievement-based grades

### 3. Categories:

For achievement-based grades the categories will be standards (topics or big ideas). These standards may remain consistent throughout the year or may change depending on the unit of instruction. In most cases, there will be no fewer than two and no more than six achievement-based grading categories or standards per unit of instruction.

A note about Unit Exams: Unit Exams will be broken down by standard. In most cases, students will earn two or more grades for each unit exam because these assessments test multiple standards or topics. (While we do scan our unit assessment Scantrons into Aware in order to provide the system with student achievement data, we cannot use the holistic grade provided by Aware for our grade books.)

Rationale: The holistic score does not tell us how the student performed on each standard, thus preventing us from using our gradebook as a tracker (a key tenet of Standards Based Grading). Neither does the holistic score give us the information we need to "FA" and use our unit exam as the reassessment opportunity.

**Same-titled courses must have a grading setup (categories, weights, assignments, etc.) that is the consistent across all sections and among all teachers.**

### 4. Weighting in ESP TAC

To ensure that effort based grades are weighted at 10% or less of a students' grade, we will weigh standards differently in ESP this year. The sum of all standards (categories) weight must be 100. The sum of all effort-based standards (categories) may be 10 or less. In determining the weight of one achievement-based standard in relation to the others, teachers should consider the importance of the standard in the current unit and its importance as a prerequisite for future student learning. See example below:

Standard (Category in ESP)	Type of Grade	Weight
Models of the Atom	Achievement	30
Subatomic Particles	Achievement	30
Atoms vs. Molecules	Achievement	20
Scientific Vocabulary	Achievement	10
Homework	Effort	5
Class Notes	Effort	5

## B. Entering Grades in the Gradebook

### 1. Range of Acceptable Grades

All assignments in the gradebook must have one of the following:

- a numerical value - West grades on a 5.0-10.0 scale. Teachers engage in professional development sessions in order to learn how to grade on this scale.
- EX** (excused) – The student will not be required to make up the assignment because he or she has shown mastery of the objective elsewhere. (This also applies to a supplemental retake opportunity that a student did NOT take advantage of or was ineligible for.)
- FA** (formative assessment) – The student demonstrated mastery of this objective on a later assessment, so this earlier and lower score is replaced with the code "FA," allowing the later score to stand.
- M** (missing) – The student has not turned in the assignment within 3 business days. ESP auto-calculates "M" to equal 5.0.

- e) be left blank – The student has not yet completed/turned in the assignment. (Blank will be replaced with an 'M' after 3 business days.)

## 2. Late and Missing Assignments

### Late Quizzes and Tests

Students have two business days after returning to campus from an absence to make up a missed quiz or test for full credit. (In the case of an extended absence, teachers and admin will determine any make-up opportunity and timeline on a case-by-case basis.) Teacher will work with the student to determine a plan for when they will complete the missed assessment. If the student does not follow through with the plan the below late work caps apply.

### Late Projects and Essays

If a student is present on campus on the day a project or essay is due and does not turn it in when the assignment is collected, then students grade on the assignment will be capped based on when it is turned in.

#### Late Work Caps

- a. 1 business day late = 8.0 cap
- b. 2 business days late = 7.0 cap
- c. 3 business days late = 6.0 cap
- d. 4+ business days late = 'missing'

In the case that a student is absent on the day a project or essay is due, the student must turn in the project or essay immediately upon returning to class. If the student does not turn in the assignment on the first day, then the below caps kick in. (In the case of an extended absence, teachers and admin will determine any make-up opportunity and timeline on a case-by-case basis.)

### Missing Assignment Policy

When an assignment is four business days late, a teacher will enter M in the grade book. ESP auto-calculates M to equal 5.0 (the lowest grade the YES Prep grading policy allows). This code signifies that the work is missing. Such a distinction from simply entering 5.0 comes in handy when communicating with concerned stakeholders exactly what the situation is.

**Parental contact is required when work is missing so that parents have an opportunity to follow up with their children before time runs out.** When a student misses a deadline or scheduled make-up opportunity, the teacher may call or send home a note requiring the student to return with a parent signature. If the teacher uses notes home, the teacher will keep a dated log of notes sent home and require the student to sign the log before giving him/her the note. That way, if the student does not return with the signature, the teacher has a record that he or she sent the note home.

## C. Communication and Failing Grades

### 1. Communicating with Families

At West, we prioritize communicating with students' families regularly, and both teachers and administrators will communicate with parents and guardians concerning their child's progress.

Teachers are expected to show documentation of parental contact for students failing their course. This is especially important if a student's progress report indicates that he or she is passing and then afterward his or her grade dips to failing, the teacher must communicate this to the parent or guardian and document this communication. This can be done using be done conveniently using systems such as:

- requiring a student to take home a letter to his or her guardian and have the student sign a sheet to indicate he or she received the letter and will bring it home
- grade-level teams choosing to use time on Wednesday afternoons to contact parents, keeping a log of those calls

## 2. Failing Grades

On six-week and semester verification sheets, teachers will scan their students' final averages and identify anyone with a 69%. For those students, teachers will consider the individual situation to determine whether a failing grade is appropriate. For instance, a teacher might ask herself or himself:

- Did I provide and document opportunities for remediation and reassessment?
- Did I personally contact parents and keep them in the loop on their child's progress? (Progress reports and report cards are not sufficient notification for parents of failing students.)
- If needed, did I enroll the GLC, Dean of Students, Dean of Instruction, Literacy Specialist or SpEd Teacher in supporting me to meet the student's needs?
- Where applicable, did I provide all the accommodations or modifications to which a special -populations student is legally entitled?
- Am I confident that the student could be successful in the next unit or course if he or she has a passing grade?

If, after using his or her professional discretion, the teacher determines that the student should pass, he or she may change the grade to a 70%.

For averages of 69% and below, teachers must be able to provide documentation justifying that student's failure should a parent or guardian request it. This documentation must show that a student has been provided opportunities to retake eligible assessments. As with parental communication regarding grades, such documentation need not be burdensome on the teacher. For instance, a teacher might choose to a) have a student sign a document saying he or she was given the opportunity to retake assessments or b) have students sign a document before retakes to keep track of students who do take advantage of such opportunities.

## C. Reassessment Expectations

As a Standards Based Grading campus, reassessments (or *retakes*) and "FA-ing" is used to honor the learning of students who require more time in order to show mastery. System Common Assessments, unit exams and major essays/projects (in other words, summative assessments) are exempt from the re-assessment policy.

- **Unit exams** provide a universal reassessment opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery and "FA" prior grades. The unit exam or equivalent unit summative assessment will suffice as the reassessment opportunity for many unit topics. In situations where the unit exam is the ONLY reassessment opportunity and the unit exam score is higher for the topic being reassessed: Enter "FA" (formative assessment) to replace the prior assessment grade. Even a prior grade of 8.0 or above may be "FA-ed" by a higher unit assessment or supplemental retake grade.
- **Supplemental reassessments (also known as "retakes")** can also be used to provide reassessment opportunities. Supplemental reassessments must take place before the unit exam/summative project. These can be given to the entire class or given only to students in need of a reassessment. Possible times for scheduling supplemental reassessments include but are not limited to: attaching a re-take for a previous topic to the end of a later quiz/assessment on a new topic, after-school tutorials, designated flexible times during the school day (for instance, during lunch), depending on grade-level schedules and policies, or building flex or buffer days into unit plans that allow students to complete re-takes.

Teachers are encouraged to require prerequisites for supplemental reassessment opportunities. Prerequisite options include but are not limited to:

- parent/guardian signature on assignment with low score
- assessment corrections
- study session/tutorials
- extra practice
- homework completion in a tutorial setting