

In an attempt to make grades truly reflect the math progress of a student, I am tweaking the grading policy I began part way through last year. My goal is to apply grades only after students have had sufficient practice and feedback for improvement. Studies have shown that students given feedback on how to improve for a test, rather than just a letter grade, are more motivated to succeed. Homework and quizzes are just practices (not graded) for the big test (graded). This means fewer, but more important grades in the grade book. It also means I need a way to inform both students and parents of progress on a weekly basis. I am working with the grade book for a space to include effort comments. Please see my explanations below for more information.

Concept Check – 40% of the Math Grade (Does your student know the basic concept?)

One of the biggest struggles in math is retention of material. Once a concept is taught and tested, it MUST be retained throughout the year and across the grade levels. It shows mastery, and this is truly where we struggle! Students will be held accountable for the concepts they have learned. This is also where students have the most control of their grade. I will give Concept Checks to assess these important skills. Students may earn up to a 10 (100%). If a student receives a lower score, he/she may come in during lunch, after school, or before school to retake the check for a better grade – up to 3 times maximum. These checks will be given randomly once a week and will reflect lessons we have already covered.

Tests – 50% of the Math Grade (Can your student apply the concept to real world problems?)

Tests will be given more frequently. There will be a mid-unit test and an end of unit test. Students will not be able to retake tests. They need to study and keep up with homework and quizzes. Tests will look very similar to the homework and quizzes. When a test is coming, I will give students a heads-up as to which lessons will be covered, a study guide, and plenty of examples for the types of problems on the test.

Effort and Projects – 10% of the Math Grade (Is your student trying to figure out math?)

Throughout the trimester, we will have projects and notebook checks. Those grades will be entered here. I will also give effort grades on classwork and participation. In this area, I will also be able to communicate with you about the progress of your student. Low grades in this area will mean they are not working to their fullest potential.

Homework and Daily Quizzes (Solely for practice and assessing preparedness for the big tests!)

I will continue to give nightly homework and daily quizzes on the concepts from the previous day. Students have access to the homework solutions online. They are expected to review their answers and fix mistakes. Quizzes will be reviewed by me, feedback will be given as needed, and students will have access to correct solutions in class. To help you monitor student work completion, students will tape their quizzes (with corrections) in their notebooks. I will also stamp/star their quiz if the homework was completed for that day. You should be able to check their notebooks on a daily/weekly basis, if necessary, to monitor their progress.

As I continue to make this transition, there are bound to be glitches and changes. Please be patient with me as I move into a direction that holds students accountable, but also gives them more control over their grades. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support!

Lana Russo