



## Teacher Tutorial #16

from Marcia:

# How to Keep and Calculate Grades in Science Classes



## How to Keep and Calculate Grades in Science Classes

### QUESTION FROM A TEACHER:

If you have any ideas for keeping grades (i.e. bonus points, extra credit, etc.) and should a teacher grade everything that she gives the students, and how often should notebooks be collected and graded.

Any information would be greatly appreciated.

--Thanks from Denise

### MARCIA'S ANSWER:

**Hello, Denise!**  
**I have strong opinions about grades and notebooks. You may not agree with all I say, but this worked for me for over 30 years of teaching!**

I did **NOT** believe in collecting much homework **AT ALL**. I collected lab write-ups and other big things. Not much else. I think students should be responsible for their own

education. I assigned lots of homework. But I only gave **EFFORT POINTS**. I had a clipboard with class lists in a grid. Students lined up for 10 points per page (usually).

**(Request Teacher Tutorial #13 for details on How to Use the Line up for Points Procedure.)**

I looked at each paper **VERY** briefly just to be sure they were on the right track. I may have paused to make a comment. I **ALWAYS** said their name!



**Marcia's Science Teaching Ideas** was founded by Marcia Krech, a retired Earth Science Teacher from Missouri, who believes passionately in passing on what she knows about good science teaching. I encourage teachers to use the active learning model including team games and foldables which puts the student to work and assigns the teacher the role of facilitator.

**Email me with questions!**

## How to Keep and Calculate Grades in Science Classes

After I'd seen all who had the paper, I would immediately put up a transparency with the correct answers. (Nowadays you might project onto your SmartBoard!) I didn't care if someone copied the entire page at this point. They only got one late coupon per semester so couldn't turn it in late with a trumped-up excuse. I wanted them to have the paper with the correct answers, at the very least!

We would chat about the paper a bit, but I didn't talk laboriously through every answer. **Boring! You can play a Team Game to reinforce the concepts!**

I would tell students it's up to them to get the right answers down and to ask me questions. I constantly reminded them they would see something similar on the Friday Quiz so they better know it.

I did closed-notebook tests and quizzes but **open notebook exams**. They knew this so tried hard to have good notebooks for the end of the term exam! And studied for the quizzes, too!

I would add up the effort points once a week and enter in my grade book and on the computer grading system as "Homework for Week 3," for example. I gave individual grades for big things: special projects or lab write-ups. I tried to collect one or two things each week. Lots of that would use rubrics which are quick and easy to grade.

**I gave out tons of bonus pages.** Kids could do all of it if they

want. My Bonus Pages promoted more comprehension and resulted in better test grades because it reviewed the material and the vocab and good critical thinking. We had a department policy that students could only raise their grade by 3% using bonus points. I had a new bonus page or two on the pick-up table by the door daily. (Students picked up their papers as they enter. I didn't hand them out during the hour. Great system, BTW!!)

### **I NEVER collected notebooks!**

I did two different types of notebook checks, at least once per unit, usually on test day. (**Request my Podcast on Notebooks.**) One type of Notebook Check had the students answering quite precise questions about what was in their OWN notebook. They were allowed to fix this to a 100% later if they want. The other type was a trade-and-grade (done the day before a big test) where I read out the questions. "Find WS#23. What is their answer for #4?" They could fix this, also. They were always worth 50 points. Tests were 100 points. Quizzes, 10 to 25 points. Again, the main philosophy was they were responsible for their own education. Most kids did most of the work and had decent notebooks. I often helped a kid try to learn to be organized.

**The point is for them to learn the material.** That can be done in lots of exciting, active ways, without having to grade every paper they ever touch!

**Note: The percentage of Tests to Daily Work depends on your school district. Ours was 50-50.**

## Goodies for the Teacher:



### A Basic Class List

Use to keep track of weekly homework.

Class List for: _____
Student Names

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**Request Marcia's Audio Podcast on Science Notebooks!**

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**Request Marcia's Audio Podcast on Science Team Games!**

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