

# ALTERNATIVE GRADING SCHEMES

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## Why do it?

Because there are problems with points and averaging... That you already know about!

## Problems with Points

### "How did Johnny end up with an A???"

There will always be kids who accumulate enough points for a grade you don't think they deserve.

### "How did Mary end up with a B???"

There will always be kids who don't accumulate enough points for the grade you think they deserve.

### Is it possible to design a system of points that won't have unintended consequences??

And in any case the conversation always revolves around points, instead of learning.

## Problems with Averaging

Averaging is one of the few statistical measures that is sensitive to EVERY DATA POINT.

### A Tale of Two B's

grade 1	grade 2	grade 3	grade 4	grade 5	grade 6	AVG
90%	91%	92%	90%	93%	80%	89.33%

*outliers!*

grade 1	grade 2	grade 3	grade 4	grade 5	grade 6	AVG
75%	78%	79%	76%	74%	95%	79.50%

Often, the student who most needs to do this calculation is least able to do it. Can you?

*Need to pass!*

grade 1	grade 2	grade 3	grade 4	grade 5	grade 6	AVG
44%	72%	79%	50%	42%	???	64.50%

### And then there's the NUCLEAR OPTION!

*mushroom cloud!*

grade 1	grade 2	grade 3	grade 4	grade 5	grade 6	AVG
92%	93%	91%	90%	94%	0%	76.67%

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*Not a panacea, but when used properly, can alleviate some of these symptoms.*

## Suggestions:

- Points are the middle man; cut out the middle man.
- Call a spade a spade (descriptive grades).
- Set benchmarks for each letter grade A, B, C, D.
- Use a spreadsheet or use a hack for your grading program (ask me for details)

*Used by me on AP assessments*

[All Correct]  
[Physics Errors]  
[Math Errors]

*Used by me for College Prep weekly grades*

[Wow]  
[Good]  
[Ok]  
[Nope]

[Outstanding]  
[Exceeds Expectations]  
[Meets Expectations]  
[Acceptable]  
[Poor]  
[Dreadful]  
[Troll]

*Stolen from Harry Potter*

## Sample 1

*Used by me for College Prep classes for the last 10 yrs.*

- Assign a grade based on all work for a given topic or skill (weekly).
- Allow (limited) reworking of assignments and/or assessments.
- Give feedback on what needs to be fixed or re-taken.
- Focus on learning, not volume of work. (Quality vs quantity.)
- Marking period grade is based on the MINIMUM GRADE. (Any Nopes=D, Any Oks = C, All Goods = B)
- A = all Goods with specified # of Wows (extra going-beyond assignments.)

[Wow]  
[Good]  
[Ok]  
[Nope]

## Sample 2

*Used by me for AP Physics C classes for the last 6 yrs.*

- Assign a base grade for completion of non-assessments (labs, homework, etc).
- Grade assessments according to type of error.
- Only math errors? Corrections required.
- Physics errors can only be fixed by a retake after conference/tutoring (limited tries).
- Base grade is shifted a letter grade up or down by assessment grades, or left where it is.

<p>[All Correct] [Physics Errors] [Math Errors]</p>
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## Scheme for Making Retakes Do-able

- Normal Assessment: Take a selection of homework problems and change the numbers and/or situations.
- Give each student a randomly selected one or two (or however many you like).
- BONUS! Each student will have different questions than their neighbors.
- Retakes consist of ANOTHER random sample of these problems. Same ones? Different ones? Who knows??

**"But the College Board uses points."**

*Yes, but they do not use the 10-point  
90% - 100% = "A" scale.*

*And they do not average scores.*

*And in any case, PREPARING someone for something does not always  
mean SIMULATING it exactly.*

*Otherwise swimmers would never lift weights.*