**HOW TO GET A TEACHER TO RAISE YOUR GRADE**

**THEME:** Academics

**TITLE:** How to get a teacher to raise your grade

**OBJECTIVES:**

This activity guides students through the process of addressing and negotiating grades with their teachers. Students will learn how to constructively communicate with their teachers about grades, and develop helpful strategies for increasing grades both short-term and in general.

**TIPS:**

* Students role-play in pairs during this activity, so special attention may be required when selecting pairs
* Students may wish to perform their skits in front of the whole group
* You may offer to go with your students to talk with their teachers about grades in the future

**MATERIALS:**

* Printed copies of the 9-step chart (see below)
* Printed and cut copies of different written scenarios (see below)

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. As a group, ask students to identify a time when they felt like they received an unfair grade, and ask them to share what they did about it. (5 mins)
2. Next, have students brainstorm ideas for getting a teacher to increase a grade. You may wish to have one student write down ideas on a board. (10 mins)
3. Review the 9-step chart below with students and discuss which steps might be applicable to the situations they previously described. (10 mins)
4. Ask students to find a partner (or assign partners), and give each pair one of the scenarios below. Explain that one student should play the “student” and the other should play the “teacher.” Using the steps and ideas presented thus far, the “students” must convince the “teachers” to raise their grades. “Teachers” should be mindful of the “students’” arguments and be prepared to discuss why their “students” were (or were not) convincing. (10 mins)
5. (Optional: have one or two student pairs role-play in front of the class). Discuss the experience of talking to teachers about grades. What was difficult for the “students?” The “teachers?” For the pairs in which the student was successful, what made the “teacher” agree to increase the grade? How do students think this activity might help them talk to their teachers in real life? What are some things that the students could have done to avoid getting into these situations in the first place? (15 mins)

Developed by: Katie Hale, Georgia State University, 2015. Adapted from wikihow.com, “How to get a teacher to raise your grade.”

**Scenario 1:**

You had to stay up late the night before a test running errands with your mom for your sick grandmother. During the test the next day, you can barely keep your eyes open and can’t remember any answers. You know that you are going to get a really bad grade. You have a C in the class now, but a bad grade on the test will bring your grade down to an F, and there are only three assignments left in the semester. You’re really frustrated and tired.

**Scenario 2:**

You have always been bad at math and struggle to understand a lot of math terms and concepts. You’re a couple months in to your Algebra class, and already have a failing grade. You haven’t told the teacher how hard math is for you, so she just assumes that you are lazy and aren’t doing your work, but you really are trying your best. The class is just hard. You have a test coming up next week, and you think you’re going to fail it because you’ve failed all the other tests so far.

**Scenario 3:**

The transition from middle school to high school has been pretty hard for you. There is a lot more going on with classes, sports, and friends than you’re used to, and you’ve fallen behind in a few of your classes. Now, it’s the end of the semester and you realize that your grades are pretty bad. You know grades in high school are important for graduation, college, and getting a job, but you feel like it’s already too late to do anything about it. Your teachers don’t take you seriously, and you feel like you’ve run out of options.

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| **Step 1** | **Work harder in class so you don't end up in this position.**  While you’re at it, stay on your best behavior for a while: participate in discussions, don’t interrupt anyone, and don’t text or chitchat with your friends. If doing these things brings your grade up naturally, you can disregard the rest of the steps; if not, they’ll just make the teacher more likely to side with you and want to help you. |
| **Step 2** | **Don't wait until the last minute.**  Waiting until after your grade comes out shows a lack of initiative. If you know you’ve done poorly - especially if there’s a good reason for it - you should do whatever you can bring it up right away. With enough time, you can also ask for extra-credit work to increase your point average before final grades are due. If a big test is coming up, you can also ask for extra study material to get yourself better prepared. |
| **Step 3** | **Identify the reasons that you may deserve a better grade.**  Whether it’s because you are making a good effort in class or you had a stumble along the road, you need a truthful and solid reason in order for this to work. Present these reasons to your teacher at the beginning of the conversation to improve the validity of your argument. |
| **Step 4** | **Go beyond the call of duty.**  Instead of just doing your homework, highlight important parts and write neatly. Make sure that everything is legible and it doesn't look like a prizefighter mangled it. This may add a few extra points since many teachers count neatness as part of your homework grade. If you are turning in a report, try purchasing a report cover to make it look professional. |
| **Step 5** | **Find good assignments to use as examples or backup.**  If you can demonstrate that your low score was a fluke and shouldn’t drag down your entire grade, you stand a much better chance of getting it changed. |
| **Step 6** | **Think of a solution that seems reasonable.**  This will depend on your situation. For example, if you did poorly on an assignment, ask to redo it for partial or averaged credit. If you need a lot of extra points, come up with a list of extra credit assignments that you will complete by a certain date to show your motivation. |
| **Step 7** | **Schedule a meeting with your teacher.**  Sometimes it’s easier to talk one-to-one before or after school, so arrange a meeting with your teacher and let him or her know that you would like to talk about your grade. Be sure to be kind, appreciative and polite to the teacher so he or she will take you seriously. Do not blame the teacher or other classmates for your bad grade; take responsibility. If you are intimated, ask a parent or mentor to go with you. |
| **Step 8** | **Make your case.**  Say what you believe is wrong with your grade, present other assignments that might demonstrate what you’re capable of, and suggest the solution you think is reasonable. |
| **Step 9** | **If any of these seem unlikely to work, don’t try them.**  Only follow steps that apply to your specific situation and that you feel comfortable doing. You know your teacher best, so use good judgment. |