

ASSIGNMENTS

STANDARDS

- Standard 1: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the lifespan.
- Standard 2: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide variety of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

MATERIALS

- ♦ Handout A-01: Better Assignments
- ♦ Chalkboard

ACTIVITY

Students will improve their performance if their assignments are organized and complete. Ask your students to make a list of ways that they can improve their grades on the assignments that they turn in. After several minutes, compile a list of their ideas on the board. Be sure to get a representative sample from the group.

Distribute a copy of Handout A-01 to each of the students and discuss each item with your class. Be sure to emphasize that improving the quality of their assignments will likely translate into earning better grades.

Ask your students to add any of the ideas from the board to the handout that they think will improve their assignment grades. Be sure to check with their teachers to see if they have any ideas that will improve their students' grades on assignments.

SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

Ask the students to design slogans and one-line statements that will encourage students to improve the quality of their assignments and improve their grades. They could pretend to be advertisers (like those who make television, radio, and magazine ads) who are given an assignment to develop motivating slogans that students will remember when working on their assignments. Once completed, you could encourage the teacher to post them as a reminder to the students and to refer to when giving an assignment.

ESTIMATED TIME

1 class period

BETTER ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Keep an assignment sheet.** If you forget to do the assignment or to study for an upcoming test, you will not earn the grades that you are capable of earning. Get in the habit of making a “To Do” list of assignments. Even adults keep day planners or other sorts of scheduling books to keep them on track. Keeping an assignment sheet will help you stay on track and not miss anything.
2. **Follow directions closely.** Many students earn low grades because they don’t follow the directions. If you don’t do the assignment as it was assigned, then you know it is not possible to earn a good grade.
3. **Do your work neatly.** Be organized and accurate in your work. Sloppy, inaccurate, or disorganized assignments will almost always earn lower grades. Here is an old but useful saying, “Anything worth doing is worth doing well.” If you are going to turn in any assignment at all, turn in a well prepared one. You might as well earn the best grade you can if you are going to earn any grade at all.
4. **Check your work.** Always spend a few minutes checking and proofreading your assignments. Simple mistakes are easy to catch. Use a dictionary. If you use a computer, then have the software check your spelling.
5. **Manage your time.** This is a hard one. There are many things to do when you are a student and sometimes assignments and homework come last or don’t get done at all because you have chosen to do other things first. Designate a study or homework time and stick to it. It is often helpful to do your homework right after school. Other things may happen later.
6. **Take responsibility for your work.** Do you ever blame your teachers for low grades? Grades are NOT given, they are earned. You earn them. If you earn low grades, then accept it and improve the quality of your work. Don’t settle for less than you are capable of doing. Earn the grades you deserve and don’t blame somebody else. Blaming is a child’s game, not a student’s game. Do what students do—do good work.
7. **Success is the goal.** When you believe you are successful and you use successful skills, you will be a successful student who earns good grades. Aim for success and then go for it. If you are playing a game, you don’t usually try to lose, right? So when it comes to school, aim to win. Aim for the best grades you can earn. Being successful always feels better than not being successful. Set your sights high, and then do it.