

Grading and the Gradebook

Amplify ELA does not have just one approach to grading to suggest to teachers because every district and school has its own requirements and expectations around grading. In consultation with his or her supervisors, each teacher will determine how to weigh the different elements of work in the Amplify program that will make up a student's grade. Every activity submitted can be graded—and teachers can export these grades to a school-wide or district-wide grading software program to calculate end-of-term grades.

Amplify recommends that teachers approach grading differently from how they approach scoring:

- Teachers should score in order to get the most accurate determination of a student's performance against a standard. The score can be used for all sorts of purposes, often more to guide the teacher's instruction than to provide feedback to the student; there are so many more nuanced ways of providing feedback. The Amplify digital Gradebook separates the score from the grade and does not automatically release the rubric scores to students so that teachers can focus on scoring with accuracy.
- The grade, on the other hand, is a necessary communication between teacher and student about how he or she is meeting or not meeting expectations. We encourage teachers to include in the consideration of grades, some element of the students' productivity along with their performance. A teacher will see that an increase in production will ultimately lead to an increase in performance.

In the chart that follows, Amplify points out how to derive students' grades from the various scores found in the formative and summative assessments, so that grades emerge from the work teachers do to inform their instruction and do not add an additional layer of labor on top of it.

| Skill | Scored Items | Communicates a Student's Production or Performance |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Writing and Reading Routines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Revising • Sharing and responding • Rereading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words produced in response to daily writing prompt • Revision Assignment completion • Sharing/responding • Solo completion | Production |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus • Use of evidence conventions | Growth in scores in responses to daily writing prompts | Production |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus • Use of evidence conventions | Essays | Performance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus • Use of evidence: describing • Use of evidence: explaining • Logical structure: paragraphs • Logical structure: introduction • Logical structure: conclusion • Conventions: sentence completion and punctuation • Conventions: punctuation and citation of direct quotes | | Performance |
| Reading comprehension | Reading comprehension checks | Performance |

The Gradebook

When a student submits work to a teacher using the Amplify ELA program, whether it is a filled in a data table with evidence and interpretations, an answer to a short answer question, an essay, or even simply the students' choice of highlighted text, the teacher can score it (based on a rubric), grade it, and provide written feedback. Auto-scored elements like multiple choice questions accumulate scores in the Gradebook. The teacher can also choose which of these elements, the grade, the score, and the written feedback to send to the student. The student's work shows up for the teacher with all the parts of the lesson around it, so that teachers can easily remember the context for the assigned task. Happily, by just looking at the digital Gradebook, the teacher can see who has completed his or her work—so, the teacher never has to sit with a stack of papers, just checking off for completion.

The Gradebook collects the scores on the student work that is automatically scored as well as the scores entered by the teacher. Gradebook gives teachers a view of student achievement at the lesson level and also shows student work and achievement over time.

| Gradebook | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------|------------|-------------|-------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| LESSON 7 The Election of the Red Successors | | | | | | | | |
| Writing | Grade | Comment | Word Count | Conventions | Focus | Use Of Evidence | Last Submitted | Print or Send |
| S1. demostudent1 | A | | 138 | 4 | 3 | 2 | SEP 2 12: 19 pm | |
| S10. demostudent10 | HANDED IN | 1 | 92 | 3 | 2 | 2 | | |
| S11. demostudent11 | C+ | 1 | 87 | 2 | 1 | 2 | SEP 2 1: 03 pm | |
| S12. demostudent12 | B- | | 122 | 3 | 2 | 2 | SEP 4 11: 52 am | |
| S13. demostudent13 | B | | 116 | 3 | 2 | 3 | SEP 3 3: 34 pm | |
| S14. demostudent14 | IN PROGRESS | | | | | | | |
| S15. demostudent15 | A | | 127 | 3 | 3 | 3 | SEP 4 8: 44 pm | |
| S16. demostudent16 | A- | 1 | 119 | 3 | 3 | 2 | SEP 2 12: 21 pm | |
| S17. demostudent17 | | | | | | | | |

Looking at Student Work Protocol

In addition to utilizing the many opportunities that assessment provides to communicate with students and parents, and to adjust instruction in response to data, Amplify recognizes that assessment of student work also presents opportunities for educators to work together to learn about students' progress, to improve instructional practice, and to improve the efficacy of their instructional practices.

The following Looking at Student Work (LASW) Protocol is designed to help teachers discuss student work in a collegial and effective way and, in particular, to focus on the accuracy of scoring and the quality of the feedback that students are receiving.

Scoring

1. Distribute the piece so that everyone has a copy, digital or paper, and read it aloud.
2. Distribute rubrics for writing skills.
3. Choose a writing skill and define it.
4. Direct each participant individually to look for evidence of where the student exhibits the skill, and to privately write down a score on a note card.
5. Pass around the notecards so that participants can see the range of scores and then ask participants to state and explain their scores. Try to come to a consensus.
6. Choose to score this piece either on another skill, or choose another piece from this same student to look for progress (or lack thereof) and repeat this process.

Feedback (helpful to do with printed-out pieces)

- 1. Discuss the strengths in this piece of writing:** Each participant should comment on specific characteristics of the language that had an impact on him or her as a reader or that contributed to clarity or power in the piece.
- 2. Individually, target and reinforce the student's use of a skill:** Each participant should write a comment in the margin of the piece that targets a place where the student used the targeted skill effectively. The comment should be written as if a student will be reading it, in order to help the student understand how using the skill conveyed something meaningful to the reader.
- 3. Pass around the student work and notice each other's comments:** As they read each other's comments, participants should imagine that they are the student receiving the feedback and try to imagine what he or she might make of it. Would the student have a good model of the use of this skill and why the skill matters? Would the student feel a connection to a real reader? Which comments are longer, shorter? More formal, informal? What is the effect on you as the imaginary student?
- 4. Discuss which Revision Assignment is appropriate:** Turn to the Flex Day Lesson Brief materials and choose from the possible skills. Which part of the writing might the teacher highlight as a starting point for the revision?
- 5.** If time allows, look at another piece from this same student, even if there is not enough time to go through the entire protocol. Teachers often start to feel that they really know a student's writing from this close analysis of one piece and are surprised to discover other aspects of the student's writing from looking at just one more. By opening this door, teachers start to talk about the importance of looking at a student's work over time in order to understand how to best guide his or her learning.