

What is Standards Based Grading?

Standards Based Grading (or SBG) is a method of assessment and grading that gives students feedback about their performance against clear academic, social, or organizational standards. You might also hear it referred to as standards-based feedback (SBF) or standards based assessment and reporting (SBAR).

What is the purpose of grading?

The primary purpose of grading is to inform students and parents of progress in the classroom. Grades should reflect classroom achievement on standards. Many leading educators believe that grades should not be heavily influenced by factors such as behavior, effort, attendance, or extra credit.

What are some of the benefits of SBG?

Students and parents can see specific feedback about what the student knows right now. At the end of the course, a student's grade is determined by what he/she currently understands, not by the average of their understanding over the whole course. Traditional grading schemes return a single number that can be a complicated combination of a student's mastery of course content, behavior, timeliness, homework completion, and test performance. It is difficult to know if a "C" means a student didn't understand the material very well or if the student missed some homework assignments. In standards-based feedback, these two very different pieces of information are not smashed together into one grade. Thus students, parents, and teachers can better celebrate success and address weaknesses.

What is a power standard?

Think of a power standard as a specific learning goal. There are different types of learning goals; they can be content-based or skill-based. Often it is the skills that are at the heart of our teaching (reading, writing, researching, thinking), but sometimes there is specific content that is important for students to master before being capable of moving on to the next level of thought and understanding.

What is a learning target?

Learning targets are specific skills or content that is to be learned or demonstrated that shows a student has mastered all parts of the specific power standard. Basically learning targets take the larger power standard and breaks it down into smaller, manageable pieces.

California Arts Standards

The power standards and learning targets are the building blocks that will be used to help students achieve the overall goal of music literacy through the processes of the California Arts Standards: Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. The California Arts Standards can be found [here](#).

Everything in SBG is evaluated using rubrics

A scoring rubric communicates expectations of quality around a task. Rubrics are used to delineate consistent criteria for grading. Because the criteria are public and given to the student ahead of time, a scoring rubric allows students to know exactly what needs to be done in order to

achieve a particular level. No more do students have to guess what it takes to “get an A”. A scoring rubric can also provide a basis for self-evaluation, reflection, and peer review. It is aimed at accurate and fair assessment, fostering understanding, and indicating a way to proceed with subsequent learning/teaching. This integration of performance and feedback is called ongoing assessment or formative assessment.

SBG basically has two types of assessments:

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures employed by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment. It typically involves feedback for both student and teacher that focus on the details of content and performance.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment (or summative evaluation) refers to the assessment of the learning and summarizes the development of learners at a particular time. After a period of work, e.g. a unit for two weeks, students take a test that aims to summarize learning up to that point. The test may also be used for diagnostic assessment to identify any weaknesses and then build on that using formative assessment.

How are Levels of Learning defined on rubrics?

This method of grading looks at the depth of student knowledge. It is based on the steps for learning something new; in other words, breaking it down into the parts or components of learning. Students are provided multiple opportunities to achieve along the way. All work is assessed on the student’s level (depth) of knowledge. More specifically the levels are explained below:

Level of Learning **Standards Explained in General Terms**

5	Exceeds the Standard	Students demonstrated with critical thinking and problem solving skills their ability to incorporate the learnings in class to the highest level. This could be achieved by inferring something new from what was learned. The student could have synthesized (put together in a new way), evaluated, experimented, investigated, solved problems, made decisions, etc.	5 Exceeds the Standard	Their hamburger is just how they wanted it and the waiter say, “Today I am also going to give you some fries and a shake for free!” It is clearly more than what was expected.
4	Meets the Standard	The teacher guided students through the more complex knowledge, skills and processes; students studied relationships by comparing similarities and contrasting differences, by using metaphors and analogies, and by analyzing errors in the information applied or presented. This can be evidenced by multiple choice and short answer	4 Meets the Standard	They get a hot-off-the-grill hamburger that has everything they expected. They get what they asked for.

		questions in written tests; in addition, evidence can be obtained through observations, demonstrations, written papers, projects, etc.		
3	Approaching the Standard	Students learned the simpler knowledge and skills, and <i>some but not all</i> of the more complex knowledge, skills and processes (level 4). The student listed, recalled, identified, explained, recognized, etc. This can be evidenced by matching, true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions in written tests; in addition evidence can be obtained through observations, demonstrations, student discussions, etc.	3 Approaching the Standard	They get a hot hamburger on time, with the cheese they asked for, but it is missing the relish they expected.
2	Partially Meets the Standard	Students learned the simpler knowledge and skills, but not the more complex knowledge, skills and processes (level 4). The student listed, recalled, identified, explained, recognized, etc. This can be evidenced by matching, true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions in written tests; in addition evidence can be obtained through observations, demonstrations, student discussions, etc.	2 Partially Meets the Standard	They get a hamburger on time, but it is only mildly warm and is missing the cheese and relish they expected.
1	Does Not Meet the Standard	No learning occurred; the student made no effort to do any work or may not have ever actually attended class.	1 Does Not Meet the Standard	They have to wait extra time, and what they get is not what they requested. Instead they get a sack of unsalted, greasy fries.