

For students...

In Social Studies, we strive to follow where scholarship and research takes us - whether that be in the content we explore or in the instructional and assessment models we use. The movement towards evidence-based grading/standards-based grading fits this aspiration. More importantly, it more fully aligns with the values we bring to our work with you: wanting all students to succeed, fostering a growth mindset, and prioritizing the development of transferable skills.

Once again, in 2022-2023,, the core history courses at WHS will use a [shared grading system](#). We linked it here, and you will find it in other parts of Canvas and throughout our work together. Remember that this type of system helps us orient our instruction and feedback to key competencies within the system. Remember too the importance of feedback - we worked hard over many years to bring more feedback into major projects and papers, and understand the value of conferencing with you when work is on-going. These feedback loops remain, and will be combined with frequent, targeted, and often verbal feedback during class time. It is going to be important for you to distinguish between feedback - those suggestions, affirmations, and questions we offer to you when work is on-going and formative - and scores - when the work is evaluated with the rubric. Rubric scores are the determinants of your grade within a standard, and 3 of the standards factor into your term grade. Your teacher will share the weights of each standard with you in their course materials. Two last points, and these practices are changes from last year: (1) there are tighter timelines for submitting missing work (up to 1 cycle at the most), and (2) not all assignments can be revised. Your teacher will communicate these specifics when they apply.

Several points in the previous paragraph bear repeating, as we want them to be clear takeaways:

- there is a distinction between feedback and grading, and we plan to keep them separate in our work with you
- this approach to grading your work relies on determining grades when we can, rather than on calculating and averaging every piece of submitted work
- you need to submit missing work with as much urgency as possible, as unsubmitted work at the end of cycles results in poor grades.

Try to do your best work as early as possible in the learning process.

For parents...

Please take a moment to review our message to students (see above). While there is overlap between the message to them and the one to you, there is also distinct language in the one for students that may help contextualize what is offered to you here..

Schools historically and typically provide students with numbers, percentages, and letter grades on each individual assignment within a course, resulting in an averaged score when reporting a singular grade. A standards-based system moves away from such averages and towards the determination of when/where/how often a student's work meets standards, to provide feedback and information about work in relation to these standards. Focusing on the student work in this manner reflects the values of wanting all students to succeed, fostering a growth mindset, and prioritizing the development of transferable skills.

Canvas is the learning management system that supports a teacher's ability to provide feedback and scores to students. PowerSchool is the platform that communicates aggregate performance to students and families. PowerSchool also calculates the term grades and overall year grades, based on the pre-set weights of the different standards. This distinction, in terms of purpose and access, is important; it's

baked into what might be helpful to restate and/or know:

- we distinguish between feedback and grading/scores
- rubrics and scores are found in Canvas
- letter grades for each standard are updated ~1x per month in PowerSchool, and are based on an aggregate of scored rubrics associated with that standard
- your student's teacher will communicate the specific weights of each standard in their course materials, and these weights are consistent by course team
- PowerSchool calculates a quarter grade, represented by a letter and number, based on the prescribed weights assigned to each standard
- all history surveys at WHS will use a [shared grading system](#)

If reading some scholarship that informs our practice helps, we'd encourage your reading of [this overview](#) from ASCD, or perhaps a review of a [collection of pieces/excerpts](#) that our department leader, Mike Reidy, shared with us. If questions remain, or you wish to discuss 'why' we adopted this practice, please contact him at reidym@wellesleyps.org.

If you have questions about your student and their performance in class, please contact the teacher directly. They are here to help. Before speaking, I might suggest talking with your student about feedback received, and working with your student through their Canvas portal periodically. We find that most uncertainties are best addressed in these open conversations at home.