

Challenging a Final (Semester) Grade

I. Philosophy

Teachers make mistakes. I frequently do. Sometimes it might be due to a clerical error related to math or possibly a data entry mistake. In a case such as this, if you feel like a mistake has been made against you, please go over your total scores and bring your calculations (on paper) to my attention immediately and I will certainly change your grade if the new computation moves you into the next higher letter grade category.

However, given the subjective nature of the grading process, especially in the field of social studies, it is also possible that you will feel I have not graded you fairly on a particular assignment or fairly assessed you in terms of your overall semester grade. Here too, I encourage students to begin the process of challenging the grade and ask that you follow the procedures below carefully.

II. Procedure

1. Everything must be documented! I will not engage in verbal “haggling” over your final grade. You should begin with typed letter *explaining in detail* why you believe I have not given you a proper assessment.

2. After I examine the letter, you should be prepared to set up an after school meeting to include the two of us and your parents and an administrator if necessary.

3. Please bring to this meeting a printout from the attendance office detailing your entire semester’s attendance including truancies and class tardies. We will match it with my own records to see if there have been any mistakes in this area. Also bring an unofficial transcript of your other grades for the semester.

4. Even after going through these somewhat complicated and time-consuming steps, *I make no guarantees that the final decision will be in your favor*. However, I will promise to give it every consideration, and have in the past been impressed by students’ legitimate attempts to fight with conviction for what they believe is fair.

III. Tips

1. Do not whine or cry during the interview. I will immediately terminate the meeting.

2. Do not bring up other student’s grades or final assessments. They are none of your business.

3. Avoid using the reason of “wanting” a higher grade due to desired freshman enrollment to some important college or a particular GPA. I don’t care what you want. I care that you feel I graded something specific in an unfair fashion.

4. Remember: your grades on that transcript are forever, so do not be intimidated or coerced into accepting a grade you think is unfair. Fight! Even if the outcome does not work out to your benefit, you’ll be proud that you stood up for yourself.