



**“How Could You Give Me Such a
Low Grade!?”**

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Apprehensive?

- ... expecting anger from students?



...or pouty-faced students

- *demanding* that you explain how you could possibly ever give them such a low score



...or, out and out tears



...or appeals to higher authorities



...or contact from a hover parent



“Children today grow up **believing it’s their effort that matters**. Everyone gets a trophy, and everyone deserves to be praised just for showing up. As one author put it: “Parents have moved from feeling they should give their children everything they need, to giving them everything they want.”

Source: <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/908-dear-student-no-i-won-t-change-the-grade-you-deserve#sthash.weydDI3F.dpuf>

But you realize this!

- Created grading rubrics ...
- Shared papers from past classes...
- Provided pre-exam reviews ...

Yet, still...

- ...WE are the “bad guys” who took away their deserved grades ...we are the one on trial...



A simple solution?

- When I've used this over the last 34 years:
 - I practically NEVER get those responses
 - Plus, it has other benefits

I add this to their paper/exam/project

- “I’m very disappointed in this performance, John. You are capable of much more than this.”
- “You know I’ve done everything I can do to help you succeed in this class. This effort **shows a lack of respect for me** and all I’ve done.”
- **If it’s a very low grade, I add,** “We need to talk. Soon.”

We have good conversations

- Students admit all kinds of things to me
 - I'm addicted to Oxycodone.
 - I'm being sued.
 - I've just lost my father.
 - I just didn't study.
 - To be honest, I waited to the last minute to do it.
 - I didn't think it would be that hard.
 - I've been spending all of my time on this other course that I thought was important to my career.

Results

- Allows me to help the student find help
- Students improve study habits and teamwork skills
- We talk through how to manage college, and life!