

## **What Is Standards-Based Grading?**

Standards-based grading (SBG), or mastery-based grading, is a system that evaluates students' progress toward mastering specific learning targets called standards. These standards can be set at national, state, or school levels. A standards-based grading scale often comprises categories ranging from “below” the standard to “mastering” it.

## **What Is The Purpose of Standards-Based Grading?**

The purpose of standards-based grading is to give a clearer picture of a student's learning progress. Instead of a traditional points gradebook where you see a single letter grade, an SBG report card gives a detailed view of student strengths and areas of opportunity. Traditional grading communicates on a high level, whereas standards-based grading provides detailed and actionable insights.

## **3 Things to Consider When Creating a Mastery Scale**

### **Remember the Goal of Standards-Based Grading**

SBG is meant to communicate how well a student understands a topic. The goal of SBG is not to reward students with a high score that includes late assignments, first attempts, and extra credit. Instead of scoring with an arbitrary number or letter, a mastery scale communicates the student's current understanding of a topic. Each category of the standards-based grading scale should be easily identifiable by teachers, families, and students.

### **Better Parent/Family Conversations**


Imagine bringing your car to the mechanic, and they say, “Your car is in B+ condition.” Not very helpful. Instead, what you want is a checklist of what is working and what is not working. “Everything is good except the brakes are broken.” Now, *that* would be good to

know. Standards-based grading shows families exactly where their student is both excelling and struggling. Understanding their student's strengths and areas of opportunity can help families better support students at home.

### Standards-Based Grading Conversion Methods

In some cases, converting a standards-based grade into a traditional letter grade may be necessary. While there is no “correct” method to accomplish this, a few conversion methods include the percentage and the Marzano methods.

Marzano Method		Percentage Method	
Avg. Standard Scores	Traditional Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add All Standards Points</li><li>• Divide by Possible Points</li><li>• Convert With Traditional Grading Scale</li></ul>	
3.75 - 4.00	A+	90% - 100%	A
3.26 - 3.74	A	80% - 89%	B
3.00 - 3.25	A-	70% - 79%	C
2.84 - 2.99	B+	60% - 69%	D
2.67 - 2.83	B	0% - 59%	F
2.50 - 2.66	B-		
2.34 - 2.49	C+		
2.17 - 2.33	C		
2.00 - 2.16	C-		
1.76 - 1.99	D+		
1.26 - 1.75	D		
1.00 - 1.25	D-		
0.00 - 1.00	F		



### **Marzano Method**

Robert J. Marzano published the Marzano method in the book *Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading*. In this method, Marzano provides a chart with a 1-4 mastery scale. Using the average of a student's SBG scores, you can quickly convert the standards grade into a traditional letter grade.

### **Percentage Method**

The percentage method is intuitive and flexible for any grading scale. First, add the number of standard points the student earned. Then, divide that sum by the total number of points possible. Once you have that percentage, you can convert it using a traditional grading scale as pictured above. This method works for the common 1-4 scale as well as for 1-3 or 1-5 scales.