



## Criterion Based Grading Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is Criterion Based Grading, (CBG)?

Criterion Based Grading is a rigorous system of measuring student achievement in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IBMYP). Robbinsdale Middle School is implementing the IBMYP Criterion Based Grading system as this school is an authorized IBMYP School.

Criterion Based Grading measures student achievement based off of IBMYP Criteria and national, state, and local education standards -or in other words, it will measure how well your student understands the material in class. In each unit of study, teachers will identify and communicate the specific goals and objectives based on these standards and criteria as well as what evidence is needed to reach the proficient level or beyond. During the unit, the student is assessed to see if they know the material and to what level through use of a variety of assessments - such as traditional paper and pencil tests, projects, discussions, or reports. The course grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of the set objectives.

### 2. How is CBG different?

In the traditional 100 point grading system (percentage), a student's grade is typically based on all of the work assigned in class, including class work, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests. These scores are often arranged in the grade book based on the type of assignment rather than on the actual objectives or standards for the class. The grade may also include points for non-academic factors, such as participation, effort, or attitude.

Criterion Based Grading uses a rubric scale from 0-8 on all assessments. (See grading scale) and it does not separate out tests, homework, class work, etc... All of the work a student does is used to assess his/her achievement level of the objectives and standards. The scores of the student's work is based off of the IBMYP Criteria using descriptor bands of 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-8 at each grade level in each MYP Course, and the national, state and local standards, which gives the student, parent and teacher a very detailed picture of what the student has mastered and achieved. The influence of positive and consistent work habits on student learning is reported separately from academics.

In CBG the student's grade more accurately represents the progress towards proficiency and beyond the set IBMYP objectives and national, state, or local standards.

### 3. What are the advantages of Criterion Based Grading?

Learning outcomes are clearly articulated to the students throughout instruction. Parents and students can see which learning outcomes students have mastered and which ones need re-teaching or re-learning. CBG can change the complexion of at-home conversations between the student and the parent/guardian from, "Why didn't you finish your work?" "Did you make up that quiz you missed?" and "Have you finished your project?" to "Tell me your understanding of this standard," "How does your teacher connect your in-class work to the unit's objectives?" or "What more do you need to do to achieve

this benchmark?" Some students struggle at the beginning of units, fail assessments and give up; with CBG, the door remains open to achieving standards.

#### 4. What are the disadvantages of CBG?

Of all aspects of our education system, none seems more impervious to change than grading and reporting. Changing long-held traditions is a difficult and lengthy process.

#### 5. What is the difference between a formative and a summative assessment...and why does it matter?

During a unit of study, students may have of a wide range of understanding. **Formative assessments** are done as students are "forming" their understanding of the concepts and skills being taught. This informs both the student and the teacher the level of understanding and is used to help teachers guide instruction (both individually and as a class.) Formative assessments are not intended to penalize a student's misunderstanding and likewise hold back a student that may understand the concepts or skills. **Summative assessments** are given at the end of the unit of study. This assessment shows what level of achievement a student is at after all has been taught and learned.

#### 6. Will students have the opportunities to "redo" an assessment?

Yes. For those below proficiency, the teacher will strongly encourage students to "re do" an assessment, especially assessments that are summative in nature. Students may also advocate for themselves (and are encouraged to do so) to retake or redo an assessment whether they scored below or at proficiency.

#### 7. What will I see in the grade book?

Teachers will be recording both **formative** and summative **assessments**. You will be able to see your student's in-progress level of achievement during the unit. You will see scores for formative assessments which will show as an in-progress grade. Summative assessments are used to assess the learning that has occurred after the teaching and learning has taken place. At the end of a grading term teachers will determine a final grade based on the trending level of achievement in summative assessments, (where the student is at the end rather than the average level of achievement throughout a marking period).

#### 8. Why aren't grades just averaged?

The purpose of Criterion Based grading is to report what students know and are able to do. Averaging does not represent an accurate picture of where a student is in his learning. (Think about how an athlete learns new skills) A student who struggles in a class at the beginning of a grading period and receives poor grades, but who keeps working and by the end of the grading period can clearly demonstrate competence in the subject, should receive a grade that reflects that competence. The average is a fixture in most grading systems, but the average does not always represent the data accurately. Consider two students, Stewart and Maria. Stewart earns the following scores: 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85, 85 and 85. The average is not difficult to calculate, and Stewart's grade is posted as a B. Maria struggles in math and turns in this performance: 50, 60, 65, 70, 80, 85, 90, 90, and 90. Her mean (average) score of a little over 75 would result in a C on her report card, but it is obvious that Maria now understands the math even though she struggled in the beginning.

## 9. What about students who want to move beyond the standards.

The IBMYP provides for just that. In the IBMYP, teachers must provide the opportunity for the student to reach the highest level band descriptor - (7-8) in their subject area. This allows the student to strive to move beyond the proficient and consistent level of the objectives and standards to the exceptional and extended level.

## 10. Does each assessment explain how the student did or did not meet the standard/criteria being addressed?

Yes. Teachers will provide feedback in a variety of ways: oral, written comments, rubrics, etc... We want to shift from discussing how many points something is worth to how a student can reach the next level of achievement. In addition, students will take the time for academic goal setting in each course at the mid-point and end-point of each academic quarter of school.

## 11. How will each instructor determine what is a 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, or 7-8?

Each department is working together to be as consistent as possible in determining scoring for practice, assignments, and assessments. Common assessments and MYP task specific rubrics are developed when units are planned. Teachers first determine what evidence will demonstrate proficiency of learning a specific standard or several standards within an MYP subject specific criterion. From there, they determine what evidence is needed to reach or exceed proficiency.

## 12. Will students have to be perfect to score in the 7-8 band?

No. Students do not have to be perfect, (and really, is anyone perfect?). In order to score in the 7-8 band descriptor, a student would have to show learning that goes above and beyond the learning objective at the end of the unit of study as assessed in the summative assessment. It would reflect in-depth understanding of concepts and skills to include higher processing and application skills and analytical thinking.

## 13. How will non-academic factors such as effort, attitude, participation, and behavior be communicated and/or assessed?

While these factors have always been and will continue to be an important part of your student's success, in CBG these factors will be communicated separately from your student's academic grade. Most teachers will have an engagement category in the grade book. This section will not be calculated in the final letter grade but will be visible in Infinite Campus. Teachers will likely track consistency of class work and homework turn in and behaviors such as having materials, being on time, and using work time in class. We believe receiving feedback on these type of behaviors for parents and students will be helpful for understanding your child's full learning experiences and how it can relate to their success.

## IBMYP Rubrics - What do these scores mean anyway? Where am I trending?

MYP Score	Description
7-8	Best of the Best - You've got this!
5-6	You're proficient and doing well.
3-4	You're approaching proficiency. Keep it up.
1-2	You need to ask for help.
0	No work submitted. Did not do what was required.

