



Ten Ways to Better Utilize the Parent Portal

1. **Add descriptions to each assignment.** With descriptions in for assignments, students and parents will know what is expected for each assignment. *To do this: In PowerGrade, open the assignment window and create a new assignment or edit an old one. Put the assignment instructions in the description box.*
2. **Enter future assignments.** Having future assignments in the grade book will allow parents and students a way to ensure that work is being completed on time. *To do this: In PowerGrade, open the assignment and create a new assignment with a future date.*
3. **Enter a class description.** The class description is a field where you can type class or “section” specific information. Some things that you may want to include in the description are when parents and students can expect updates, what makes up the final grades, explanations of any special codes that you use, a link to your website, etc. *To do this: In PowerGrade, open a class, click on the class info shortcut and choose the description tab.*
4. **Enter category descriptions.** Category descriptions outline the specific breakdown or assignment grouping in your grade book. If you calculate your final grade based on category points, you might want to include the category weighting in the description. *To do this: In PowerGrade, go to Windows > Categories, create a new category or edit an existing one. Put the description in the description field.*
5. **Enter Parent notes (student comments).** You can create a student comment for each student if you choose. *To do this: In PowerGrade, double click on the number next to the student name and enter your note on the parent note tab. You must have at least one assignment in the class to do this. **Remember that the parent note will remain there until you delete it.*
6. **Enter Score Comments.** Score comments can be entered for specific students. Use this to celebrate that the student “finally gets it” or to communicate that there is a real problem with this assignment. *To do this: In PowerGrade, select the score that you would like to create a note for and hit “CTRL-N” on the keyboard.*
7. **Use special codes.** Special codes can be used in place of a score to make your grade book more readable or understandable. Examples: EX=excused, ABS=absent, NHI=not handed in, CHT=cheat. *To do this: In PowerGrade, click on the Preferences shortcut, go to the Scores tab and define your special codes there.*
8. **Anticipate the questions that parents and students will ask.** Any time you can answer a question before it is asked, you will save time in the long run. If you can answer it once in the Parent Portal it will save you from answering it for each student.
9. **Use PowerTeacher Quick Lookup screen to view what your grade book looks like from the parent portal side and to find out which parents and students are looking at the portal.** *To do this: In PowerTeacher, choose the Student Information icon (the back pack), choose a student from the roster on the left, then in the select screens drop down choose Quick Lookup or Net/Phone Access summary. The Quick Lookup screen will let you see what the parent sees when they look at the parent portal. The Net/Phone Access summary will show you when parents and students looked at the parent portal.*
10. **Use web links in class descriptions, assignment descriptions, or score notes.** Any web resource that you use in instruction can be associated to the appropriate Grade book resource. (If students need to use a website to complete an assignment, the website can be entered in the description field.) *To do this: In PowerGrade, decide where you want a link to the website to be. Click on the appropriate web link icon and enter the URL or web address in the URL box, enter what you want your link text to be in the Link Text box. Examples: “Click here for more info.” Or “Click here to visit my website.” Check the box next to “Open this link in a new browser window” and click OK.*