PowerTeacher Gradebook Basics

Explore the basics of PowerTeacher gradebook in order to prepare for the first day of school. Use the gradebook to perform many daily tasks including:

- Setting up the gradebook
- Entering assignments
- Recording scores
- Creating student groups
- Using School Content

Getting Started with PowerTeacher

Access the gradebook anywhere that you have Internet. PowerTeacher's features and functions are tailored to the duties and responsibilities teachers handle day to day. Launch the gradebook from the main menu in PowerTeacher. The following table provides a brief explanation of the tabs teachers see when they launch the gradebook.

Tab	Description
Scoresheet	Displays the assignments and scores entered for students
Assignments	Displays the details of the assignments you have created
Student Info	Displays demographic data for each student in the class
Grade Setup	Displays the final grade setup for each term
Class Content	Displays basic information about the selected course
Reports	Provides an interface to designate and format reports

Use each tab to access specific information. Three of the tabs contain modes that divide the tab information into smaller sections.

The gradebook is easy to use because it's ready to go the first day of school. You don't have a lengthy setup to complete because it contains default settings. Of course you may want to format certain items, but the defaults are fully functional.

Activity 1 – Creating an Assignment

To experience firsthand the ready-to-use gradebook, launch the gradebook and create a homework assignment.

1. On the PowerTeacher Start Page, click **Gradebook** > **Launch PowerTeacher Gradebook**
2. Click **Trust** or **Allow** (Mac) or **Run** (PC)
3. On the Scoresheet tab, click the **+** sign next to the assignment heading to open the New Assignment pane
4. Enter a name for the homework assignment and press **Tab**
5. Edit the abbreviation if needed
6. Choose **Homework** as the category and choose **Points** as the score type

7. Enter **30** points possible

8. Use the default values for the Extra Points, Weight, Date Due, and Include in Final Grade fields

9. Enter a description if needed

10. Click **Save** in the lower right corner to save the assignment

Activity 2 – Recording Scores

Record scores for the assignment you just created.

1. Close the assignment pane

2. Click in the cell that is the intersection of the row containing the student's name and the column of the assignment you want to score

3. Enter the score, such as **25**

4. Press **Enter** to advance to the next student

5. When you have finished entering scores, click **Save**

Setting Up the Gradebook

Even though many areas are preformatted, personalize the gradebook to fit your teaching needs.

Adding Categories

Categories are broad classifications in which you group similar types of assignments. Examples of categories are homework, tests, and quizzes. The gradebook includes four predefined category types, but add additional categories and/or modify the default categories whenever needed.

When you set up categories, the assignments in that category are calculated in the final grade. If you don't check "Include in Final Grade," the scores will not count. For example, you may want to keep track of students who have turned in permission slips or checked out classroom materials. Create an assignment for each task, but do not include the assignment scores in the final grade calculation.

Using Score Types

Score types explain the value entered for assignment scores. Assign specific score types to each category or assignment. Choose from the following scoring options:

• Points – record all scores as points (default format)

• Percentage – record all scores as percentage values

• Letter Grades – record all scores as letters according to the grade scale

You have one more scoring option: score codes. Score codes are words or abbreviations that represent a specific score. For example, one of your students is redoing an assignment. You exempted the student, but you know that you won't remember why you exempted after a few months. Also, you don't want to forget that the student is working on the assignment again. Create the score code REDO, and give the score code a value of EX. When you enter REDO on the Scoresheet, the missing assignment won't affect the final grade and the REDO reminds you of the pending work. Navigate to Preferences to add scores codes. Every score code you create must have a value.

Activity 3 – Adding Categories and a Score Code

Add two new categories to the gradebook for extra credit and class work, and create a score code for partial credit.

1. From the Tools menu, choose **Categories**

2. Click the **+** sign in the lower left corner of the Categories window to add a new category

3. Enter information into the appropriate fields, including the category name, abbreviation, color, and the defaults points possible for assignments in the category

4. Click the **+** sign to add the second category and enter information into the fields

5. Click **Close** to save the new categories and close the Categories window

6. From the PowerTeacher Gradebook menu (Mac) or the Tools menu (PC), choose **Preferences**

7. Select the Score Codes tab and click **Add**

8. For Code, enter `PART` and for Description, enter `partial credit`

9. Clear the Exempt check box

10. For Percent, enter `60` and click **OK** > **OK**

Setting Up Final Grade Calculations

After you create assignment categories, determine how you'll calculate the students' final grades for each term by total points, term weights, or category weights. The Grade Setup tab contains two modes: Calculations and Grade Scales. Use the Calculations mode to set up calculations for your final grades. The next section discusses the Grade Scales mode.

Total Points

Use the total points method to calculate a student's final grade by dividing the points the student has accumulated by the total number of points possible. Total Points is the default setting for all terms. If you use a calculation method other than total points, set up final grade calculations for each class individually, or set up one class and copy the setup to your other classes.

Term Weights

Use the term weights method to multiply a term grade by the value (or weight) to calculate a grade in another term. For example, your school awards grades for the following terms: Y1, S1, and S2. You calculate the year grade (Y1) based on semester weights. Semester 1 (S1) might be worth 40% of the Y1 grade and Semester 2 (S2) worth 60%. If needed, enter percents with decimal points, such as 33.33%.

Category Weights

Use the category weights method to multiply the total number of points by the value (or weight) of each category. Set up the weights for each category according to your personal plan or school requirements.

Activity 4 – Setting Up Final Grade Calculations

Set up final grade weighting for two quarters and a semester term. Since Total Points is the default method, use another calculation method.

1. Select the Grade Setup tab and click **Calculations**

2. Double-click a term

3. Select the final grade setup method, such as **Category weights** or **Term weights**

4. If you select category weights, click **+ add category**

5. Check the categories you want to weight and click **OK**

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6. Enter the weight for each category

7. If you select term weights for S1 or S2, enter the weight for each "child" term, such as Q1 and Q2, or Q3 and Q4

8. Click **Save**

9. Repeat the process for the remaining terms

   If you want to copy the setup to your other terms, click **copy**, select the term, and click **OK**. Check the terms to copy to and click **Next** > **Finish**.

Copying Grade Scales

Use the Grade Scale mode to copy and edit the course grade scale. Your PowerTeacher administrator determines which grade scale you can copy. To copy a grade scale, select the grade scale and click the **+** sign. To make changes, select the copy, rename the scale, change the description, and alter the grade values. You can't remove grades, but you can ignore grades. Finally, click **Save** to store the changes.

Formatting Gradebook Preferences

Use Preferences to format different areas of the gradebook. Create a personal comment bank and indicate how you want to calculate, store, and display grades in your gradebook. Also, add an email signature, create score codes, customize the names of your different sections, format your spell check, manage standard-based grading, and display students in a specific manner. Locate Preferences in the PowerTeacher Gradebook menu (Mac) or the Tools menu (PC) at the top of the screen.

Activity 5 – Copying and Editing the Grade Scale

The default grade scale contains pluses and minuses, but you've decided to use whole letter grades only. Copy the default grade scale and make the necessary changes. Then, assign the grade scale to several students.

1. Click the Grade Setup tab and then select the Grade Scales mode

2. Select the Default grade scale and click the **+** sign to copy the scale

3. Click the arrow next to the copy's name and enter the name `Whole Letter Grades`

4. Click in the Ignore cell for each letter grade that includes a + or −

5. Click **Save**

6. Click the Student Info tab

7. Click the arrow next to the first student's name and choose **Whole Letter Grades** from the Grade Scale menu

8. If an alert window appears, click **Yes**

9. Repeat steps 7 and 8 for a few more students

Using the Gradebook

You've learned how easy it is to use the gradebook and create assignments, but there's much more. The gradebook contains many tools to accomplish your job efficiently. Also, access information for each student in your class and record a personal note. To view alerts, phone numbers, birthdays, and email addresses, click the Student Info tab.

Creating Assignments

View assignments on both the Scoresheet and Assignments tabs. Set up assignments at the beginning of a school term or at any time during the term. The name, point value, and date due for each assignment appear above the column in which you enter student scores. Double-clicking an assignment heading (or clicking the arrow at the top) opens the assignment pane where you can modify the assignment, publish criteria, or standards.

As you enter assignments, notice that a demarcation line separates future assignments from past assignments. Posting assignments before entering scores does not skew how grades appear. The final grade that appears next to a student's name on the Scoresheet reflects an average grade for only the assignments that you have already scored.

Copying Assignments

Use Copy Assignments in the Tools menu to copy assignments from one class to another, or from current or previous terms. The gradebook window contains a menu to change classes and to select previous classes so that you have access to any assignment, no matter the date. Choose to copy one assignment, several assignments, or all assignments.

Publishing Assignments

Publishing an assignment makes it possible for parents and students to see it in the PowerSchool Student and Parent Portals. Publish an assignment at the same time you create it or at any point afterward. The gradebook defaults to publishing assignments to the PowerSchool Student and Parent Portals as soon as you create them. The Publish tab is located in the assignment pane.

If an assignment is part of students' final grades, you *must* publish it at some point to the Student and Parent Portals. You will receive an error message if you choose the **Never** publish option for an assignment that counts towards the final grade.

Weighting Assignments

When creating an assignment, use the Weight field to help keep grading practices flexible, yet consistent. For most assignments, keeping the weight at the default value of 1.00 and using Points Possible to adjust how the assignment contributes to the overall term grade is a common grading method.

When scoring letter grade assignments, you do not need to be concerned with points. Enter the letter grade for each assignment and weighting will take care of the relative value for each assignment automatically.

Activity 6 – Weighting Assignments

Use weighting to make a set of three quizzes worth 50 points, regardless of the number of questions each contains.

1. Create three quiz assignments following the steps in Activity 1

2. Use information in the grid below to fill in the Points Possible and Weight fields

3. Based on the information in the grid, fill in the last column

Number of Questions	Points Possible	Weight	Calculated Grade Value in Points
10	10	5	
20	20	2.5	
25	25	2	

Recording Scores

When entering scores, match the type of score to what you set up when you created the assignment. Use numbers for points and percentages, and letters for letter grades. Enter scores individually or use the following quick-entry methods:

- EX - marks an assignment Exempt
- (=) - assigns the maximum points possible
- MI or (/) - marks an assignment missing
- LT or (*) - marks an assignment late
- COL or (.) - marks an assignment collected
- Choose **Fill Scores** to mass fill a specific score

Occasionally, after creating an assignment, you may need to change the number of points possible. After changing and saving the number of points possible, a warning appears. Choose to keep the scores or have the gradebook adjust them based on the new points possible. Additionally, use the maximum points possible value to keep from entering a score with too many digits. For example, you create a test worth 100 points and include 10 extra credit points. When you enter one of the student's scores, you type an extra zero accidentally, making the score 1000. An alert notifies you of the error and that the maximum number of points possible is 110.

Using the Score Inspector

Use the Score Inspector to mark a student's assignment late, exempt, or missing. Also, use the inspector tool to enter a score comment or to indicate that you collected an assignment without entering a grade. The following table provides a brief explanation of the assignment indicators available in the gradebook.

Indicator Description	Indicator Meaning
Small "C" in blue dot next to score	Comment attached to the assignment
Small "L" in red dot next to score	Assignment turned in late
Small "M" in orange dot next to score	Assignment missing
Green check in a cell	Assignment collected but not graded
Italicized faint score *Ex*	Assignment does not count towards final grade OR was marked as exempt after scoring
Small hourglass in assignment heading	Assignment published on certain date
Circle with line through it in assignment heading	Assignment never to be published
Small red exclamation mark next to italicized final grade	Final grade changed by manual override
Yellow exclamation mark in the assignment heading	Scores are not published
Small "G" in gray dot next to student name	Student assigned a grade scale other than default
Capital "S" in the assignment heading	Assignment contains standards (gray means no scores or partials scores, green means complete scores)

Indicator Description	Indicator Meaning
Gray gear wheel with a blue arrow next to the assignment name in Student View mode, in the Final Score cell of the Student View mode, or in the standard heading	Higher level standard score calculates from the lower level standard scores

Entering scores manually and using the Score Inspector aren't your only options for recording scores on the Scoresheet. Use any of the following scoring shortcuts by control-clicking (Mac) or right-clicking (PC) an assignment heading:

- Fill Scores: give every student the same score, indicator, or comment for an assignment, or just students with no score

- Quick Fill: enter the same score for any student with no score

- Copy Scores: copy all student scores for an assignment

- Paste Scores: paste all scores into another assignment

Overriding a Final Grade Manually

Occasionally, you need to modify a student's final grade in a course based on effort, participation, or other performance factors. Use the Score Inspector to change a final grade with the Manual Override function.

Activity 7 – Recording Scores and Using the Score Inspector

Time to record some scores for these assignments. Try using several of the methods available. Use Fill Scores for an assignment; use the quick-entry methods for several scores; and use the Score Inspector to add score comments and to mark assignments collected, late, and exempt.

1. On the Scoresheet tab, control-click (Mac) or right-click (PC) an assignment heading of an assignment with no scores and choose **Fill Scores**

2. Verify "Items with **No Score**" is selected

3. Check **Score** and enter the score that everyone will receive

4. Click **OK**

5. Click an empty score cell, use one of the quick-entry keys to enter a score, and press **Enter**

6. Repeat step 5 for several scores using different quick-entry keys

7. Click an empty score cell and choose **Score Inspector** from the Tools menu

8. In the Score Inspector, check **Collected** instead of entering a score

9. Click the Next Student arrow and check **Late**

10. Click the Next Student arrow and check **Missing**

11. Click the Next Student arrow and check **Exempt Score**

12. Click the Next Assignment arrow and click the Comment tab

13. Select a comment and click **Insert Selected**

14. Continue to use the Score Inspector to enter more comments and scores

15. Click **Close** and then click **Save** to retain the changes

Activity 8 – Overriding a Final Grade Manually

Override a student's final grade manually to make it higher than the calculated grade.

1. Double-click a final grade to open the Score Inspector

   If the Score Inspector is already open, click the final grade once.

2. Check **Manual Override**

3. Change the percent and grade, and add a comment

4. Click **Close** and then click **Save** to retain the changes

Working Offline

When you want to work offline, export assignments and then import scores later. Create the assignment first. Then click the assignment heading, and select **Export Scores Template** from the Tools menu. Save the file in the desired location and open it with Excel.

The export is a CSV file and contains a column for entering scores. Depending on the score type you choose for the assignment, the column will be titled Points, Percentage, or Letter Grade. Enter the scores and save the changes.

The final step is to import the scores. Click the assignment heading and select **Import Scores** from the Tools menu. Select the format of your import file. The import window has two tabs: Basic and Advanced. The two tabs are similar, but the Advanced tab contains the data being imported and a preview of the Scoresheet. The file does not have to be the Scores Template. Depending on the file type, the import process automatically selects the import settings. Click **Import** and the Scoresheet populates with the new scores.

Activity 9 – Recording Scores Offline

Your students completed a big project and you would like to record their scores over the weekend. However, your Internet service provider has scheduled an outage. Create the assignment and record the scores for the two assignments you have graded so far. Then, export the Scores Template, enter a few scores, and import the template.

1. Click the Assignments tab and click the **+** sign

2. Enter the project assignment information and click **Save**

3. On the Scoresheet tab, record scores for two of your students and enter a comment for both about their excellent work

4. Click **Save**

5. From the Tools menu, choose **Export Scores Template**, and save the file to your desktop with a .csv extension

6. Open the file with Excel, record a few scores, and save the file

7. Verify that you selected the assignment and choose **Import Scores** from the Tools menu

8. Select the file and click **Open**

9. Click the Advanced tab

10. You see a warning that scores already exist in the gradebook, so select **Keep Existing Scores**

11. Click **Import** and **Save**

Accessing Helpful Tools

Setting Up Student Groups

With PowerTeacher gradebook, create sets and groups and select students to include in the groups so that you can adapt instruction to the needs of subgroups of students. Create and modify student groups at any time.

The Student Groups pane contains two default groups: Active and Dropped. Students are sorted into these two groups automatically based on their class enrollment status. Use the Student Groups filter to highlight or filter students selected from a group. Use the highlight option to highlight students' names in yellow on the Scoresheet and Student Info screens. Use the filter option to hide all students except those in the selected group.

Activity 10 – Making Student Groups

Add student groups to your class. Create a group for students whose parents want to be contacted via email and a group for students whose parents want to be contacted by phone.

1. Click the **+** sign in the Student Groups pane and choose **Add Group Set**
2. Enter the name `Contact` and click **OK**
3. Control-click (Mac) or right-click (PC) **Group 1** and choose **Edit**
4. Enter the name `Email` and click **OK**
5. Click the **+** sign again and choose **Add Group**
6. Verify that Contact is the Associated Group Set
7. Enter the name `Phone` and click **OK**
8. Select a student's name and drag it to a group, or use command-click (Mac) or control-click (PC) to add multiple students

Using the Grade Scale Icon

The gradebook assigns each student to the Default grade scale automatically, but you can reassign a student to one of your custom grade scales. To change a student's grade scale, select the Student Info tab, and click the arrow next to the student's name. The Student pane in the lower half of the gradebook window contains a grade scale menu. After changing the grade scale, you are notified that the new grade scale will change final grades and assignment scores. Click **Yes** to confirm the changes.

To view the students in each of your sections assigned to a specific grade scale, click the Grade Setup tab. Click the arrow next to the grade scale and then click the Sections tab in the Grade Scale pane. Click the triangle to the left of the section name to view the list of student names associated with that grade scale.

Use the Student Groups pane to divide students into groups according to which grade scale you use for each student. Then filter or highlight one of the groups, and change the grade scale of each student.

The Custom Grade Scale icon appears next to the student's name on the Scoresheet and Student Info tabs. The icon is also visible when view final grades.

Formatting Extra Class Columns

The Student Info tab lists specific student information by default, such as gender, home phone, and date of birth. As with other areas of the gradebook, you aren't limited to the defaults. Personalize student information using the extra class columns. Edit the five custom columns and change the default name, or add more columns. Edit or create columns to record book numbers, locker numbers, lab partners, or emergency contacts for each of your students.

Personalizing Class Information

The Class Info mode under the Class Content tab contains basic information about the course you select in the Classes pane. Enter text in the Custom Display Name field to personalize your class list. Enter text in the Description field to communicate to parents your class rules and your expectations of students, or give an overview of the course and any other information that would be of interest to parents. The information you enter in the Description field appears in the Parent and Student Portals.

The School Content mode contains links to websites and information on the web. Your PowerTeacher administrator compiles the information. Insert available school content links in the Class Info description and the assignment description. Inserted links appear in the Description text box along with any other information you enter.

PowerTeacher also contains a spell check feature. The Tools menu contains an option to check spelling. Define spell check settings under Preferences. Check the spelling of a word by clicking the word and pressing **Control** on a Mac or right-clicking on a PC. A list of possible replacements appears as well as dictionary options. Manage the dictionary under Preferences. Add words specific to the class subject or remove unnecessary words. The dictionary is specific to your gradebook and is not shared with other teachers.

Activity 11 – Customizing Extra Class Columns

Customize two of the default class columns to record book numbers and lab partners.

1. Click the Student Info tab
2. Click **Extra Class Columns**
3. Double-click **Custom 1**
4. Enter `Book Numbers` and click **OK**
5. Double-click **Custom 2**
6. Enter `Lab Partners` and click **OK**
7. Click **Close**

Activity 12 – Adding Content to the Class Description

Your School Content contains a website that students visit to obtain study guides. You would like to make the site available in the PowerSchool Student and Parent Portals. Add the website link to your class description.

1. Click the Class Content tab
2. Select the Class Info mode and enter a description referring to the website
3. Click **+ link** and select **School Content**
4. Select a website and click **OK**
5. Verify the website is in the correct place
6. From the Tools menu, select **Check Spelling** and click **Ignore**
7. When you are finished, click **Save**

Communicating Progress

Final grades calculate throughout the term. At the end of the term, tell your PowerTeacher administrator that your grades are complete. The Scoresheet contains a progress dialog located above the student names. The dialog states "In Progress" until you mark that you completed your grades. If you have not finished entering your grades, enter a comment to let the PowerTeacher administrator know when your grades will be ready.

A helpful tool to use during parent/teacher conferences is the Student View mode on the Scoresheet. Use the mode to hide all students except for the one whose parents you are meeting. First, expand the Active group in the Students Group pane and select the first student's name. Then, click **Student View**. The only student visible on the Scoresheet is the first student. Continue to choose each student one at a time.

Activity 13 – Marking Your Grades Complete

1. Click the Scoresheet tab and verify S1 is the selected Reporting Term
2. Click **S1 In Progress** in Assignments or Final Grades mode
3. Check **Final Grades Complete**
4. Enter a comment, such as `I have entered all my grades for this term`
5. Click **OK**

Investigating Reports

The gradebook contains several reports. The available reports provide options for an onscreen display or a paper printout. Personalize each report by entering a custom title or by including a top note, bottom note, and signature line. The following table provides a brief description of the reports:

Report Name	Description
Attendance Grid	Displays student/date grid template for taking attendance
Category Total Report	Summarizes category totals by section or by student
Final Grade and Comment Verification	Displays students' final grades and teacher comments by term
Individual Student Report	Displays a summary of the class activity per student
Missing Assignment Report	Displays assignments that are missing per assignment or per student
Scoresheet	Displays a copy of the teacher's gradebook
Standards Report	Displays standards assignments and final grades
Student Multi-Section Report	Includes grades from all of a student's sections
Student Roster	Displays demographic information by class

Activity 14 – Running Progress Reports

You have scheduled parent/teacher conferences for your struggling students. You plan to provide parents with a progress report for their records. Print the report for a group of students.

1. In the Student Groups pane, select a few students from the Active group

2. On the Reports tab, click the arrow next to Individual Student Report

3. Verify the output type is PDF and the section is Selected Class

4. Verify that Selected Groups and/or Students and Student Name are selected

5. Choose to abbreviate assignments, but not categories

6. Check **Final Grades**, **Assignments**, **Comments**, and **Categories** to include them in the report

7. From the Date Range menu, choose **S1**

8. Click **Run Report** in the lower right corner of the screen

9. Select **Open Report** and click **OK**

Activity 15 – Creating a Roster

Your class is going on a field trip next week. You need to keep track of which students paid and which students still need to pay for the trip. Create a roster to record the payment information.

1. On the Reports tab, select **Student Roster**

2. Verify the report is a PDF document, and includes the selected class and all enrolled students

3. Check **Student Name**; it is the only student info needed on the report

4. Check **Blank1** and **Blank2**

5. Delete the title Blank1 and enter `Amount Paid`

6. Delete the title Blank2 and enter `Form of Payment`

7. Sort by student's last names

8. Click **Run Report** in the lower right corner of the screen

9. Select **Open Report** and click **OK**

Key Points

- Gradebook format – six gradebook tabs to accomplish every classroom task

- Setup – three methods used in combination to calculate final grades

- Scoring – three score types to use when grading assignments

- Helpful tools – student groups, notifications, content, and more to make your job easier

- Reports – nine reports to customize for your classroom needs