

How Do I Prevent or Handle Cheating in the Classroom?

Six Tips and Advice for Preventing and Handling Cheating

1

When giving a test, arrange students' desks in neat rows and sit (or stand) in the back of the room. When students cannot see you well, they are usually more nervous about trying to cheat. Those who are tempted to cheat usually will try to turn around to see where you are. That makes it easier for you to spot potential cheaters.

2

Cheating is easier when you give short answer tests (true/false, fill-in-the-blank, or multiple choice). An effective way to curb cheating on these types of test is to create two sets of test questions, arranging the questions in opposite orders. Copy one set of questions on white paper and the other set on a different color of paper. Distribute the two versions to alternate rows of students. Tell the students you have done this so that if they are tempted to cheat, they will be copying the wrong answers. Another good thing about setting up the test this way, is that you can use one answer key to grade both sets of tests.

3

Do not take away the paper of a suspected cheater, or reprimand the student in the middle of taking a test. Such an action will cause a disturbance during the test, and the disruption will give other students an opportunity to cheat. Instead, inform students before the test that if you (the teacher) suspects anyone is cheating, nothing will be said during the test, but when the test papers are handed back a notation will be suspected cheating will accompany the designated grade (point level). A statement to this effect will often make potential cheaters too nervous to cheat.

4

Tell the students at the start of the test to make sure their answers are covered. You might even let students know that any student who helps another cheat also will face repercussions. By encouraging students to cover up their own papers, you will probably be giving most students permission to do what they really want to do. But now, since you directed the action, they will be able to do this without risking peer disapproval. Also, the students most likely to follow your "cover up" instruction are usually the ones who studied for the test-and the ones with most correct answers.

5

Do not wait for the day of the test to tell students how you will handle cheating. By then, it is too late to motivate students to study, rather than try to cheat. Give warnings about cheating during class orientation with a repeat a day or two before the test.

6

Return test papers at the end of a class period. Doing this is helpful in two ways. Students will be more likely to listen to a review of the test answers before they get their papers back. Also if you return papers at the beginning of the class, cheaters who lost points or got zeroes might vent their anger and disrupt your planned lesson. If they get their papers at the end of the period, they can talk to you after class. Even better, they may go home to vent, and cool off by the time you see them next.