

GradeConnect

GradeConnect (www.gradeconnect.com) is a free Web-based gradebook program that is integrated with a robust course management system. Students and parents can track student progress and calculate grades at any time. The course management program provides pages to post assignments and announcements, a calendar, links for websites, an email system for effective communication, and a database to manage student textbooks.

GradeConnect is very easy to use because it was created by teachers. Presently, about 1,000 schools are using the program globally. GradeConnect can be used at all grade levels and it completely enhances the model of a technology-driven twenty-first century classroom.

Overview

- **Free** – The online program is free for teachers. Premium accounts are available for a small fee, but are not essential.
- **Secure** – Having an online program provides the teacher with access from school or home. The program uses the same technology that is used with credit cards. The servers are backed up daily with 24/7 monitoring to provide the utmost protection.
- **A Proven Record** – GradeConnect has been recognized by some of the leading organizations such as *The New York Times*, National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), U.S. Department of Education, and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE).

Highlights for Teachers

- **Course Description** – Each course (classes are referred to as courses) has a section to post a short description. This is handy when many classes are offered.
- **Online Gradebook** – You can post all your grades for each assignment, test, or quiz with one of three grading methods. The spreadsheet-style format has excellent statistical functionality.
- **Post Assignments and Announcements** – Teachers can post homework assignments, projects, and announcements. These tools are great for students who are absent or for parents to check on their child's assignments.
- **Progress Reports** – Teachers can generate progress reports or failure warnings for individuals.
- **Automated Emails** – You can send emails to a single student, your entire class, all students in multiple classes, or to parents.
- **Records of Textbooks** – There is a mini-database section to keep track of all your student textbooks such as title or book condition. This eliminates unnecessary paperwork, generates a digital record, and reinforces the importance of keeping books in excellent condition.
- **Time Saver** – GradeConnect saves time by giving your students feedback that will eliminate questions if they are absent or on vacation.

Try the Demo

If you want to see the program in action, click the Demo Login tab on the home page. GradeConnect has set up the usernames and passwords specifically for this article, eliminating the need to pre-register. They are as follows:

Teacher	Username: <i>teacher</i>	Password: <i>teacher</i>
Student	Username: <i>student1</i>	Password: <i>student1</i> (change drop-down menu to student)
Parent	Username: <i>parent1</i>	Password: <i>parent1</i> (change drop-down menu to parent)

Getting Your Free Account

Click the Create Account link and then the Create a Teacher Account link. Select your state and fill in the appropriate information. If you do not have the School Code, email GradeConnect at support@gradeconnect.com for an alternate method of verification. **Note:** There is a small fee for access to parent accounts. Most parents use their student's username and password for login purposes.

Premium Teacher Account

Connected Newsletter readers can upgrade to a trial premium teacher account for six months. Simply set up your free account as described above, log in to your account, click the Your Account tab, and then click Membership. Read the important information on the page, enter the promotional code **classroomconnect34**, and submit. You will be upgraded to a premium account until June 30, 2008.

Parent Communication Is Key

Parents have access to their child's grades, homework assignments, due dates, failure warnings, and any other postings. This is vital for creating and maintaining a positive teacher-parent relationship. In addition, the email system provides a convenient and effective form of ongoing communication. Parents can connect from home, office, or anywhere to get a daily overview of their child's test grades, homework, and any other special assignments or important announcements.

Summary

GradeConnect is a great tool for teachers to maximize their grading system and manage their courses online while providing an effective form of communication for students and parents. Louis Osinski, President of GradeConnect states, "Teachers tell us since they started using GradeConnect they have more time to do what they really love doing, and that is teach."

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