



Wellesley Middle School

# Concepts

Welcome to Concepts! Let's start the year off by giving you an overview of the course and hope this helps you to find success in our class this year. We will be exploring the Algebra 1 text by Carnegie Learning. A few of the topics you may be working on are Patterns, Multiple Representations, Proportional Reasoning, Percents, Solving Linear Equations, Linear Functions, and Writing/Graphing Linear Equations. In addition to these text topics, you will also be using two online software sites to help improve your basic skills and MCAS scores; the two sites are Cognitive Tutor (more text based support) and ALEKS (more MCAS focused).

## The Grading System:

Your grade for each quarter will be determined on a percentage basis. There will be four categories (these will be described in more detail) to think about:

Tests & Quizzes	45%
Homework	20%
Computer	20%
Communication	10%
<u>Self-evaluation</u>	<u>5%</u>
Overall Quarter Grade	100%

\*The only extra credit will be earned through class participation. The overall grade will be assigned according to the following scale:

99% - 100%	=	A+
92% - 98%	=	A
90% - 91%	=	A-
88% - 89%	=	B+
82% - 87%	=	B
80% - 81%	=	B-
78% - 79%	=	C+
72% - 77%	=	C
70% - 71%	=	C-
68% - 69%	=	D+
62% - 67%	=	D
60% - 61%	=	D-
59% & below	=	F

Overall Course Grade = QTR. 1 (15%) + QTR. 2 (20%) + QTR. 3 (25%) +  
QTR. 4 (30%) + Final Exam (10%)

### **Tests/Quizzes (1 every 2-3 weeks)**

These problems are used to determine knowledge and communication of concepts covered in class and on homework. Each problem is scored using this 5-point scale:

- 5 Correct, all thinking shown, complete and clearly presented
- 4 Correct, sound reasoning with a careless error, such as labeling incorrectly
- 3 Computation/basic-skill error but shows sound reasoning or correct with more thinking needed
- 2 Multiple errors made, or incorrect with hard to follow thinking, or correct with no thinking shown when needed
- 1 Weak understanding of concept being tested or incorrect with little or no thinking shown
- 0 Question is left blank

### **Basic Skills, Review or Notebook Quiz (1 of these each month)**

The skills quiz consists of ten basic skills questions and will be worth 50 points. The Review Quiz will cover any material learned from the start of the year and the Notebook Quiz will require that you copy a problem out of your notes.

### **Homework**

Homework will usually be given Monday through Thursday. We will walk around the room at the beginning of the period and check each person's homework for effort. You will be given credit based on the below rubric. Most assignments should take between 20 - 30 minutes. If you spend 30 minutes on any homework assignment and have not completed it, then you may have a parent or guardian sign to that under the last of your completed work and receive full credit. Please have them sign in cursive that you spent 30 minutes on it after the last completed problem.

**Daily Homework (randomly checked in class & no credit for late work)**

These checks are used to determine effort. Every student can work hard. Each daily check will use the following 3-point scale:

- 3 = looks like the student spent 30 quality minutes on the assignment
- 2 = looks like the student spent 20 quality minutes on the assignment
- 1 = looks like the student spent 10 quality minutes on the assignment
- 0 = no work product to show effort

**Communication:**

We will determine this grade. It will be based on our judgment of how hard you have worked and how well you have learned the material this quarter.

**Self-evaluation:**

You will determine this grade. It will be based on your judgment of how hard you have worked and how well you have learned the material this quarter.

**Computers**

This class will have a computer component to it that may be different than what you have experienced in past math course. Once or twice a week you will be using MacBook computers in class with teacher support. You will be exploring two different software programs: Cognitive Tutor and ALEKS. The Cognitive Tutor program will be closely connected to the text and focuses on algebraic thinking, geometry, and statistical thinking and probability, and revisits algebraic thinking and geometry. The ALEKS program is a Web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system. ALEKS uses adaptive questioning to quickly and accurately determine exactly what you know and don't know. ALEKS then instructs you on the topics you are most ready to learn.

**Attendance**

If you are absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to make up any missed homework and copy class notes from a classmate for the days you have missed. We will give you one extra day for each absence to make up the work. So if you were absent on a Monday and Tuesday, then you will have Wednesday and Thursday to complete missed work and show it to us on Friday.

### **Classroom Discipline**

There are three rules you will need to think about in this class. They are the following: 1.) Do your best 2.) Treat others fairly 3.) Do what is right. These three rules will be our guide to what is acceptable classroom behavior. We will also be on a point system to encourage the class to stay focused when a substitute teacher is in for US. When we are absent, the substitute teacher will rate the behavior of the class using a 5-point rubric. On the last day before winter break, if the class has earned above 90% of the total possible focus points with the substitutes, then we will have a party! This process will begin again for the second half of the year.

### **Materials**

- 1.) 3-ring or D-ring binder for book, spiral and any handouts
- 2.) Pencils
- 3.) Basic four function calculator

Math can sometimes be challenging. The thing to remember is to keep trying and have an open mind. Stay focused on what information the problem gives and what it is the problem wants you to solve. Read the problem three times and try it again. WE know you will do well if you just give your best. Hard work equals talent. Remember that **WE ARE ROOTING FOR YOU!**

Sincerely,  
Mike Mazzeo & Jennine Shulkin

### **Press On**

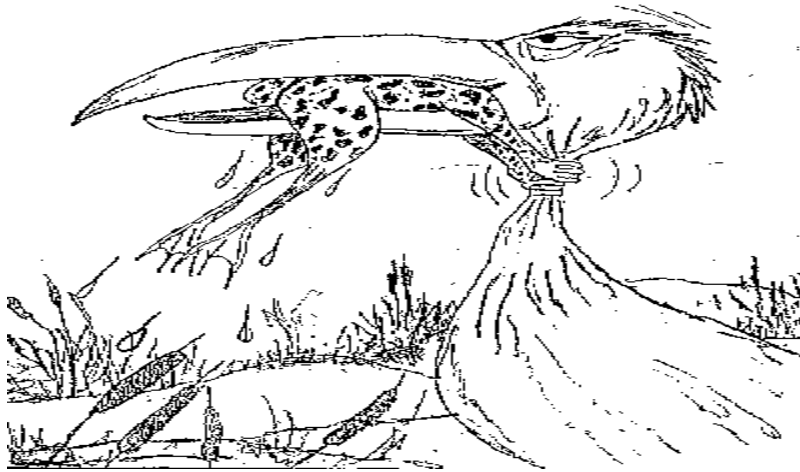
Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence,  
Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent.

DON'T EVER GIVE UP



### **Breathing Exercise (to help you relax)**

X = seconds to inhale deep into your belly

4X = seconds to hold breathe

2X = seconds to exhale slowly

(Start with X = 4 and work your way up)