



Writing Report Cards with Meaningful Comments

Before You Begin Writing Report Cards...

Several weeks before report cards are due, begin using our **Observation Checklist** (available for download on JTeach.org) to help focus your observations of students. Each week, choose 3-4 students to focus on and record your observations in the chart. This will provide a basis of information for crafting report cards.

Students themselves are also a wealth of information when writing report cards. Ask students to complete the **Student Self-Evaluation** (available for download on JTeach.org). You might find it helpful to review the *mitzvot* categories that are used in the headings with students before they complete the self-evaluation. Especially for younger children, it might be helpful to review what each of these concepts might look like.

The categories on the Student Self-Evaluation are parallel to the ones on the Observation Checklist. It can be very telling to see where you and the student agree or even disagree on how they are working/participating in class. This is a great conference conversation starter, as well, and can provide specific information for the comments section of the report card.

As You Write Report Card Comments...

- Begin by summarizing what you have covered. This creates the basis for the evaluation that follows.
- If available, share concrete measurements to legitimize your evaluation. List attendance, test scores, percentage of homework assignments completed, etc.
- Consider a four-part plan for your comments:
 1. Start with a compliment and/or positive statement based on the observations you made using the **Observation Checklist**.
 2. Indicate one or two things that the student has done to show you know the child personally and understand his/her uniqueness. Address any goals that the student has achieved and/or strived towards.
 3. *Tachlis* – Indicate areas of concern and/or comment on any growth the child has demonstrated.
 4. Wrap up with a positive statement regarding having the child in class and/or an encouraging statement regarding their future learning.

Consider This...

- Spell correctly. Have someone else read your comments before you submit them to your principal.



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- Brief is okay, as long as you are substantive and accurate.
- Be honest. Misinformation can effect many people:
 1. The **parent** receives wrong information and will either not trust your judgment or will be angry when the truth comes out later—which it always does.
 2. The **student** loses the incentive to work for a grade, gets a false impression of his/her ability relative to your standards, and will have to work that much harder when s/he needs to meet school standards.
 3. The student's **teacher** next year will have to clarify the reality for everyone, which is neither a fun nor easy task.

Sample Comments Regarding Specific Assignments and Classwork

- I was really proud of ___ for scoring ___ out of ___ points on his last test.
- Her quiz score of ___ reflects the consistent quality of her work.
- ___ did well on nine out of ten in-class assignments.
- ___ always/often/rarely completed his homework assignments.
- ___ missed (insert number here) assignments during this semester.
- ___ has shown tremendous/moderate/measured progress in (insert goal here) since ____.

Sample Comments Regarding General Skills and Participation

- ___ always/often/rarely contributes important insights in class discussions.
- ___ tends to be less participatory in class discussions, but she did (insert good participation item(s) here).
- ___'s performance has been inconsistent. (Provide examples.)
- ___ works well with other students (e.g., ____).
- ___ does his best when working on his own/in small groups/with the whole class.
- ___ has basic (text/reading/...) skills and continues to work on refining them.
- ___ made up missed up work and, in spite of absences, made sure to learn the material.
- ___ sometimes seems to struggle with staying engaged during class discussions.
- ___ asks insightful questions during class discussions.
- ___ is often the first to share her ideas in class discussions.
- ___ demonstrated her commitment by (insert positive action description here).
- I observed ___ working hard to master (insert curriculum area here).
- ___ struggles with _____. I am providing (insert strategies here) to help ___ feel successful in class.
- ___ excels at ___ and frequently shares this talent/skill with the class.