



SCHOLARLY

# How to Talk to Your Teacher

and bounce back from a bad mark.



presented by Rebecca  
Sparrow and Jane Sullivan

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# DEAR SCHOLARS,

You did it!

You've taken your first step to boosting your confidence in class and improving your connection with your teacher!

I know high school can be overwhelming at times (all those different teachers with different expectations) but with the right mindset and a few handy tips from me and Bec Sparrow, you can build positive working relationships with your teachers.

Being able to speak up and talk to your teacher is a skill ALL students need. Although it would be wonderful if all your teachers were like Miss Honey from Matilda, the truth is some teachers can be really scary and intimidating!

This webinar and downloadable PDF is designed to give you some tools to not just talk to your teacher and bounce back from a bad mark, but to help you actually enjoy your high school experience.

I'm so glad you've joined my community.

Sincerely,

*Jane Sullivan*

Director and Lead Educator

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# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR TEACHER (AND BOUNCE BACK FROM A BAD MARK)

*Jane's advice for enjoying the high school experience.*

## 1. YOUR TEACHER IS NOT YOUR ENEMY

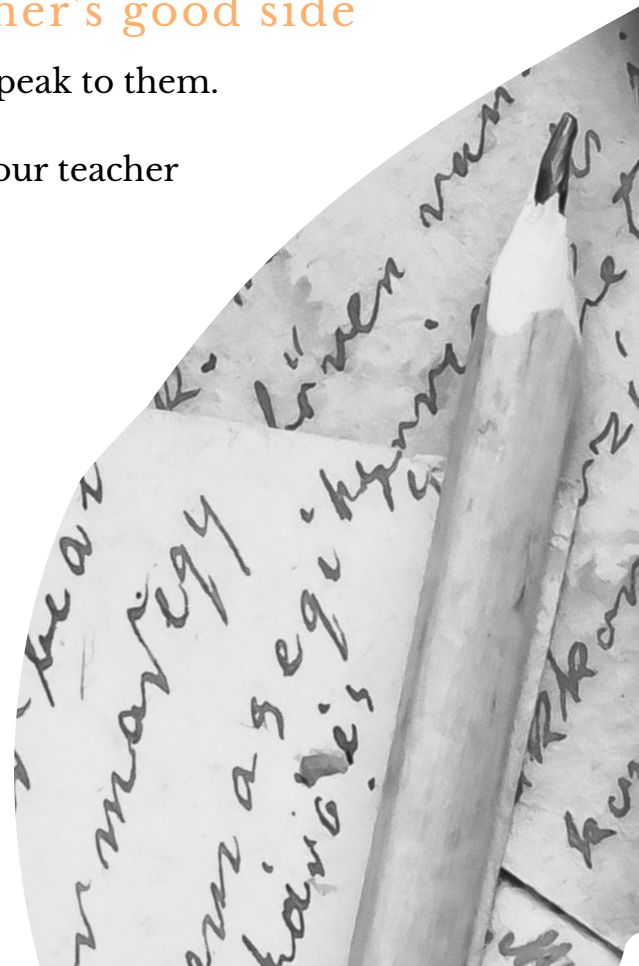
Although they may seem intimidating, I want you to remember that your teacher is **NOT** your enemy. **They are on your team.** Think of them like a personal trainer or sports coach. The fact is, teachers (even the cranky ones), are there to help you learn and achieve your personal best.

But, building a positive working relationship with your teacher isn't a one-way street. You need to invest some effort into engaging in your lessons. The reality is, a positive relationship with your teacher will have enormous benefits. The only person you're really disadvantaging when you sit in the classroom giving your teacher a death stare from the back row, is you.

But, in the vast majority of cases, your experience within the classroom, and your interactions with your teacher, will be improved with a little **enthusiasm**, **good manners** and a **solid work ethic**. Here are some top tips for connecting with your teacher:

### Top tips for getting on your teacher's good side

- Remember their name - and use it when you speak to them.
- Say "Hi Mr/Ms such and such" when you see your teacher around the school or you enter the classroom.
- Try to use eye contact when you speak to your teacher - remember, they're not your enemy - I promise lasers won't shoot out of their eyes!
- Every teacher seems to have a pet hate - being late, forgetting your task sheet, not raising your hand - try to work out your teacher's pet peeve and avoid making them grumpy.
- Show a little curiosity about their subject. Which brings me to my next point...



## 2. GET CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR SUBJECTS - EVEN THE ONES YOU 'HATE'

I recommend that you approach your learning with some curiosity – even if it's a subject that you dislike. Curious learners are successful learners - and your teachers will LOVE you for it!

Albert Einstein once said, "Curiosity is more important than knowledge."

Remember when you were a little kid and you would ask your parents "why?" all the time? Why are there stars? Why does the sun set? Why do we have birthdays? So. Many. Whys.

My point is, when you were younger, learning was FUN, it was just a natural part of life and was ignited by your curiosity!

### Top tips for sparking curiosity in class

- Change your mindset from "why do I have to learn this" to "I'm so lucky that I get to learn this!"
- Ever heard of a "power pose"? Why not try to adopt a "learning pose"? Sit up straight at your desk, keep your eyes focused at the front of the class, and nod your head when your teacher says something interesting.
- Ask questions, even if they seem trivial. Forget about what your peers might think - chances are they have questions too!

### How to tell your teacher you don't understand

#### IN CLASS

*Excuse me Ms/Mr, could you please go over that again? I'm a bit confused.*

#### VIA EMAIL

*Dear Ms/Mr,*

*I'm Jane from your Grade 9 Math's class. Can I make a time to see you because I'm struggling to understand [fill in the blank]."*



### 3. HOW TO BOUNCE BACK FROM A BAD MARK

Firstly, don't take it personally. Just because you received a bad mark, doesn't mean your teacher doesn't like you, or that you're 'bad' at the subject. Lots of students say to me, "my teacher hates me" and believe that any feedback from the teacher is a personal attack. Most of the time, it isn't. (In the cases where a teacher truly is treating students unfairly, then you should absolutely report this to your pastoral care leader or principal.)

If you've received a bad mark it's time to sit down and work out what areas you specifically need to improve. Where are the ticks/marks placed on the criteria sheet? What feedback did you teacher give you? Wherever the problem lies, you first need to identify the problem.

Once you've identified the areas where you may have fallen short, it's time to work to improve your skills. This might involve better planning or greater commitment to the drafting process. In most cases, students who work hard to understand their task sheet right off the bat, and have frequent check-ins with their teacher during the drafting process, usually get better results.

#### What do you do if you think your teacher's mark is wrong or unfair?

The first thing you need to do is work out whether the mark you've been given is a fair judgement of your work based on the criteria. If you've looked closely at the criteria sheet and feel that the mark still doesn't reflect your work, then it's time to chat to your teacher. Most schools will have a formal assessment review process, but I still think talking to your teacher in the first instance is the best approach. My advice? Don't just spring it on them. Approach them at the end of a lesson, and try the following opening:

*"Excuse me, Ms/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Dr \_\_\_\_\_, I wondered if I could make a time to have a chat with you about my recent assignment/exam. I was really disappointed with my mark and I'd love some feedback about how I could do better next time."*

Most teachers are open to these types of discussions because it shows some initiative on your part, as well as a willingness to improve. (Two things teachers love.) If, once you've had your chat, you still don't think the mark is fair, then apply for a formal assessment review with the Head of Department or Year Level Coordinator.

