

What Was On The Test?

Depending on when you have math (or English or science or whatever), kids who have the class later in the day will frequently ask about the day's lesson or assignment. How about you do me a personal favor and don't tell them? When kids get a little information about a class, some bad things happen.

For example, people might hear what an assignment is and be tempted to start it early without really knowing what they are doing. Or people might think they know in advance what is going on in a class so they don't pay attention when it actually happens. Or, since people have heard about them, I can't tell the same jokes all day (which is a big emotional hardship for Mr. Rice).

And here's the biggest problem from your view. From time to time, if I give a quiz or test where the grades turn out to be lower than I expected or wanted, I will curve the grades; that is, I will apply some formula to each person's grade to raise it to the level where I'd like it to be.

But suppose somebody in your early-in-the-day math class goes blabbing about everything on a test. If later kids come in knowing more than they should about a test, they will do better than they should, right? Right. However, *your* non-cheater grade stays exactly wherever it was. So, if the test was originally going to be one that I would have curved your grade up for, now when I look at all the grades, it doesn't look as necessary. Get it? In this instance, your mouth (or someone else's) can actually **hurt** your grade.

So, to keep your pal Mr. Rice healthy (as well as your own math grade), please just don't tell anyone anything about anything that is scheduled to happen in his class. Not what the assignment is, not what the lesson is about, not even whether a quiz was hard or easy, long or short. I promise I'll tell them everything they need to know when I see them. Or better yet, lie to them. Allow me to suggest the following phrases for your use ...

- What do you mean what was the homework? He never gives our class homework!
- He took us outside to ride ponies again today. I'm almost getting sick of doing that three times a week.
- I'm not sure ... I skipped math so that I could go to English twice.
- Believe it or not, every answer on the test was Alabama!

Thanks for your help. And notice that I always phrased things above in terms of what to do when people asked you information about a class ... I never assumed that you would be the one asking. Make sure I'm right about that.