

Protesting Appropriately

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Navigating conflicts can be challenging. It is particularly hard to do when you *adamantly* disagree with a teacher's decision, or you've been given an assignment you *really* don't want to do. Nonetheless, it is absolutely crucial to express your concerns and resolve conflicts respectfully. Learning how to calmly and clearly address disagreements about assignments or decisions can help you build better relationships with your teachers while ensuring your voice is heard. Below are six strategies you can use to have constructive dialogues with your teachers.

Comply First - Always follow lawful instructions from your teacher, regardless of personal disagreement. Start the assigned task immediately and complete the first few problems before voicing any protest. Ensure your work is accurate, as this demonstrates your willingness to comply and may strengthen your position when you present your case.

Stay Quiet - If you are upset about an assigned task, take a moment to calm down before speaking. Doing this will help you maintain composure. Organize your thoughts by writing them down. Writing out your thoughts and feelings can not only help you keep your cool during the conversation, but it will help ensure that you can clearly and politely express your perspective.

Ask to Speak to the Teacher - Once you've completed the first few problems, politely request to speak with the teacher. Use a calm voice and respectful language to explain your feelings and reasoning. Provide specific evidence or proof to support your viewpoint. For example, say, "Yesterday, I completed 20 linear equations and achieved a perfect score on the task. Why is it necessary to work on additional ones today?"

Be Willing to Negotiate - Rather than aiming to avoid an assignment altogether, be open to negotiating a reduction in requirements. There might be valid reasons for the task that you are unaware of. If you're still unclear, ask to discuss it privately with the teacher later. Remember, lawful orders must be followed, so view any reduction as a success, no matter how small.

Be Ready to Accept 'No' for an Answer - Understand that even a well-presented protest might not result in a change. Teachers often have valid reasons for their assignments. Before initiating the conversation, prepare yourself to accept a negative response without losing your temper.



Ask Once for Justification, Then Move On - If the teacher does not change their decision after your protest, calmly ask for their reasoning. Say, "Will you please tell me why you made that decision?" If you discover that the teacher had inaccurate information when they made their decision, politely correct the information and then ask if the new information changes their mind. If the answer remains no, accept it and move on. Demonstrating respect and understanding can leave a positive impression and lead to better outcomes in the future.

Effective communication with teachers involves a balance of respect, compliance, and assertiveness. By following these six strategies, you can ensure that you are addressing your concerns respectfully and constructively. These techniques will not only help you resolve immediate issues, but they will also help you build a foundation of mutual respect and understanding for future interactions. (534)