

Classroom Policies & Procedures

Mr. Bigler, Lynn English High School

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Welcome to Mr. Bigler's physics class!

Physics will be fun, and probably different from most of the other classes and teachers you're used to.

"Is this class hard?"

Yes.

Physics is hard for several reasons. You need to *use* algebra, geometry and trigonometry—not just to get the right answers when someone gives you the equation, but to be able to visualize what the equation means, how each of the variables relates to the others, where it is going, and to be able to follow it in your head to see the answer. If you struggle with any part of this process, then physics will be a struggle all year.

"How can I survive this class if it's so hard?"

Do the homework. Always. If you don't know how to do it, try anyway. Do as much as you can. Set up the equations and leave room to add to them. Pay attention when we go over the homework! Ask questions about anything you don't understand. Make sure you understand how to do it by the time you leave class. If you don't, come in for extra help as soon as you can, because the next assignment will probably build on it.

Don't copy from other students or the internet, and don't just write down the solutions and assume that you can study by looking at them later. Just as you can't learn to play a sport or a musical instrument by watching someone else do it, you can't learn to solve physics problems that way either.

However, before you panic, if you keep up with the homework and get the extra help you need, you will be able to earn a good grade. In my thirteen years of teaching I have a 99.5% pass rate for my classes (roughly one failure every 2 years). The only students who end up failing are the ones who don't try.

Bring to Class

- Pen or pencil.
- Mr. Bigler's *Physics Notes* and your binder/folder for worksheets, handouts, *etc.*
- Your lab notebook, if it is not already in the classroom.
- Completed homework assignments.
- A scientific calculator that can handle exponents, scientific notation and trigonometry. A TI-30, which costs about \$12, is sufficient. (If you already have a graphing calculator for math, you're all set.)

What You Should Do

- Be quiet and non-disruptive during lectures and discussions, so you don't prevent your classmates from being able to do well in the class. (This is one of my hot buttons.)
- Pick up handouts, if any, on your way to your seat. These will usually be on the demo table in the front of the room.
- Sit in your assigned seat until I have taken attendance. (Note that sometimes I take attendance by checking homework.)
- Wear your LEHS ID and keep food, drinks and phones out of sight, especially if you sit near the door. Make sure phones and other electronic devices are turned off or in silent mode.
- Get up out of your seat (without asking) any time you need to, as long as you are non-disruptive about it. (*E.g.*, to sharpen a pencil, get a tissue, get a cup of water or a fidget toy, move to the front of the room when we go over a homework problem you had trouble with, or move back to your seat so someone else can move to the front.)
- If you were absent, find out what you missed by checking the archives, checking with classmates, or by checking with me.
- Participate! Ask questions! Volunteer for demos! Take part in discussions! Respond to questions! You will learn much better if you do these things.
- If you can afford to, buy a copy of the class notes so you can write in and highlight them.
- Take notes on problems as we go over them. Complete and turn in any late work as soon as you can, because it's more likely than not that the next topic will build on the current one.

- If you are confused, wave a “white flag of surrender” (piece of paper) to show that you’re lost. This tells me exactly where I need to come back to when I go back to clarify.
- Use the ASL “toilet” sign for bathroom requests, so you don’t interrupt the discussion.



- I do not use a lab safety contract—safety is required at all times and is not something you have the option of agreeing to or not. I will not micromanage your lab experiences, but I will make sure you know what the potential dangers are and how to keep yourself and everyone else safe. I expect that you will always work in a safe, sensible manner, and that you will follow instructions, ask proactively about anything you are unsure of, and above all exercise common sense! I do, however, recommend that you read the Flinn Scientific Lab Safety Contract (http://www.flinnsci.com/documents/miscpdfs/safety_contract.pdf) because it contains a wealth of information about potential dangers and how to avoid them.
- You must wear approved (by me) eye protection whenever instructed. Experiments that require eye protection include (but are not necessarily limited to) working with liquids, powdered solids, heat, pressure, or glassware. I have safety glasses in the room, so you do not need to provide your own.
- I really hate issuing consequences. Any time I try to talk you out of one, I am trying to do you a favor. Please take me up on it.
- If I ask (or tell) you to do something, please do your best to comply first and save questions for afterwards. (If it’s something that one of us is upset about, it’s best to wait for at least a 5-minute “cooling off” period before asking questions.) If I (or any other teacher) ever tell you to do something that would be inappropriate, unsafe, or otherwise unreasonable to comply with, go to your guidance counselor.

What You Should Avoid Doing

- Avoid doing anything that might disrupt the class or distract others from learning.
- Avoid doing anything I have just asked you or someone else not to do (or to stop doing).
- Avoid asking to go the bathroom during the last 5 minutes of class unless you *really* can’t wait. If I give you a bathroom pass during the last 5 minutes of class, you need to leave your books and bags in the room and come back for them afterwards. (This is to prevent the fake “bathroom pass” that is really a means of getting to the cafeteria early for first lunch.)
- Do not let me catch you checking or using your phone. It’s impolite during lecture/discussion, unsafe during a lab experiment, and will be treated as cheating during a quiz or test. (Throughout the year, there will be specific “once-in-your-high-school-career” demonstrations or activities that I may allow you to record on your phone. However, you may not access your phone unless I specifically invite you to take it out for this purpose.)
- Do not lie, cheat, steal, or antagonize your classmates (or me). If I catch you cheating (including using your phone) or plagiarizing, your parents/guardians will need to give me explicit permission to let you re-take the test or re-submit the assignment, for a maximum of 75% of the original credit.
- Do not leave trash (including food wrappers and gum) anywhere in the room other than the wastebasket. This includes drawers, sinks, cabinets, cubbies, under desks, on the floor, *etc.* (It’s always OK to get out of your seat to throw something away, even if you weren’t supposed to have it in class.)
- Do not argue with me about grades, *etc.* during class time. (If you want to argue or debate, you are welcome to do so after school; I enjoy a good argument and won’t take it personally.)
- Do not put Kleenex Anti-Viral tissues in your mouth to find out if they taste like lemons.

Fire Alarms

- Be sure someone gets the “Save in case of fire” box. (It has sidewalk chalk and other useful things.)
- Turn *left* out the door, go down the stairs, exit the building, and continue to Goodridge Street.
- Check in with me outside to let me know you got out alive. This counts as a homework grade and I won’t give out any toys until everyone has checked in.
- Anything you write or draw on the sidewalk needs to be school-appropriate.

Lockdowns

Be quiet, hide, and follow instructions. If you wish to arm yourself, obtain a suitable weapon.

Grades

Grades are calculated as follows (based on the LEHS Uniform Grading Policy):

- Unit tests, formal lab reports, and major projects: 100 points each
- Quizzes, lab write-ups, and minor projects: 50 points each
- Lab experiments: 25 points for performing/participating in the experiment
- Day-to-day homework and classwork assignments: 5 points each
- Mid-term and final exams: 150 points

Students will (anonymously) grade each other's lab write-ups, using a rubric that I will provide. If you disagree with your grade on a lab write-up, you may submit it to be re-graded by me. Any difference greater than $\pm 10\%$ may be deducted from the *grader's* score.

If you are unhappy with your grade on a quiz or test, you can take a re-test. You get to keep the better score, except that the maximum grade on a re-test is 90%.

If need to rewrite parts of a lab write-up, rewrite the missing or inadequate sections starting on a new page, and include a "see page ____" reference pointing back to the original write-up. Submit the original rubric along with the rewritten sections. I will give you full credit for anything you add as a rewrite, up to a maximum grade of 90%.

You may also rewrite other written assignments if you are unhappy with your grade. Again submit the graded original along with the rewrite, and the rewrite grade will replace the original grade, up to a maximum of 90%.

Each homework assignment is graded out of 5 points. The guideline for on-time homework is 5 points ($\checkmark+$) if at least 75% completed and 4 points ($\checkmark-$) if at least 50% completed. (No points for less than 50% completed.) Having to get your homework from your locker costs 1 point. If you did not understand most or all of an assignment, I will usually let you make it up for full credit by the next class day. Late homework must be fully completed (with correct answers and work shown), and is worth 3 points if turned in before the test on the unit, and 2 points afterwards.

If you need an extension on an assignment or for a test, please ask in advance (unless something comes up that makes this impossible). I will usually say "yes" to any reasonable request. Note, however, that except for extraordinary circumstances (usually involving a directive from guidance or a vice principal), all extensions, late assignments, retests, rewrites, and other adjustments to your grade must be completed *before* grades close for the quarter.

Grades are calculated by the eSchool Plus grading system. In the past, there have been inconsistencies in the way eSchool Plus calculated grades, and changes were sometimes made to the eSchool Plus software without notice, resulting in unexpected changes to students' grades. If you believe that your grade was calculated incorrectly, it is *your* responsibility to bring it to my attention. I will then check the calculation against my grading policy and adjust your grade as appropriate.

Extra Credit

Extra credit points are called "up quarks." You can earn them by impressing me during class, being the class archivist or receptionist for a week, coming in for extra help and working on physics for at least 20 minutes (except for re-tests, which already bring up your grade), or bringing in something for the "brag board". Note that because there are ample opportunities to re-take tests, re-submit lab writeups, and and turn in missing homework late for partial credit, I do not give extra credit assignments. One up quark can be used as a "homework pass" each quarter. Remaining up quarks add one point each to your point total for the quarter (equivalent to one point on a test). All extra credit combined is limited to a maximum of a 3-point increase to your final grade for the quarter.

Archivist

The archivist's job is a voluntary one-week rotating duty, and is worth two up quarks. The archivist's duties each day are:

- If there are any filled-out “missed work” slips in the pocket in the front of the binder, distribute them to the appropriate students.
- Write down what we did under the appropriate day on the “class summary” sheet. Include a summary of the class, assignments, and announcements.
- For each student who was absent, mark them absent on the attendance sheet, fill out a “missed work” slip for them, and place it in the pocket in the front of the binder. If there are handouts, staple them to the missed work slip.
- Remember to ask for your up quarks after you finish your week of archiving!

Receptionist

The receptionist's job is a voluntary one-week rotating duty, and is worth two up quarks. The receptionist's duties are:

- Greet anyone who comes to the door (you will need to get up to meet them) and find out what they need. If they have a slip for a student, check whether the student is present and if so, take the slip and deliver it. If they ask to speak to me, ask whether you should interrupt class, or if they would rather have you take a message.
- If the telephone rings, answer it and say, “Mr. Bigler's room. Student speaking.” Find out who is calling and what they need. If they ask for me, ask whether you should interrupt class or if they would rather have you take a message.
- If we do an experiment in the hallway outside the classroom, listen for the telephone and answer it if it rings.
- Remember to ask for your up quarks after you finish your week of being the receptionist!

Extra Help and Communication

I am available for extra help most days after school, except for Science Team meetings/competitions (usually on Tuesdays), or when I have faculty or department meetings. (Faculty meetings are the first Wednesday of each month and department meetings are usually the second Thursday of each month.) If you plan to come in after school, check with me during the day to make sure I can actually be there.

The best way to communicate with me outside of school is via email. The best email address to use for me is MrBigler@MrBigler.com (which sends to my school email, my personal email and my phone), but you can send to BiglerJ@LynnSchools.org if you prefer.

Please be sure to tell me anything you want me to know. You'll find me to be friendly, patient and understanding, but I can only help you if I know that you need something. Even if you have an IEP or Section 504 accommodation that I should already be aware of, mistakes and omissions sometimes happen—it's always safest to talk with me specifically. Remember that throughout your life, *you* will always be your own best advocate. If you don't stand up for what you need, who will?

Finally, please be aware that your well-being is extremely important to me—far more important than physics. If it appears to me that something might be wrong or bothering you, I will probably ask you if you're OK or if something is wrong. This is an invitation to talk with me to whatever extent you're comfortable, and an opportunity for me to offer whatever help I can (including but not limited to some flexibility around deadlines). I won't feel slighted if you decline to talk to me or don't want my help, but please do let me know if there is anything I can do.

Post Script

Do you talk like this in class?

Yes, and usually way too fast. Feel free to ask me to slow down as often as you need to.