

# What to Say When Teachers Say No

You know your rights, you've come up with a proposal that seems reasonable to you, and you've talked to your teacher clearly and politely. . . to no avail. Sometimes the best-laid plans go awry in the face of that formidable opponent known as The Implacable Teacher. Don't give up just yet! Depending on what your teacher says (and your own energy level), there are a few more rebuttals you can attempt to the following "standard refusals."

## If your teacher says . . .

"I can't make an exception for you."

"It's always been done this way."

"It would cause chaos in my classroom."

"You're a straight-A student. Why not be satisfied with that? After all, what more could you ask for?"

## You might respond . . .

"That's okay with me, since I think there are a number of students who might benefit from being allowed to *[fill in here with whatever it is you're suggesting—e.g., testing out of material you already know, doing an alternative to the traditional assignment as long as it fulfills your class requirements, etc.]*."

"I know. And I'm sure there are probably some very good reasons for that. But how about letting me try this one time, and if it doesn't work, I'll agree to go back to the way it's been done in the past? Anyway, what's the worst that could happen—and would it really be so awful?"

"I'd be willing to help see that chaos doesn't prevail. I could form a small committee of students who really care and who would help set some guidelines that would keep order in the classroom. We'd agree that if things got out of control, we'd lose the opportunity to *[fill in with the idea at hand]*."

"I know I get straight A's, but the thing is, I feel I could be learning so much *more*. If it was possible to get a higher grade than an A, just think of the possibilities! You know the old cliché—'The sky's the limit.' I'd like to aim higher, and I really need your help and support."