

**General Procedures:**

1. Verify that answer keys are correct according to the handbook before beginning to grade
  - a. One answer key at a time should be checked by ALL graders (i.e. only one answer key at a time is discussed by the whole group).
  - b. If errors are found, notify the contest host and all graders to ensure discussion and agreement.
  - c. Once corrections are agreed upon, make necessary changes to ALL key copies immediately in a contrasting-colored pen.
  - d. One individual should read aloud to the entire group the acceptable ranges for the lower depth, clay%, and sand % columns. This ensures that every key has correct ranges.
2. Split up graders by tables. Each table is responsible for grading one pit face. Try to avoid having graders change tables in the middle of grading. There should be at least one coach with prior grading experience at each table and multiple schools represented.
  - a. Once all cards have been graded for an entire pit face, graders can change tables to facilitate grading completion.
3. Do not make “table rules” that differ from the contest host instructions. If there is a question about grading procedures or additional corrections to scorecards that were not approved by the group. Announce to the entire group that there is a question and reach agreement before proceeding.
4. Please resolve any and all general scoring questions resulting from the practice scorecards at the coaches meeting or prior to the start of contest; do not wait until the contest scoring begins.

**Questions that should be resolved prior to starting grading:**

- Are unambiguous answers correct?
  - Typically in Region V we have scored unambiguous answers as correct and ambiguous answers as incorrect. For example, “W” is ok for structure grade; “G” is ok for structure shape; but “BK” would NOT be ok for structure shape. If unsure whether or not an answer is ambiguous get group consensus before proceeding.
- Are the following equivalent? “-“ or “N”, or “n” or empty box
  - Typically in Region V we have treated these as equivalent.
- How should R or Cr horizons be graded?
  - Typically in Region V, for R or Cr horizons, all morphological properties (all columns following the lower depth column) should may indicated as “-“ (or “N” for redox features); if the properties are described by a student, the answers are ignored (i.e. not marked incorrect).
- What is a correct answer for the lower depth of the last horizon?
  - Typically in Region V, we have counted any answer (including blank) as correct.
- How should sections in C and D that have multiple answers (Parent Materials, Diagnostic Subsurface Horizons and Features, and subgroups) be graded?
  - Typically in Region V, these items were graded as +5 for each correct answer, -5 for each incorrect answer. The lowest score possible is 0. No points are deducted if one correct answer is selected, but a second correct answer is not.
- How should suffix order be addressed?

Region V Soil Judging Scoring Procedures (adapted from KSU version by N. Jelinski & B. Young, OCT-2019), Reviewed for 2022 contest by Amber Anderson.

- Typically in Region V, we have required that certain suffixes such as t be placed in the correct order but others do not have to be.
- Is “1” in the prefix box acceptable?
  - Typically, this is acceptable in Region V

### **SCORING!**

- Alternate or incorrect answers do not cascade through the scorecard to influence answers in later sections. Score every box independently.
- If an answer is incorrect, DO NOT indicate the correct answer and DO NOT obscure the original answer.
- The first grader should grade incorrect boxes by drawing a diagonal slash across the box, from corner to corner. The second grader draws a diagonal slash in the opposite direction, making an “X” across the box.
- After grading section B (morphology), add both across (row sums) and down (column sums) to ensure the numbers match.
- Each grader should initial the card when finished at the bottom of the card near the final point total. DO NOT circle this point total.
- All scorecards should be graded twice and tallied completely twice (i.e. not just graded once and “checked”).
- The second individual to grade a scorecard should use a different color pen than the first.
- If a discrepancy between two point totals is found on one card, the graders must reconcile, each change the written point total, and re-initial. This is to ensure that a student does not receive a card back that has multiple differing point totals on it which can lead to confusion and frustration even if the final score is correct.
- When two graders concur on the score, the final point total is written large at the top of the card and circled.
- Graders should avoid being the first to grade a student card from the same institution. It is acceptable to be the second grader on a card from your same institution.