Students who are given grades work harder than those who do not. Do you agree or disagree? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.

It is critically important that students work as hard as possible when they are at school.  Personally, I believe that teachers can motivate students to work hard by giving them grades. I feel this way for two reasons, which I will explore in the following essay.

         To begin with, students who are graded achieve more comprehensive knowledge of academic subjects.  When a student has an opportunity to earn grades, he will spend more time working on his assignments and will therefore absorb more information and will achieve more comprehension.  On the other hand, students who do not have to worry about their grades won’t work very hard and will only superficially understand their subjects. My own experience as a student is a compelling example of this. During my sophomore year I had to complete a major assignment in a political science class I was taking.  According to the course syllabus, the assignment would make up about half of my total grade in the class, so I approached my work with diligence and care. I wrote an amazing speech and spent hours preparing for every possible question my classmates might think of. If the presentation had not been graded, I would not have spent so much time preparing for it.  I am sure that students all over the world today are motivated to work hard by the chance to achieve high grades from their professors.

         Secondly, grades motivate students because they are a way to determine which people in a group are objectively most intelligent.  Grades are assigned in a systematic way, so they clearly demonstrate which students in a class are the best and brightest. For example, in my freshman year I took a literature class where students merely got a “pass” or “fail” at the end.  Since only a moderate amount of effort was required to pass the class, I completed my assignments and presentations quite halfheartedly. In contrast, when I took a graded class on the same subject in my junior year, I spent hours in the library researching my papers so that I could show my professors that I was intellectually superior to my classmates.  This may appear somewhat shallow, but in today’s competitive academic environment it is absolutely necessary for people to distinguish themselves.

         In conclusion, I strongly believe that grades encourage students to learn.  This is because they force students to learn as much as possible, and because they give young learners a way to distinguish themselves from their peers. (412 words)