



Striving for Accuracy and Precision

People who do this:

- Take time to check their work to get the best possible results.
- They are very aware of the expectations on them and the standards they need to meet.
- Confirm that their work exactly meets the criteria they were given.
- Take pride in their work.
- Rework projects they decide do not meet the required standard.
- Don't go for the quickest answer but instead go for the best.

Embodied in the stamina, grace and elegance of a ballerina or a shoemaker, is the desire for craftsmanship, mastery, flawlessness and economy of energy to produce exceptional results. People who value accuracy, precision and craftsmanship take time to check over their products. They review the rules by which they are to abide; they review the models and visions they are to follow; and they review the criteria they are to employ and confirm that their finish product matches the criteria exactly.

To be craftsmanlike means knowing that one can continually perfect one's craft by working to attain the highest possible standards, and pursue ongoing learning in order to bring a laser like focus of energies to task accomplishment. These people take pride in their work and have a desire for accuracy as they take time to check over their work. Craftsmanship includes exactness, precision, accuracy, correctness, faithfulness, and fidelity.

For some people, craftsmanship requires continuous reworking. Mario Cuomo, a great speechwriter and politician, once said that his speeches were never done—it was only a deadline that made him stop working on them! Some students may turn in sloppy, incomplete or uncorrected work. They are more anxious to get rid of the assignment than to check it over for accuracy and precision. They are willing to suffice with minimum effort rather than investing their maximum. They may be more interested in expedience rather than excellence.

“People who value accuracy, precision, and craftsmanship take time to check over their products. They review the rules by which they are to abide, they review the models and visions they are to follow, and they review the criteria they are to use to confirm that their finished product matches the criteria exactly.”

Webster’s II New College Dictionary defines *accuracy* as conforming closely to a standard or a fact. *Precision* is strict adherence to rules, forms, or standards.

Ask students to think of types of activities that require accuracy. Then compare to dictionary definitions.

Scientists, engineers, mathematicians, health-care providers, and factory workers are all examples of people that we may easily recognize as using accuracy in their work. Craftsmen also value accuracy and precision in their art. A craftsman can be a musician, a dancer, a shoemaker, or carpenter, to name a few.

When a carpenter measures the length of a 2x4 before cutting it, he or she may check the measurement to be sure that it is accurate.

A dancer whose movements are synchronized to music may stop moving at the precise instant that the music ends.

What can you do to improve your accuracy?

When I use this habit I am setting high standards for myself, and always doing my best. I am checking that I'm reaching my goals and always looking for ways to improve.

A man who has committed a mistake and doesn't correct it is committing another mistake.
Confucius