

HOW TO PLAN AND SET UP A 12-WEEK JOURNEY TO STUDENTS' FIRST GRADING

Keep new students motivated, progressing, and committed with a clear path from day one.

New students are most likely to drop out in the first 8–12 weeks — often because they don't know what they're working toward. A clear 12-week journey to their first grading gives them structure, a visible goal, and a sense of progress from the very first session. When students (and parents) understand what they're aiming for, they're more likely to stay engaged, train consistently, and become long-term members.

KEY BENEFITS FOR YOUR CLUB:

- Builds early-stage motivation and momentum
- Reduces drop-outs by giving students a clear purpose
- Helps instructors deliver consistent, goal-focused sessions
- Encourages parent buy-in and engagement
- Creates a natural upsell point at grading time
- Strengthens overall club structure and professionalism

STEP 1: BREAK YOUR SYLLABUS INTO WEEKLY FOCUS POINTS

Divide your beginner syllabus or white belt requirements into 12 weekly topics (e.g. Week 1 = basic stance, Week 2 = guard and footwork, Week 3 = first combo, etc.).

Tip: Keep it simple and repeat key skills often for confidence and muscle memory.

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STEP 2: CREATE A VISUAL PROGRESS TRACKER

Use a printable sheet, wall chart, or digital version that shows the journey from Week 1 to Week 12. Mark off progress with stickers, stripes, stamps, or badges.

Tip: Kids (and parents) love visual feedback — it turns learning into a game.

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE THE JOURNEY AT SIGN-UP

Tell new students and parents: *"We'll support them through a structured 12-week journey leading to their first belt grading."*

Tip: Position it as a milestone — it builds excitement and reduces early nerves.

STEP 4: CHECK IN AT THE HALFWAY POINT (WEEK 6)

Send a short message or chat after class: "[Name] is doing great — halfway to their first belt!"

Tip: Encouragement at the midpoint boosts confidence and reduces drop-offs.

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STEP 5: MAKE WEEK 12 FEEL SPECIAL

In the final week, prepare for grading with review sessions and extra support. Explain what to expect and how to succeed.

Tip: Add a small certificate or “Grading Ready” badge to mark the occasion.

STEP 6: CELEBRATE THEIR FIRST GRADING

Make it a big deal! Invite parents, take photos, post on social media, and give students a sense of achievement.

Tip: A great grading experience cements long-term commitment and makes students proud to represent your club.

FINAL TIP: KEEP IT SIMPLE — BUT MAKE IT VISIBLE:

Your 12-week journey doesn't need to be fancy. What matters is that it's clear, consistent, and visible — so every new student knows exactly what they're working toward. When beginners can see their path, they're far more likely to stay on it.