

Grades in Higher Education

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the importance of grades in higher education and define grade point average. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Importance of Grades

In high school, grades are important for getting into higher education—but once you're in higher education, do grades really matter that much anymore? At a minimum, of course, grades matter in the sense that you need to pass your classes to stay in school. You also might need to maintain a minimum grade point average to keep your scholarships or student loans. If you plan to continue your education in graduate school and earn an advanced degree, your college grades will matter in much the same way as your high school grades matter for college admission.

But what if you don't plan to attend graduate school—is a potential employer in the IT field really going to care about your grade in English Composition? They might! Certain employers may consider your college GPA a significant criterion in assessing your qualifications for a job and, especially if the job is competitive, an excellent GPA is a great way to distinguish yourself from other candidates. While your grades and your work in subjects that are relevant to the job may be of the utmost importance to your employer, your overall GPA—including those classes that aren't directly relevant—can be considered a measure not only of your ability but your determination and focus. A high GPA is an achievement indicative of hard work.

2. Grade Point Average

GPA stands for Grade Point Average. Grade points accord with the letter grades you receive in your classes:

A = 4.0

B = 3.0

C = 2.0

D = 1.0

F = 0.0

Pluses and minuses move the grade point up or down by one-third:

$B+ = 3.3$

$B = 3.0$

$B- = 2.7$

Your grade point average is what it sounds like—the average grade point for all of your classes in a given term or year or throughout your high school or college career. In high school, you may have had a 5-point GPA scale; this is due to AP or advanced placement (college-level) courses that are given more weight than typical high school courses. Colleges will use the 4-point GPA scale.

You might value certain classes—particularly those in your major or area of study—more than others, and therefore put more effort into your work in those classes. This makes sense, but keep in mind that your grades in all of your classes will be reflected in your GPA, and your GPA is the quick, quantifiable measure by which your academic performance will be assessed. On a résumé, you can distinguish your GPA in your major from your overall GPA, but that overall number tells a story of its own.



TRY IT

Let's say these are your grades for the fall term; practice calculating your GPA:

FIRST-YEAR WRITING: B

BIOLOGY: B+

STATISTICS: A-

INTRO TO ACCOUNTING: A

INTRO TO FINANCE: A-

What is your GPA?



TERM TO KNOW

GPA

Stands for grade point average. It is an average score for all of the grades you've received in the classes you have completed. A high GPA is a desirable goal for students, especially those seeking to continue their education.



SUMMARY

Your **grades may be important** to your career and academic goals in higher education. Your GPA, or **grade point average**, is an average score for all of the courses you have completed.



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