

Maintaining the Grades You Need or Want

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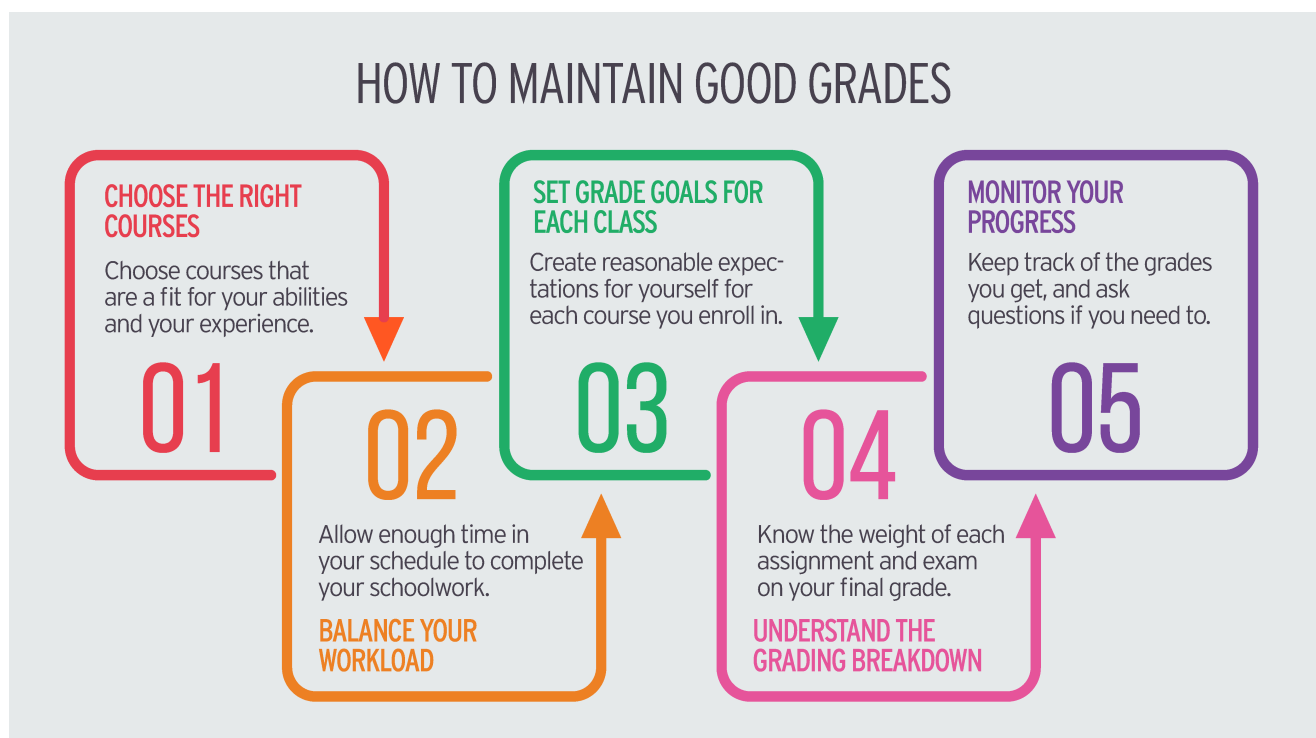


WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to manage your GPA by emphasizing the importance of grades, defining grade point average, and detailing some best practices for managing your GPA. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Best Practices for Managing Your GPA

Earning and maintaining a high GPA are important elements of student success in higher education, but that's easier said than done. You might be wondering how to achieve good enough grades across all of your classes to keep your GPA at a high level. First and foremost, of course, you'll have to study, but there are some strategies to keep in mind that can help you manage your GPA.



- **Choose the right courses:** Make sure you are choosing classes that are appropriate for your skill level and experience. You might consider whether an advanced class outside your major is a good choice as

an elective if it could potentially lower your GPA.

- **Balance your workload:** If you take on too much work and overload your course schedule for a single term, you may not have enough time or energy to do your best work. This can have a negative effect on your grades. So, it is important to set reasonable goals not only in terms of which courses you take, but how many you take at once.
- **Set grade goals for each class:** To put yourself in the best position to succeed in a given class or a given term, you need to set reasonable goals. If you are interested in a particular course but you are not confident you can earn a high grade, you might see whether you can take the course “pass/fail”—this way you get what you want out of the course without endangering your GPA.
- **Understand the grading breakdown:** Make sure you figure out as much as you can about your grade status by using the grading breakdown on the syllabus and all of the graded assignments you have gotten back.
- **Monitor your progress:** It helps to have a plan. Assess each of your classes in terms of a reasonable grade to aim for—be optimistic but also realistic—and keep track of your progress as you go. This will give you a goal to strive for and if you monitor your performance during the term, you won’t be surprised when final grades are posted at the end of the term.

IN CONTEXT

A key part of managing your GPA is knowing as much as possible about the status of your grade while you are taking a course. More and more, students can track their grades on course websites and digital platforms, but this will vary depending on the course and the instructor.

In certain classes, if you want to know where you currently stand, you are left with the old-fashioned method of asking your instructor. This is perfectly acceptable to do; in fact, it is recommended, but consider observing a certain etiquette in terms of communicating with your instructor about your grade. You don’t want to be perceived as what is known as a “grade-grubber”—a student who is only concerned about earning high grades. These are the students who are constantly asking, “Will this be on the test?” or “Will this affect our grade?” throughout a class.

In order to avoid this reputation, make sure you figure out as much as you can about your status using the grading breakdown on the syllabus and all of the graded assignments you have gotten back. Also, space out your inquiries about your grade; don’t pester the instructor about it every week. Finally, while it is acceptable to ask your instructor to explain why you earned a specific grade, outside of an egregious circumstance it is not appropriate to argue with your instructor about your grade.



SUMMARY

It’s possible to **manage a good GPA** by taking a strategic approach to course selection and planning your grades. It’s okay to ask questions, but you should never argue with your instructor over grades.