Grade Point Average & Class Rank

What is a "Grade Point Average?"
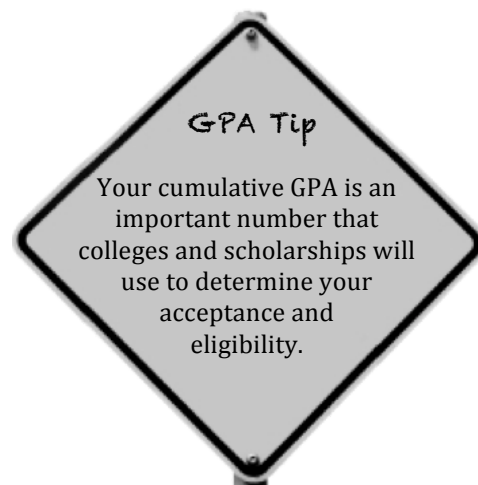
Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale
A+	97-100	4.0
A	93-96	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7
B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	65-66	1.0
E/F	Below 65	0.0

Your grade point average (regularly called GPA) is exactly what it sounds like – an average of all of your grades. When you get into high school and college, each letter grade you receive will be represented by a different number. Your grade point average is calculated by taking the sum of all of your grades and dividing that sum by the total number of credits or courses taken. Grade point averages are typically calculated on what is called a *4.0 scale*, yet some schools may use a 5.0 weighted GPA or even an 11.0 scale. If your school uses a 4.0 scale, then your GPA will be between a 0.0 and a 4.0, with a 4.0 being the best. The number representations that are most generally used for letter grades are listed below. It is important to note that some schools give plus/minus grades while others do not, and some high schools may not use this exact number scale for grades.

Whichever scale is used at your school, just know that the higher your GPA, the better (remember in your 6-year checklist that you want to maintain *at least* a B, or 85, average).

Semester GPA vs. Cumulative GPA

On your report card, you will typically see two types of GPAs – semester and cumulative. A semester GPA calculates your grade point average from that semester *only.* Your cumulative GPA calculates your grade point average from the very beginning of your freshman year. You will have a separate high school cumulative GPA and college cumulative GPA (so your high school GPA will not rollover into your college GPA). While it's great to have a high semester GPA, you want to work on keeping your cumulative GPA as high as possible since that is what colleges and potential employers will be looking at when you apply.

GPA Tip

Your cumulative GPA is an important number that colleges and scholarships will use to determine your acceptance and eligibility.

Weighted GPA and Unweighted GPA

The previously mentioned GPA examples are based on a 4.0 scale are considered "unweighted" GPA. However, many schools offer accelerated and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, IB classes, Dual Credit classes, and honors classes. Since these classes are more advanced than the regular courses, schools often assign a different point system to the harder classes. To weight the GPA, the semester grade in each course is added to the course weight. All weighted courses are totaled and divided by the total number of courses to get the weighted GPA.
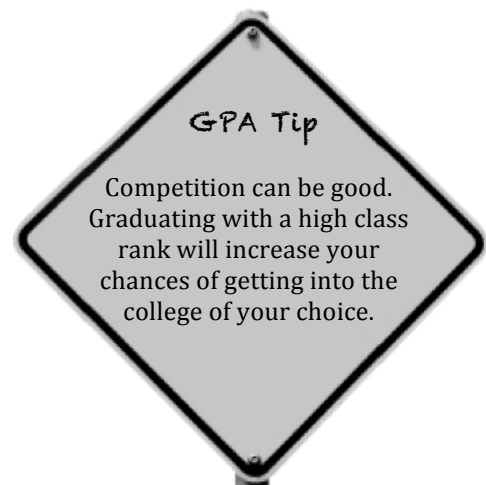
For example, a student earns a grade of 4.0 in Mrs. Blackwell's AP Chemistry class for the spring semester. This student's points will be calculated using a weighted GPA since it is an advanced course. Think of it as earning an additional point because you are in an advanced course. So instead of earning a 4.0 for an "A," this student would receive a 5.0 (4.0 for the A + 1.0 for the advanced course) for the semester class.

Check with your school to learn more about their weighted GPA scale and which classes it applies to. Taking advanced classes and doing well in them can help to raise your GPA. Your transcript (see "Glossary") will most likely show both your weighted GPA on a 5.0 scale and your unweighted GPA on a 4.0 scale. These numbers will be decimals and are used to calculate your class rank.

What is "Class Rank?"

Your class rank measures where you stand academically compared to others in your graduating class. For example, if you have a GPA of a 3.7 and your friend has a GPA of 3.8, your friend will rank higher than you do. Class rank may be used as a number (such as 6th in a class) or as a percentile (top 25% of a class). Admission officers for colleges and scholarships usually look at both your GPA and class rank together, so it is just as important to have a high class rank as well as a high GPA. A "really good" class rank is typically considered to be in the top 25% of your class and to be in the top 10% is considered "highly competitive" or "excellent." Think of it as a friendly competition between you and all of your classmates.

GPA Tip

Competition can be good. Graduating with a high class rank will increase your chances of getting into the college of your choice.

How to Calculate GPA

To calculate your GPA, remember to ADD all of your grades together and DIVIDE by the total.

For example: $\frac{A+A+B+B+C+A+B}{7} = \frac{4.0 + 4.0 + 3.0 + 3.0 + 2.0 + 4.0 + 3.0}{7} = \frac{23}{7} = $ **3.28**

Look at the two report cards below. Calculate both students' GPAs to determine if Anna or Darrion has a higher GPA.

Skyrise High School	
Anna Johnson	
Semester 1	
Algebra II	A
English II	A
World History	A
Art I	B-
Biology I	B
Team Sports	A
Newspaper	A
	TOTAL

Cityview High School	
Darrion Maher	
Semester 1	
Yearbook	A
Choir	A
Geography	A
Algebra II	A
Chemistry	A-
English II	A
Lifetime Sports	C+
	TOTAL

Letter Grade	Percent Grade	4.0 Scale
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USE THIS TABLE TO HELP ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW:

1. According to your calculations, what is **Anna's** GPA? _____

2. According to your calculations, what is **Darrion's** GPA? _____

3. Using your answers to the first two questions, imagine Anna and Darrion both went to the same high school and were the only two students there. If this was the case, what is each of their class rank's?

Anna's Class Rank: _____   Darrion's Class Rank: _____

Calculating My GPA

After speaking with your guidance counselor, fill in the chart below:

What numerical value does your school assign for each of the following grades, just in case it is different from the previous page:

A+ =   B+ =   C+ =   D+ =

A =   B =   C =   D =

A- =   B- =   C- =   D- =

Use this specific scale and your report cards to calculate your own GPA and make sure you are staying on track! To practice, fill in the chart below with your each of your classes and the grade you earned from last semester.

Class	Letter Grade Earned	Numerical Value
Example: Math	B	3.0

Your Calculated GPA =