

GPA FACTS AND CALCULATIONS

Calculating one's GPA is a fairly straightforward process. Except for the fact that many high schools report "weighted" and "unweighted" grade point averages. Basically, a weighted GPA takes into account the difficulty of the courses a student is taking, and those taking harder courses are rewarded with extra "brownie points" in their GPA. Usually colleges strip these brownie points from an applicant's GPA in order to fairly compare one student against another.

But merely stripping away the brownie points is not enough to uncover your real GPA, because in today's comprehensive high schools, we give grades for just about every class a student takes, including:

- physical education
- performing groups (including theater and all sorts of music)
- student aide

These courses help pad a high school student's schedule. But they do not constitute the academic core of high school. But these grades cannot really be counted as a measure of a student's academic abilities. To calculate a student's core GPA, we have to remove the fluff. We have to calculate the GPA based solely on the five academic solids that constitute a high school student's performance:

- Math
- English or Language Arts
- Social Studies
- Science
- Foreign Language

Now with that out of the way, let's look at the nuts and bolts of the GPA calculation for students who are awarded letter grades. For each grade in an academic course, assign the following number values to each grade. Then simply divide the sum of these numbers by the number of courses (a simple average). This will be our "Real" GPA.

A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, F = 0

So, to give an example, let's say that Stan the Student has a B- in Math, a B+ in English, a C+ in social studies, an A in Spanish, and a B in science, we add the following values: 2.7 + 3.3 + 2.3 + 4.0 + 3.0, for a total of 15.3. Divide by 5 courses, and the GPA is 3.06.