



# Herndon High School

## A Guide to Grading and Reporting

Herndon High School  
Herndon, Virginia

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# FCPS Secondary Guidelines for Grading

The purpose of the Secondary Guidelines for Grading and Reporting is to establish grading and reporting practices at the middle and high school levels in order to reach the following goals:

- Ensure that grades are based on student achievement, knowledge, and skill proficiency demonstrated in the classroom and are **separated from work habits**.
- **Promote consistency in grading across teams, departments, and schools.**
- Promote ongoing formative feedback to students.
- Promote practices that encourage continuous engagement in learning.
- Provide parents and students ongoing, credible, and useful feedback that conveys the expectations and achievement of **identified standards of knowledge** included in the curriculum.
- Ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

## Academic and Grading Philosophy:

At Herndon High School, we are in alignment with FCPS guidelines for grading. Furthermore, we believe in grading practices that foster a growth mindset because all students can learn and achieve; therefore, beginning in 2023-2024, we will utilize standards-based instruction/grading model in conjunction with a rolling gradebook. This practice informs all stakeholders of the standards students work towards in each course. This design gives students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians a better understanding of strengths and areas of growth for each student so that targeted support may be offered. With these grading principles, educators can provide greater clarification of student progress through our use of some common understandings and practices for grading while staying true to our commitment to a culture of deeper learning.

# Grading Scale:

	Definition	Communication	Grade Range
<b>Advanced</b>	Consistent demonstration of applying, recognizing, and transferring the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I can apply my knowledge in different situations or from different perspectives."</li> <li>● "I can do this well enough to teach others."</li> </ul>	<p>A 93-100 (GPA: 4.0)</p> <p>A- 90-92 (GPA: 3.7)</p>
<b>Proficient</b>	Demonstrates understanding of the standard with few errors	"I can complete all of my work independently, but I might make minor mistakes."	<p>B+ 87-89 (GPA: 3.3)</p> <p>B 83-86 (GPA: 3.0)</p> <p>B- 80-82 (GPA: 2.7)</p>
<b>Competent</b>	Partial understanding or demonstration of the standard; requires some additional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I can complete some of my work."</li> <li>● "I am not confident that I am doing it right without help."</li> <li>● "I am in the process of learning to do this, but need more practice or help."</li> </ul>	<p>C+ 77-79 (GPA: 2.3)</p> <p>C 73-76 (GPA: 2.0)</p> <p>C- 70-72 (GPA: 1.7)</p>
<b>Limited</b>	Minimal demonstration of understanding of the standard; unable to demonstrate understanding without significant support	"I cannot complete any of my work without help."	<p>D+ 67-69 (GPA: 1.3)</p> <p>D 64-66 (GPA: 1.0)</p>
<b>Insufficient Evidence</b>	No evidence of understanding yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I turned in completed work, but my work does not show that I understand."</li> <li>● "I did not turn in any work."</li> </ul>	<p>F 50-63 (GPA: 0.0)</p> <p>F 50 (GPA 0.0)</p>

## **Grading Communication:**

Parents and students can access information on student progress, grades, and feedback in our Student Information System (“SIS”). Parents and students can view SIS information on the FCPS website (ParentVUE or StudentVUE). Both parents and students are encouraged to contact a teacher if they have questions about what they see in SIS.

- For additional information on the SIS ParentVue, please click on [this](#) link.
- For additional information on StudentVue please click on [this](#) link.

### ***What do grades represent?***

The grade earned indicates the level of knowledge in accordance with the course standards from the VDOE, FCPS Program of Studies, the College Board (AP courses), or a partner college (dual enrollment courses).

### ***How do I interpret the gradebook?***

In the gradebook, each standard for the course will be a category or column. The current grade for a student’s level of mastery of each standard will be based on summative assessments and recorded and updated throughout the year. In addition, there are practice or formative assignments indicated to provide feedback to parents and students on how students are performing to prepare for summative assessment of standards.

### ***What is a rolling gradebook?***

A rolling gradebook is a cumulative documentation of learning. Unlike traditional quarterly gradebooks, a rolling gradebook documents learning on an ongoing basis throughout the year; it is not an average of quarter marks. The grade posted at the end of each traditional quarter is a snapshot of a student’s current progress in the course. This grading and reporting practice allows for increased opportunities for students to show their highest level of learning on individual standards.

### ***How will we know when assignments were or are due?***

Assignment information can be found on Schoology. Teachers will also enter due dates for each entry in SIS. If you cannot find what you are looking for, please email the teacher.

### ***What comments will teachers use in their gradebooks?***

The following comments will be used in SIS to communicate to parents and students the status of assessments recorded in the gradebook.

- Mi = Assignment not turned in (missing)
- SB = Student scored below 50%
- La = Assignment turned in late

### ***Is extra credit offered?***

Per FCPS grading policy, students cannot be awarded extra points/credit in lieu of or to replace assignments or assessments.

## ***How will grades be calculated?***

Summative assessments will be used to determine the grade for each standard. Grades for each standard will be determined by the following criteria (in this order):

1. Most recent performance on standard (including retake opportunities)
2. A pattern of achievement (including repeated level of achievement and an upward trend)

More course-specific details may be explained in the course syllabus. The student's year-end grade will be an average of the scores for each standard in the course.

## ***What are final exams like?***

Teachers are encouraged to create a culminating activity to reflect on what students have learned throughout the year. There are three options from which teachers can choose for the final exam:

1. A reflective, formative activity. This can be used for grade replacement.
2. An assessment on specific standards where the student did not perform well. This assessment will be used to inform the grade for that standard.
3. A traditional cumulative exam. This grade is not calculated as a separate grade in the gradebook; rather it is included among other summative assessments.

## ***How do quality points work for honors and AP classes?***

For students who pass an AP/HNs course, an additional 1.0/.5 quality point will be added to the quality point value assigned to the final mark for purposes of calculating GPA. For example, a final grade of A in the course shall receive 5.0 quality points. No additional weight will be assigned to an F.

AP students are strongly encouraged to take the AP exam(s). This standardized examination is designed to measure content and skill mastery, and a successful score may earn credit and advanced placement in college.

- FCPS will pay for six total AP exams during a student's academic career in FCPS. After six exams, students will be assessed a fee of \$93 for an AP exam. Information for students who choose not to participate in an AP exam for a course in which they are currently enrolled will be provided later in the school year.
- AP Economics, AP US & Comparative Government, and AP Physics C (one-credit course): The curriculum for these courses is assessed through two separate AP tests. Because students are enrolled in one course that covers material for two tests, the related tests are considered as one test for the FCPS-funded test counts and fees.

## ***What if a student submits an assignment past the due date?***

Students remain responsible for turning in work within deadlines in order to receive timely feedback. An assignment may close, but the standard will remain open in order to continue to demonstrate understanding.

If a student knows work will be turned in late due to special circumstances, the student should communicate with teachers in advance to create an action plan.

## ***Will students be able to retake or revise assessments?***

Retakes can be offered in the form of formative opportunities and as reassessments on specific standards where the student did not perform well. Prior to taking a reassessment or receiving a grade

replacement, it is expected that students demonstrate growth on the corresponding standard(s).

### ***What will I see in the gradebook? How can I see feedback in the gradebook?***

There are two types of grades (scores) entered in SIS. One is in the form of feedback given on formative assessments and practice and will be marked “not for grading.” A score may be associated with practice to indicate how students are doing in preparation for an assessment. The second form is through summative assessments. These scores will be broken up by standard as well and will directly contribute to the student’s grade on specific standards. Many teachers will provide information through the comments in the gradebook or through Schoology. If you have questions, you should reach out to your child’s teacher.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **What are the pedagogical benefits of standards-based instruction and grading?**

In standards-based instruction, teachers give frequent, specific feedback to students. Quality feedback accelerates learning. Instead of teachers traditionally stating a student did poorly on unit 1 or earned a 75%, teachers must be intentional to provide feedback about the task performed, skill used, or the knowledge demonstrated based on the standard. For example, stating to students that they did not demonstrate an understanding of chemical and biochemical processes, specifically protein synthesis, is more helpful than stating that the student failed the Unit 1 test. This helps students understand their areas of improvement and helps them understand where to improve to reach the next level. Overall, our goal is for grades to be accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning.

### **How does standards-based grading take into consideration those with disabilities and/or those who don’t test well, as class assignments and homework are non-graded work?**

Assessments are not only tests. Assessments come in a variety of formats: essays, short answers, exit tickets, projects, presentations, labs, quizzes, oral responses, etc. After a student has had the opportunity to practice and has received feedback, an assessment of their knowledge can occur. The goal of ungraded practice is to provide the opportunity for students to practice without being penalized. Teachers are to use a variety of assessments, beyond just tests, to determine what students know and are able to do.

### **Will teachers still assign homework to students?**

Homework serves a positive purpose for learning and supports the instructional program. Homework is often a vehicle through which students practice, apply, and/or elaborate on content that they are currently learning. It may also be used as preparation for learning new content.

### **What incentives exist for students to complete ungraded work?**

The purpose of practice is to monitor a student's progress toward mastery of essential course skills and standards. These student learning experiences prepare students for culminating learning experiences/assessments. Teachers will use practice to provide ongoing feedback to students toward mastery of specific skills, identify areas of need, and inform instructional practices. Students will use practice to identify their progress towards mastery, target skills that need more practice, set goals, and advocate for their learning

## **How are teachers providing feedback on homework and other assignments so that students are prepared for the assessments?**

Feedback is provided in a variety of ways. Teachers can provide comments or written feedback, have verbal conferences, and/or do whole-class reteaching. Teachers can enter practice grades in SIS and regularly provide feedback to the parents and students on how students are performing in class.

## **What is the expected timeline for students to receive feedback from teachers?**

Feedback on practice should happen during the class in which the practice is performed or the next class period. For summative assignments, teachers are expected to grade each assignment by standard and post the grades to the electronic gradebook within seven school days after the due date with the understanding that major projects/papers may require additional time to ensure quality feedback. If more time is required to provide feedback, teachers will notify students in advance.

## **What happens if a student is absent?**

Attendance is critical to student achievement. Being on time to class is important at Herndon High School. When students arrive to class on time, teachers can start class with minimal interruption and maintain the momentum of their instruction. It is essential to student learning and achievement that absences, even excused, be kept to a minimum.

Students are fully responsible for completing any missed assignments. Each day of excused absence affords one school day of makeup work opportunity. Students have a maximum of ten days to make up work missed during an excused period of absence; however, the period of time allowed to make up work may be extended at the discretion of the teacher. Makeup work for excused absences is graded and recorded in the grade book by teachers without penalty to students. For an approved pre-arranged absence, a student may request assignments in advance of the absence. Teachers will provide regular or alternative assignments in advance of the absence, when feasible. Following any absence, including a prearranged absence, students should make arrangements with individual teachers for makeup work.

## **How is grading communicated to college admissions? How will this affect a student's ability to get into a college when they are competing with students in the district or state?**

We send a school profile to every college that a student applies to, which includes information specific to Herndon. How grades are calculated at the school level is not an area of interest for college admissions. Attending a school with standards-based instruction and grading will in no way impact college admission processes. In general, admissions departments are looking for program of studies (courses the student has taken), GPA, and grades in specific courses. The final mark for courses is the grade of record.

## **How will transcripts look? How will this affect GPA calculation?**

Students will still receive letter grades, so transcripts will look the same. Since students still receive a final letter grade for each course, there is no impact on GPA calculation.

## **How is student effort being graded?**

Non-academic factors, such as attitude, effort, and participation have always been and will continue to be important to a student's success. We will continue to stress these skills; however, per FCPS grading

guidelines, student effort and behavior are not to be calculated into a student's grade. In FCPS, work habits must be separated from the academic achievement grade.

### **Does standards-based instruction and grading lead to grade inflation?**

Grade inflation refers to students receiving grades that are artificially higher than what is earned. In standards-based instruction and grading, it is expected that students demonstrate learning in each standard. Standards-based grading/instruction does not decrease rigor or assign higher grades to lower quality work. Rather, standards-based grading/instruction and grading provides more specific feedback about where student learning needs to improve so that students have a better idea of how to perform better. Our goal for all students has been and continues to be for them to achieve mastery on all standards in their courses.

### **Who do I contact if I have a question about grading?**

Students should talk to their teacher if they have a question about a grade. If there are still concerns after the student has contacted the teacher, parents should communicate with the teacher directly. The expectation is that teachers respond to messages within two business days. You may also contact your child's school counselor who can help facilitate a conversation with the teacher.

### **Resources Shared During TA**

This video was shared with students during our 4th block TA period:

- [Standards Based Instruction \(https://bit.ly/3qLxjgL\)](https://bit.ly/3qLxjgL) - English
- [Standards Based Instruction \(https://bit.ly/44iJDCN\)](https://bit.ly/44iJDCN) - Spanish

### **Other policies and expectations:**

#### **Required Class Reading:**

Please note that some of the books students will read this year may contain mature content and/or controversial material (i.e., offensive language, violence, and/or implied or explicit sexual situations). The resources listed below can be used to see book reviews and get more information about the books used in classes.

- [Fairfax County Library \(http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/)
- [Bartleby.com: Great Books Online \(http://www.bartleby.com\)](http://www.bartleby.com)
- [Book Reporter \(http://www.bookreporter.com\)](http://www.bookreporter.com)
- [Book Spot \(http://www.bookspot.com/\)](http://www.bookspot.com/)

A parent or guardian can contact the teacher directly by phone or email if s/he would like to review any of these texts or request an alternate reading assignment.

#### **Technology use expectations:**

##### Participation

- Bring your laptop to school FULLY CHARGED each day
- Use technology as, and when, directed by your teacher
- Create a positive digital footprint

##### Respect



- Give your full attention to the teacher and other students when they are talking
- Turn off distracting notifications
- Record/photograph others only with their permission
- Stay on task when using the laptop in class

#### Integrity & Diligence

- Be accountable for your device at all times
- Use your device for learning

#### Empathy

- Treat your device as if it is your own
- Keep food and drink away from your laptop

Students are expected to bring their assigned laptop each day fully charged. Additionally, it is recommended that students have a pair of earphones or earbuds they can access during the day. **We are unable to provide loaners for forgotten laptops, earphones, or chargers.**

In general, cell phones, headphones, and earbuds cannot be used during class time.

- Students will be able to use their phone during passing times and during lunch time, but once class time begins, their phones must be turned off and put away.
- There are a few exceptions to this rule, including the use of the phone to monitor medical needs and some specific documented learning needs. Beyond these exceptions, teachers are allowed to provide students with a five-minute phone break during class and they can also assign specific learning activities that might necessitate phone use (such as using the camera during photography class).
- If a parent needs to urgently get in touch with his/her child, the parent can call the main office at 703-810-2200 and we will help the parent reach his/her student.

### Digital Resources Consent:

Parents should visit the website listed below to give permission for their student(s) to use the digital resources provided by teachers in Herndon High School and FCPS. More information is also available on the [FCPS Digital Resources - Parental Consent webpage \(https://bit.ly/45Ef0sv\)](https://bit.ly/45Ef0sv)

### Herndon Writing Center:

The Herndon Writing Center (or the HWC) is a great resource for students seeking guidance with any and all writing assignments. Trained peer tutors are available to help you by giving you individual, personal feedback on your writing. Tutoring sessions are available during all lunches Monday-Thursday in the HWC, room A101. Sign-up sheets are available outside A101, and walk-ins are welcome based on tutor availability. Questions? Email Ms. Johnson ([lbjohnson3@fcps.edu](mailto:lbjohnson3@fcps.edu)) or Ms. Rigsby ([kripsby@fcps.edu](mailto:kripsby@fcps.edu)) or stop by room A101 for more information.

## Honor Code:

Students attending Herndon High School are expected to conduct themselves honorably in pursuit of their education. Cheating, misrepresentation/fraud, plagiarism, and theft violate ethical and moral rules of conduct and will not be tolerated at Herndon High School. **Note: Both giving and receiving information is considered a violation of the Honor Code.** The following table provides some examples these infractions:

Cheating	Misrepresentation or Fraud	Plagiarism	Theft
<p>Participating in or facilitating any form of copying (e.g., paper copying, taking pictures, utilizing cell phones)</p> <p>Giving or receiving information orally, or by signs, gestures, or deception during any type of assessment</p> <p>Discussing assessment information without teacher approval</p> <p>Representing another person's work as one's own</p>	<p>Forging a signature on any document</p> <p>Hiring or paying another student/person/website to complete school assignments</p> <p>Misrepresenting experience and/or participation in a club or organization on a resume</p> <p>Presenting community service hours for course credit or other requirements when no service was performed</p> <p>Submitting a project or assignment, without making substantial changes, more than once for credit (without teacher permission)</p>	<p>Copying material directly from published material or a website without using quotation marks and proper citations</p> <p>Turning in an assignment or project as one's own work when it was written in part or entirely by someone else</p> <p>Making up sources or including sources not consulted in works cited page</p> <p>Altering, restating, or paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, or work without giving credit or acknowledging one's sources. This would include but not be limited to text, music and video clips, photos, graphics, and artwork</p> <p>Paraphrasing partially or carelessly, even if cited</p>	<p>Taking another's piece of writing/work and submitting it as one's own</p> <p>Taking teacher copies of quizzes and/or tests</p> <p>Accessing an answer key or other materials belonging to a teacher without permission</p> <p>Sharing pictures or details about assignments in person or through social media without teacher permission</p>

Consequences for Honor Code violations remain on a student's record until graduation.

## Terminology:

- **CT** - collaborative team; a team of teachers who teach the same course for the year. Example: Biology, English 10; US VA history
- **Course Standards** - standards created by the VDOE, FCPS, the College Board, and/or partner colleges that we teach and assess throughout the year
- **Formative Assessment** - an opportunity for students to demonstrate learning of a standard, or a portion of a standard, and receive feedback; based on the results, teachers will design instruction to clarify any misunderstandings or to advance learning; with standards-based grading, formative assessments are check-ins that do not calculate into the student's grade
- **Growth Mindset** - a belief that all students are capable of learning and need practice to do so; the amount of practice needed is individualized and not intended to punish a student
- **Mastery of Learning** - a system of instruction, assessment, grading, and academic reporting based on student demonstration of acquisition of the knowledge of the standards of learning they are expected to progress in through their education
- **Objectives** - statements which encapsulate the learning goal for the day, the unit, and the year that are derived from the standards
- **Practice and Preparation:** Practice and preparation (including homework) are opportunities for students to receive individualized feedback on their learning. Work assigned in this manner is formative and will not be calculated into the grade (though it may be used to inform professional judgment of a summative grade). This work can be completed in and/or out of the classroom. Practice and preparation may look like studying, revising, reading, brainstorming, and/or practicing skills. When assigning preparation and practice work, Herndon's teachers consider the purpose and the quantity, ensuring that the type and amount is appropriate for students. Without completing practice and preparation, students may be unprepared for further learning and graded assessments.
- **Rolling Gradebook** - a cumulative documentation of learning; unlike quarterly gradebooks, a rolling gradebook documents learning on an ongoing basis throughout the year. This grading and reporting practice allows for increased opportunities for students to show their highest level of learning on individual standards.
- **Rubric** - a grading tool for evaluating student work which specifies the qualities or traits to be evaluated in a given assignment
- **Skills** - the action students take in order to demonstrate learning of the standards
- **Standards** - educational objectives of what students should learn in a given course; depending on the course, we use the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) standards, the FCPS Program of Studies, the College Board standards (AP), and/or the standards from a partner college (dual enrollment).
- **Standards-based approach to instruction** – instruction is planned, implemented, and assessed based upon prescribed learning standards in each course.
- **Standards-based Grading (SBG)** - a grading and reporting practice to communicate student progress of the course standards; grades directly assessing a standard/skill determine the overall grade. Student progress is evaluated every quarter based on performance on each

standard for each course based on expectations for the curriculum taught during that period of time. Students are given practice on the standard prior to assessment. Standards-based grading is a way to communicate what students know at a point in time rather than an average of performance over an entire period. This practice informs all stakeholders of the essential standards students learn in each subject area in a particular course. It is designed to give students, teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians a better understanding of strengths and areas of growth for that student.

- **Summative Assessment** - a culminating learning experience (i.e. project, presentation, exhibition, test, etc.) that allows students to demonstrate evidence of learning of the standards; students may have opportunities to demonstrate their learning through different modes of assessment. The purpose of an assessment is to evaluate a student's level of mastery of essential course skills and Portrait of a Graduate (POG) skills at key inflection points and/or endpoints during the course.

## Resources:

This is not an exhaustive list, but it does provide a starting point for further information.

- *The Standards Based Classroom: Make Learning the Goal* by Emily Rinkema and Stan Williams
- *Grading from the Inside Out: Bringing Accuracy to Student Assessment through a Standards-Based Mindset* by Tom Schimmer

[FCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting](#)

[FCPS Elementary Grading and Reporting](#)

[Ted Talk](#)

[What is Standards Based Grading?](#)

[Powerschool and SBG](#)

[Seven Reasons For Standards-Based Grading](#)

[What is Standards Based Grading?](#)

[Standards-Based Grading and College Admissions](#)