

# CALIFORNIA ACADEMIC DECATHLON

Incorporated from the United States Academic Decathlon

[www.academicdecathlon.org/GPA.htm](http://www.academicdecathlon.org/GPA.htm)

## EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTED/UNACCEPTED COURSES

### ACADEMIC COURSE GRADES FOR GPA CALCULATION



#### Conversions:

07.01.2021

Honor = 3.80 – 4.00 GPA <sup>34</sup>	Scholastic = 3.20 – 3.79 GPA <sup>34</sup>	Varsity = 0.00 – 3.19 GPA <sup>34</sup>
Grade/Points: A = 4	B = 3	C = 3
90 – 100 = A	80-89 = 3	70-79 = 2
	60 – 69 = 1	50 – 59 = 0

Incomplete, Pass/No Pass, Credit/No Credit grades are not included unless the student received a grade that appears on the transcript.<sup>12</sup>

#### Acceptable Courses

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic Business Courses</li> <li>▪ Accounting</li> <li>▪ Ag Biology<sup>15</sup></li> <li>▪ Ag Business</li> <li>▪ Ag Science (Theory)</li> <li>▪ Algebra Fundamentals<sup>14</sup></li> <li>▪ Algebra Lab<sup>8</sup></li> <li>▪ Algebra Support<sup>9</sup></li> <li>▪ Algebra Readiness<sup>10</sup></li> <li>▪ American Sign Language<sup>29</sup></li> <li>▪ Anatomy<sup>17</sup></li> <li>▪ Art Appreciation</li> <li>▪ Art History</li> <li>▪ Basic Business Economics</li> <li>▪ Business Concepts</li> <li>▪ Business Management</li> <li>▪ Business, Intro to</li> <li>▪ Business, Principles of</li> <li>▪ Basic Communications</li> <li>▪ Business Law</li> <li>▪ Computer Literacy</li> <li>▪ Computer Programming Language<sup>5</sup></li> <li>▪ Computer Science<sup>5</sup></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consumer Economics</li> <li>▪ Creative Writing</li> <li>▪ Creative Writing, Advanced</li> <li>▪ Criminal Law (Justice)</li> <li>▪ Debate</li> <li>▪ Distance Learning<sup>28</sup></li> <li>▪ Drama Comp / Drama Literature<sup>22</sup></li> <li>▪ Earth Science (Theory)</li> <li>▪ Economics</li> <li>▪ Engineering Design (Theory)</li> <li>▪ English/Language Arts</li> <li>▪ English Intervention / ELD<sup>7, 27</sup></li> <li>▪ Foreign Language Arts</li> <li>▪ Foreign Language</li> <li>▪ Foreign Language: American Sign Language</li> <li>▪ Forensics (Science, Bio Tech)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Geography<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Group Problem Solving (Communications)</li> <li>▪ History of Motion Pictures<sup>6</sup></li> <li>▪ Humanities</li> <li>▪ Journalism<sup>18</sup></li> <li>▪ Kinesiology<sup>30</sup></li> <li>▪ Marketing (Theory)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mathematics</li> <li>▪ Music Appreciation</li> <li>▪ Music History</li> <li>▪ Music Theory</li> <li>▪ Oral Communications</li> <li>▪ Political Science<sup>19</sup></li> <li>▪ Principles of Technology (Science)</li> <li>▪ Psychology</li> <li>▪ Reading (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)<sup>13</sup></li> <li>▪ Robotics<sup>24</sup></li> <li>▪ Science (Theory)</li> <li>▪ Social (American) Justice<sup>20</sup></li> <li>▪ Social Studies (Contemporary Issues)</li> <li>▪ Sociology</li> <li>▪ Speech</li> <li>▪ Statistics (Math)</li> <li>▪ Theory of Knowledge<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ U.S. History</li> <li>▪ Upward Bound Courses<sup>16</sup></li> <li>▪ Visual Arts, IB<sup>21</sup></li> <li>▪ World Geography</li> <li>▪ World History</li> <li>▪ Writing</li> </ul> |
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#### Unacceptable Courses

(How to, skills-type; non-book learning; Lab/hands-on courses)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic Decathlon</li> <li>▪ AVID courses<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Agriculture<sup>36</sup></li> <li>▪ Ag Mechanics<sup>25</sup></li> <li>▪ AP Seminar (AP Capstone™)<sup>33</sup></li> <li>▪ Architectural Drawing</li> <li>▪ Art (Ceramics, Drawing, Multi-Cultural)</li> <li>▪ Astronomy (unless a Science credit)</li> <li>▪ Automotive</li> <li>▪ AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)</li> <li>▪ Band/Chorus</li> <li>▪ CAHSEE Math<sup>11</sup></li> <li>▪ Child Development</li> <li>▪ Computer: (Information Processing, Keyboarding, Lab, Micro Applications, Software Courses)</li> <li>▪ Computers, Careers, and Finance<sup>32</sup></li> <li>▪ Crime Science<sup>31</sup></li> <li>▪ Current Events (unless Social Studies)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drafting</li> <li>▪ Drama / Advanced Drama<sup>23</sup></li> <li>▪ Driver's Education</li> <li>▪ Electronics</li> <li>▪ Engineering Graphics</li> <li>▪ Ethic Law (Theology)</li> <li>▪ Film</li> <li>▪ Graphics</li> <li>▪ Health Education</li> <li>▪ Home Economics</li> <li>▪ Horticulture</li> <li>▪ Independent Study</li> <li>▪ Industry</li> <li>▪ Jewelry</li> <li>▪ Mechanical Drawing</li> <li>▪ Media Studies</li> <li>▪ Medical Ethics</li> <li>▪ Metal Procedures</li> <li>▪ Morality and Issues</li> <li>▪ Multi-Media (Communications)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Newspaper, School<sup>18</sup></li> <li>▪ Personal Law</li> <li>▪ Photography</li> <li>▪ Physical Education</li> <li>▪ Printmaking</li> <li>▪ Project Lead The Way (PLTW)<sup>35</sup></li> <li>▪ Public Safety<sup>26</sup></li> <li>▪ Record Keeping</li> <li>▪ Religion</li> <li>▪ ROTC</li> <li>▪ Shop</li> <li>▪ Shorthand/Speed Writing</li> <li>▪ Spelling (8<sup>th</sup> Grade)<sup>13</sup></li> <li>▪ Stage Craft</li> <li>▪ Television Production</li> <li>▪ Theater Arts</li> <li>▪ Typing</li> <li>▪ Vocational Education Courses</li> <li>▪ Word Processing</li> <li>▪ Yearbook</li> </ul> |
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## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> AVID was declined by USAD on 7.27.11. AVID is an elective course that teaches students how to study, read the content, take notes, and manage time. Students participate in collaborative study groups or tutorials led by tutors who use skillful questioning to bring student to a higher level of understanding. AVID courses are a general elective course that helps students with study skills related to their specific academic courses. Therefore, AVID should not be counted towards GPA Verification because it is considered more of a study skills course.
- <sup>2</sup> Theory of Knowledge was approved by USAD on 8.31.11 because it appears to focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories of this discipline (knowledge). The course also uses texts and resources for papers, quizzes, etc. which appears to have more objective assessment rather than being more performance-based/subjective assessments.
- <sup>3</sup> Forensics was approved by USAD on 8.25.11 because the course description includes objective assessment and also covers a lot of speech, debate, public speaking, which are also listed as acceptable courses.
- <sup>4</sup> Geography was approved by USAD on 11.28.11 because the course is often tied together with Social Studies and/or History courses, which are acceptable. It was also accepted based upon the syllabus which supported this course being more theory based. Many of World Geography curriculum USAD came across in their research involved a textbook (such as *World Geography Today (Holt, Rinehart, Winston)* ) and assessed with tests on chapter tests, U.S. states and capitals test, and a world map test where students are required to know many of the world's countries, capitals, and locations.
- <sup>5</sup> Computer Science was approved by USAD on 1.4.12 because the course syllabus, course title and course description reviewed. Also, USAD does list Computer Programming Language (previously listed as Programming Language). Both courses appear to be aligned with a programming course as opposed to a computer lab course that involves keyboarding, word processing, or software (which USAD does not accept).
- <sup>6</sup> History of Motion Picture was approved by USAD on 1.9.12 because the course syllabus reviewed shows the curriculum focusses more than 50% of the time on concepts related to film history through outside readings, includes exams, screening quizzes a final exam. This course does not include a text book.
- <sup>7</sup> Approved by USAD on 11.29.12. English Intervention (8<sup>th</sup> grade) - This is an intervention class. Smaller class size and slower paced, designed for the student who was not below basic or lower in the 7th grade CST English section. This course is academic in nature and has objective assessments (progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments).
- <sup>8</sup> Approved by USAD on 11.29.12. Algebra Lab - This is a slower pace, smaller class size designed for students who were below basic or lower on the previous year's CST Math section. This course uses Algebra I textbook (McGraw Hill) and has weekly tests (75% grade based on assignments and tests and 25% based on Final Exam).
- <sup>9</sup> Approved by USAD on 11.29.12. Algebra Support - This is a slower pace, smaller class size designed for students who were below basic or lower on the previous year's CST Math section. Old name for what became Algebra Lab. This course uses Algebra I textbook (McGraw Hill) and the 30% of grade is based on quizzes and 40% of grade is based on exams.
- <sup>10</sup> Approved by USAD on 11.29.12. Algebra Readiness - An intervention type class for students who scored Below Basic or lower on the previous years CST Math section. Designed with smaller class size and more moderate pace. Uses Algebra Readiness Textbook and 60% of the grade is based on quizzes and tests.
- <sup>11</sup> Not approved by USAD on 11.29.12. CAHSEE Math - A class designed to help student unsuccessful in passing the Math section of the CAHSEE exam. Small class size and slower paced to allow the concepts to be more thoroughly grasped. This course would be considered more of a "prep" course. This does not appear to be book-based and does not have objective assessments based upon the course descriptions. The course grades are based on classwork, participation, and ALEKS Progress (online computer program).
- <sup>12</sup> ~~According to USAD guidelines (10.30.07 and 12.16.12), incomplete and pass/fail grades are not included in computing the GPA unless the student received an F that appears on the transcript. If only pass/fail grades are assigned, the State Director will determine an evaluation scale in concert with the USAD.~~

As of 07.01.14, California schools must include all Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Grades from school transcripts to the CAD GPA Calculation Worksheet. There will be (2) options: **Option 1:** Pass = A and No Pass = F. **Option 2:** In order to change a P/NP to a grade you feel is more appropriate, a coach "must" obtain proper verification and present findings to the regional coordinator for review. Proper verification must include approval from school site administration and school district(s). The Regional Coordinator may assist the coach in obtaining the proper verification. The Regional Coordinator will present findings to the state director for final review and approval.

- <sup>13</sup> According to USAD as of 12.13.12. Spelling as a course should NOT be counted since this falls under more "how-to/skills-type." As far as Reading, USAD would accept this as a course if there is a syllabus that provides a course description that includes clear assessments including quizzes, tests, and writing assignments. USAD recommends checking with the school regarding the specific Reading syllabus since there are Reading Lab courses in middle schools that may be more designed as "skills courses" and may not include any form of objective assessments.
- <sup>14</sup> Algebra Fundamentals: As of 12.18.12, USAD would count this course since the curriculum includes a textbook and the assessments are based upon Chapter/Unit Tests as well as Quarterlies and Final Exams.
- <sup>15</sup> Agriculture Biology: As of 12.18.12, USAD would count this course. This does not have "Lab" in the course title and based upon the Agriculture Biology Course Syllabus on a Hamilton High School website, this course utilizes the text, *Modern Biology/The Science of Agriculture*, and grades are determined by tests, quizzes, and projects (40%) and classwork, homework, and notebook (40%). This course appears to focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories in this specific discipline.
- <sup>16</sup> Upward Bound Courses: As of 12.18.12, USAD would count specific Upward Bound Courses that are academic in nature (such as Physics, Geometry, Biology etc.) after reviewing an Upward Bound Chemistry Syllabus and the course is based from the text "*Chemistry in the Community*" and the grades in the class are calculated by combining equally the tests/projects grade, the homework grade and the participation grade (each at 1/3). Again, this course focuses more than half of the time on understanding the theories in this subject.

- <sup>17</sup> Anatomy: As of 12.18.12, USAD would count this course. This does not have "Lab" in the course title and is based upon a text and has objective assessments. It appears that most of the Anatomy courses have the grading based on homework, lab assignments, section/unit quizzes, Chapter Assessments, and a final exam.
- <sup>18</sup> Journalism & Newspaper: As of 9.26.14, USAD's explanation of both courses.  
 USAD lists **journalism** under the "Language Arts" acceptable courses since there are scholastic journalism courses in high schools that do focus more than 50% of the time on understanding ideas, concepts, and theories in the field of journalism. This acceptable journalism course may include a textbook, such as *Inside Reporting or High School Journalism*, and the course objectives may involve students learning the differences with journalistic writing, understanding history of journalism, study of First Amendment/Freedom of Press, etc.  
 While a **newspaper course** would not be counted since this type of course is not as academic in nature since the focus of the course is for students to write, edits, and layout issues of the school newspaper. This falls more under hands-on/skills-type and the majority of the student's grade is subjective in nature.
- <sup>19</sup> Political Science: As of 8.5.15, USAD states, "Political Science courses appear to be countable for GPA since these include a textbook (American Government) and there are objective assessments for the course which would make this more academic."
- <sup>20</sup> Social (American) Justice: As of 8.17.15, USAD states: American Justice courses appear to be countable for GPA since this class includes a component that studies historical events/cases as well as the current justice system. In addition, since debate is on the acceptable list which further weighs in favor of counting American (Social) Justice towards GPA tabulations.
- <sup>21</sup> IB Visual Arts (LAUSD): As of 5.10.16, USAD recognizes IB Visual Arts as an acceptable course. USAD does list Art Appreciation and Art History as Acceptable as long as 50% of the time focusses on understanding ideas, concepts and theories of art in these types of courses. IB Visual Arts course (LAUSD) appears to be more academic in nature and in line with an Art Appreciation course. It appears students are creating artwork for this course, however, there seems to be a lot more involved than other art courses that would NOT be counted such as ceramics, jewelry-making, or painting course. Students are "exploring and comparing visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and critically reflect upon a wide range of contemporary practices and media." Based on this statement and the overview of the course, the course is more academic in nature as opposed to a strictly hands-on or lab-based art class.
- <sup>22</sup> Drama Comp or Dramatic Literature is more academic in nature and this type of course would be more of a survey of major periods/genres of major playwrights, critics, and theorists and tends to be tied with English courses.
- <sup>23</sup> Drama (Advanced Drama) is more of a performance-based course and is closely associated to the category of theater arts.
- <sup>24</sup> Robotics is a course listed on USAD's official list of Acceptable Courses (10/11/16). This falls under Engineering.
- <sup>25</sup> Ag Mechanics. This appears to be a lab-based and project-based course that gives students the opportunity to increase hand-eye coordination/motor skills and focuses on ag mechanics technology such as engine maintenance, metal fabrications, welding, construction. As of 10/11/16, USAD would not accept this course based on the fact that this is more a skills-type course.
- <sup>26</sup> Public Safety. This is a course that falls into the Vocational and Applied Technology Department. Based on this category, USAD would not accept this course (10/11/16).
- <sup>27</sup> Originally approved by USAD on 11.29.12. English Intervention (8<sup>th</sup> grade) - This is an intervention class. Smaller class size and slower paced, designed for the student who was not below basic or lower in the 7th grade CST English section. This course is academic in nature and has objective assessments (progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments).  
 On 10.31.16, USAD extended its approval to include high school English Intervention since it includes writing, reading, vocabulary, and communication that would be more academic in nature with objective assessments as opposed to a performance based class.
- <sup>28</sup> Distance learning is similar to how Academic Decathlon treat community college courses in that if the course is academic, high school credit is given, and it is listed on the official school transcript, then is accepted.
- <sup>29</sup> American Sign Language is an acceptable course approved by USAD on 11.21.17.
- <sup>30</sup> Kinesiology was approved as an acceptable course approved by USAD on 10.30.18. It was approved based upon the review of the Syllabus and interviews from the instructor and students. It appears that that more than 50% of the course is more academic in nature (providing theory, book-based, understanding of ideas, concepts of kinesiology and more objective testing to determine the grade rather than a lab science/hands on course).
- <sup>31</sup> OHS 18 Crime Science 1-2 was not approved as an acceptable course by USAD on 10.23.18. Based upon the review of the Syllabus, the course description indicates this is more of a hands-on career/technical education course.
- <sup>32</sup> ADS 15 Computers, Careers, and Finance was not approved as an acceptable course by USAD on 10.23.18. Based upon the review of the Syllabus which appears to be a survey lab course with lab supplies/hands on course.
- <sup>33</sup> AP Seminar (AP Capstone™). Defined as a diploma program from the College Board. It's based on two yearlong AP courses: AP Seminar and AP Research. Rather than teaching subject-specific content, these courses develop students' skills in research, analysis, evidence-based arguments, collaboration, writing, and presenting. **These courses are not to be included** (USAD, 11.02.18) because they are not focused on an academic subject/theory of a specific discipline but rather more of a skills course and the assessments (particularly in the research course) are more subjective.
- <sup>34</sup> Effective as of July 1, 2020.
- <sup>35</sup> Project Lead The Way (PLTW). PLTW was not approved as an acceptable course by USAD on 7.3.2020 based on the fact that the "majority" of the assessments are performance/project based according to the PLTW homepage review.
- <sup>36</sup> Some of the courses include: Ag Science III (Madera), Small Animal Care (Madera)