

Behavioral Dimensions of Grades

The following information is designed to explain what behaviors are likely to earn you an A versus a C. Treat the nine dimensions as guidelines for earning these grades rather than rigid conditions for or guarantees of success. In particular classes, for example, an A student can earn a C while a C student can earn an A. Likewise, an A student may earn an A without satisfying the characteristics of an A student on all nine dimensions. It is very difficult for anyone, no matter how exceptional, to consistently exhibit every quality associated with that of an A student.

'A' or Outstanding Students

'C' or Average Students

1. Ability (Talent)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have special aptitude, motivation, or a combination of both. This talent may include either or both creativity and organizational skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vary greatly in aptitude. Some are quite talented but their success is limited by a lack of organizational skills or motivation. Others are motivated but lack special aptitude.
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2. Attendance (Commitment)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never miss class.• Commitment to the class resembles that of their professor• Attending class is their highest priority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Periodically miss class and/or are often late.• Place other priorities, such as a job, ahead of class.• Have illness or family problems that limit their success.
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3. Communication Skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write well and speak confidently and clearly.• Communication work is well organized, covers all relevant points, and is easy to read or listen to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not write or speak particularly well.• Thought processes lack organization and clarity.• Written work may require a second reading by the professor to comprehend its meaning.
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4. Performance

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain the highest scores in the class.• Exhibit test-taking skills such as an ability to budget their time and to deal with test anxiety.• Often volunteer thoughtful comments and ask interesting questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obtain mediocre or inconsistent scores.• Often do not budget their time well on exams and may not deal well with test anxiety.• Rarely say much during class discussion and their answers indicate a cursory understanding rather than mastery of the material.
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'A' or Outstanding Students**'C' or Average Students****5. Attitude (Dedication)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show initiative. • Desire to excel makes them do more work than is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seldom show initiative. • Never do more than required and sometimes do less.
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6. Curiosity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibly interested during class. • Display interest in the subject matter through their questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in class without enthusiasm, with indifference, or even boredom. • Show little, if any, interest in the subject matter.
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7. Preparation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always prepared for class. • Always respond when called on. • Attention to detail sometimes results in catching text or teacher errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not always prepared for class. • Assignments may not be fully completed, may be completed in a careless manner, or are handed in late.
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8. Retention

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn concepts rather than memorize details. • Able to connect past learning with present material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorize details rather than learn concepts. • Usual cram for tests, therefore perform relatively better on short quizzes than on more comprehensive tests such as the final exam.
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9. Time Commitment (Effort)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a fixed study schedule. • Regularly prepare for each class no matter what the assignment. • Average 3-4 hours of study for every hour of class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study only under pressure. • Do not review or study ahead. • Average no more than 2 hours of study for every hour in class. • Tend to cram for exams.
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Adapted from Dr. Paul Solomon, "Communicating About the Behavioral Dimensions of Grades", *The Teaching Professor*, February 1996.