

## FINAL GRADES PRIMER - TEMPLATE

A document like this one will be sent to you after each exam is completed and graded. The curve and grade cut-offs for each exam will be filled in as the semester progresses.

**Bonus points** are added AFTER these grade cut-offs are determined.

For example, if you're 10 points away from an "A", but have 10 bonus points, you'll get an "A".

I give + and - grades, but only to a very narrow range. If you are above the "A" cut-off, then you get an "A", not an "A-". A- and B+ (etc.) are for scores slightly below the lowest A cut-off. Same for the other letter levels. (This is explained on the next page.)

Here is an example of exam grading for a hypothetical class taking four 100 point midterms and one 200 point final exam. The lowest cut-off for any grade is simply the sum of the lowest cut-offs of each exam. *Percent of class earning each grade varies with natural cut-off points on the curve.*

**The cut-offs below do NOT include any bonus points.**

<p><b>Exam 1 (100 points)</b>            Lowest A = xx            Lowest B = xx            Lowest C = xx            Lowest D = xx            Etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>xx and higher = A (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>xx - xx = B (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>50 - xx = C (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>40-48 = D (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>below 40 = F (xx% of class)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Exam 2 (100 points)</b>            Cumulative after exam 2:            Lowest A = xxx            Lowest B = xxx            Lowest C = xxx            Lowest D = xxx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>xx and higher = A (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>xx - xx = B (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>50 - xx = C (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>40-48 = D (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>below xx = F (xx% of class)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Exam 3 (100 points)</b>            Cumulative after exam 3:            Lowest A = xxx            Lowest B = xxx            Lowest C = xxx            Lowest D = xxx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>xx and higher = A (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>xx - xx = B (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>50 - xx = C (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>40-48 = D (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>below 40 = F (xx% of class)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Exam 4 (100 points)</b>            Cumulative after exam 4:            Lowest A = xxx            Lowest B = xxx            Lowest C = xxx            Lowest D = xxx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>xx and higher = A (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>xx - xx = B (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>50 - xx = C (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>40-48 = D (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>below 40 = F (xx% of class)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Exam 5 (200 points)</b>            Cumulative final cut-offs:            Lowest A = xxx            Lowest B = xxx            Lowest C = xxx            Lowest D = xxx</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>xx and higher = A (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>xx - xx = B (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>50 - xx = C (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>40-48 = D (xx% of class)</b></li> <li>• <b>below 40 = F (xx% of class)</b></li> </ul>

### **BONUS POINTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Let's suppose that at the end of the semester, Adrienne finds herself with an exam point total of 486, just 18 points shy of that elusive 504 point total needed for an A.

But she has faithfully attended class and done well on the bonus quizzes, earning 22 bonus points.

This brings her new total to 508, which boosts her letter grade from a B to an A.

Adrienne's pal Harold earned the same number of exam points as Adrienne (486), but he didn't attend class very often, and earned only 5 bonus points. His point total is boosted to 491, but that's still not enough for the A. Poor Hal. Lesson learned too late.

### **PLUS AND MINUS GRADES**

If Adrienne earned 504 points in this hypothetical semester, then she has earned an A.

A small proportion of students just below 505 points (~500 points) will get an A-.

Another small proportion of students slightly below 500 points (~495 points) will get a B+.

The same very small range of "just shy" grades at each cut-off will be treated in a similar fashion. But if you earn the lowest number of points for any given grade cut-off, then you get that grade, not a + or - version of that grade.

### **THE BOTTOM LINE**

Attendance should be considered mandatory, though roll is not taken.

At the end of the semester, I can clearly see who has taken the effort to come to class via the list of responses (with time signatures) from the bonus quizzes.

If you don't come to class and take an active role in your learning experience, then please don't come to me at the end of the semester, teary-eyed, begging for other bonus point opportunities. I can't offer those unless I offer them to every student in the class. To do otherwise would be unfair and possibly illegal.