



California Academic Decathlon

10-29-2024

Examples Of Acceptable / Unacceptable Courses For GPA Calculation

Incorporated from the United States Academic Decathlon

Examples Of Specific Accepted Courses

Conversions:

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

Incomplete, Pass/No Pass, Credit/No Credit grades are not included unless a grade appears on the transcript.¹²

A-G Course List: [Academic Decathlon: https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist](https://hs-articulation.ucop.edu/agcourselist)

Acceptable Courses

- Academic Business Courses
- Accounting
- Ag Biology ¹⁵
- Ag Business
- Ag Science (Theory)
- Algebra Fundamentals ¹⁴
- Algebra Lab ⁸
- Algebra Support ⁹
- Algebra Readiness ¹⁰
- American Sign Language ²⁹
- Anatomy ¹⁷
- Art Appreciation
- Art History
- Basic Business Economics
- Business Concepts
- Business Management
- Business, Intro to
- Business, Principles of
- Basic Communications
- Business Law
- Computer Literacy
- Computer Programming Language ⁵
- Computer Science /Computer Science Programming / AP Computer Science / Exploring Computer Science ⁵
- Computer Animation and Game Design ⁴⁰
- Consumer Economics
- Creative Writing
- Creative Writing, Advanced
- Criminal Law (Justice)
- Debate
- Distance Learning ²⁸
- Drama Comp / Drama Lit. ²²
- Earth Science (Theory)
- Economics
- Engineering ⁴⁷
- Engineering Design (Theory) (PLTW 1)
- Engineering and Architecture, Honors Principles of ^{41 / 42}
- English/Language Arts
- English Intervention / ELD ^{7, 27}
- Entrepreneurship (CTE) ³⁹
- Ethnic Studies (Social Studies) ³⁸
- Foreign Language
- Foreign Language: American Sign Language
- Forensics (Science, Bio Tech) ³
- Geography ⁴
- Group Problem Solving (Communications)
- History of Motion Pictures ⁶
- Humanities
- Journalism ¹⁸
- Kinesiology ³⁰
- Marketing (Theory)
- Mathematics
- Music Appreciation
- Music History
- Music Theory
- Oral Communications
- Political Science ¹⁹
- Principles of Technology (Science)
- Product Innovation Design and Manufacturing, Introduction To / Advanced / Honors ⁴³
- Product Innovation Design & Manufacturing, Introduction & Advance ⁴⁵
- Project Lead The Way (PLTW), Science & Engineering Courses ³⁵
- Psychology
- Reading (8th Grade) ¹³
- Robotics ²⁴
- Science (Theory)
- Social (American) Justice ²⁰
- Social Studies (Contemporary Issues, Ethnic Studies ⁴⁸)
- Sociology
- Speech
- Statistics (Math)
- Theory of Knowledge²
- U.S. History
- Upward Bound Courses¹⁶
- Visual Arts, IB ²¹
- World Geography
- World History
- Writing

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Examples Of Specific Unaccepted Courses

Unacceptable Courses

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

- Academic Decathlon
- AVID courses ¹
- Agriculture ³⁶
- Ag Mechanics ²⁵
- AP Seminar (AP Capstone™) ³³
- Architectural Drawing
- Art (Ceramics, Drawing, Multi-Cultural)
- Astronomy (unless a Science credit)
- Automotive
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
- Band/Chorus
- CAHSEE Math ¹¹
- Child Development
- Computer: (General Application, Information Processing, Keyboarding, Lab, Micro Applications, Software Courses)
- Computers, Careers, and Finance ³²
- Crime Science ³¹
- Current Events (unless Social Studies)
- Drafting – Learning Software ⁴⁷
- Drafting & Architecture / Advanced D&A ⁴⁴
- Drama / Advanced Drama ²³
- Driver’s Education
- Electronics
- Engineering Graphics ⁴⁶
- Ethic Law (Theology)
- Film
- Graphics / Graphing Design ⁴⁷
- Health Education
- Home Economics
- Horticulture
- Independent Study
- Industry
- Jewelry
- Mechanical Drawing ⁴⁶
- Media Studies
- Medical Ethics
- Metal Procedures
- Morality and Issues
- Multi-Media (Communications)
- Newspaper, School ¹⁸
- Personal Law
- Photography
- Physical Education
- Printmaking
- Public Safety ²⁶
- Record Keeping
- Religion
- ROTC
- Shop
- Shorthand/Speed Writing
- Spelling (8th Grade) ¹³
- Stage Craft
- Television Production / Occupations
- Theater Arts
- Typing
- Veterinary Science #91049 ³⁷
- Video Production
- Vocational Education Courses
- Word Processing
- Yearbook

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ AIVD 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.
- ² 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.
- ³ 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.
- ⁴ 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.
- ⁵ 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).

COMPUTER SCIENCE AND PROGRAMMING Meets requirements: CTE/EL/g/Δ Grades: 10-12 Prerequisite: "C" in Math 1, "C" in Exploring Computer Science Computer Science and Programming is a second year computer science course with an emphasis on programming concepts and methodology. Students will learn algorithmic thinking and expression and be able to understand basic principles of programming logic. They will learn to communicate complex ideas simply and solve problems logically. Topics include computer hardware, troubleshooting, computer security, networking, and program development. Students will engage in several in-depth projects to demonstrate the real-world application of computing and programming. This course is a CSUS ACE (Accelerated College Entrance) approved course. Juniors and Seniors may earn college credit from the CSU system and may transfer credit to other colleges and universities.

AP COMPUTER SCIENCE A Meets requirements: CTE/EL/c Grades: 11-12 Prerequisite: "B" or higher in Exploring Computer Science and Computer Science and Programming OR Engineering Design and Honors Principals of Engineering; 3.0 College prep GPA AP Computer Science A focuses on further developing computational thinking skills through the medium of Android™ App development for mobile platforms. The course utilizes industry-standard tools such as Android Studio, Java™ programming language, XML, and device emulators. Students collaborate to create original solutions to problems of their own choosing by designing and implementing user interfaces and Web-based databases. This is a Project Lead the Way Course. (PLTW).

- ⁶ 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 textbook.
- ⁷ Approved by USAD on 11.29.12. English Intervention (8th 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).
- ⁸ 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 is more academic in nature. 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).
- ⁹ 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.
- ¹⁰ 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.
- ¹¹ 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).

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- ¹² [Revised 10/29/24 in collaboration between CAD & USAD]. Incomplete, credit/no credit, or pass/no pass (ICP) grades are not included in the GPA calculation unless the student received an F grade for the course. These ICP grades generally do not affect the GPA. However, if a course with an ICP grade subsequently results in a failing grade (F), that F will be included in the GPA calculation.

For students with ICP grades assigned to all focus semesters for GPA computation which go back two years prior to the current grade level, regional coordinators and state directors will collaborate to determine an evaluation scale. The state director will then submit the final request to the United States Academic Decathlon Testing Director for final review and approval. Only USAD acceptable grades from these focus semesters will be considered for GPA calculation.

To convert an ICP grade to a letter grade, a coach must provide verified documentation from the school site administration and district(s) to the regional coordinator. The regional coordinator may assist in obtaining this verification and will forward the approved request to the state director. The state director will then submit the final request to the United States Academic Decathlon Testing Director for final review and approval.

- ¹³ According to USAD as of 12.13.12. Spelling as a course should NOT be counted since it 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.
- ¹⁴ 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.
- ¹⁵ 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.
- ¹⁶ 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 on 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.
- ¹⁷ 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.
- ¹⁸ 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.
- ¹⁹ 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."
- ²⁰ 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.
- ²¹ 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.
- ²² 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.
- ²³ Drama (Advanced Drama) is more of a performance-based course and is closely associated to the category of theater arts.
- ²⁴ Robotics is a course listed on USAD's official list of Acceptable Courses (10/11/16). This falls under Engineering.
- ²⁵ 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.
- ²⁶ 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).

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²⁷ Originally approved by USAD on 11.29.12. English Intervention (8th 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ American Sign Language is an acceptable course approved by USAD on 11.21.17.

³⁰ 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).

³¹ 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.

³² 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.

³³ 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.

³⁴ Effective as of July 1, 2020.

³⁵ [Updated] As of 7.1.2023, Project Lead The Way (PLTW) science and engineering classes will count. (Originally, PLTW was not approved as an acceptable course by USAD on 7.3.2020 since the "majority" of the assessments are performance/project based according to the PLTW homepage review.)

³⁶ Some of the courses include: Ag Science III (Madera), Small Animal Care (Madera)

³⁷ Veterinary Science: The Care of Animals by IUSD Virtual Academy @ San Joaquin was not approved as an acceptable course by USAD on 9.9.22. Based upon the review of the submitted information and Syllabus, the course description indicates this is more of a hands-on career/technical education course.

³⁸ Ethnic Studies (Social Studies): Ethnic Studies falls into the Social Studies/Contemporary issues and is an acceptable course if the syllabus shows there is over 50% book-learning and includes objective assessments and tests.

³⁹ ENTREPRENEURSHIP Meets requirements: CTE/EL/g Grades: 9-12 Prerequisite: None Students in this course will develop an understanding of entrepreneurship and small business ownership and the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs. Students will learn about factors that affect a business's image, and how to develop and successfully build and maintain a business's image and brand.

⁴⁰ COMPUTER ANIMATION AND GAME DESIGN Meets requirements: CTE/EL/g Grades: 10-12 Prerequisite: None This is a survey course which explores the art, science, and programming behind computer animation and digital games. Students will design computer animations from "scratch" learning to program motion, lighting, shadow, and background elements. Students will employ these skills in developing the look and feel of digital games. Game design includes individual and group development of gaming projects from game concept and mapping through basic programming, the iterative design process, and proof of concept. (Programming Language)

⁴¹ HONORS PRINCIPLES OF ENGINEERING (PLTW 2) Meets requirements: CTE/EL/d Grades: 10-12 Prerequisites: "C" in Engineering Design, and concurrent enrollment in Integrated Math 2 This course helps students understand the field of engineering and engineering technology. Exploring various technology systems and manufacturing processes helps students learn how engineers and technicians use math, science, and technology in an engineering problem solving process to benefit people. Students will use a hands-on and cooperative approach to learning. Scientific principles, mathematical concepts and communication skills are taught through the activity-oriented approach. Students will explore robotics, electronics, hydraulics, pneumatics, and computer design technologies. Students will work in problem solving groups that will research, design, and build projects for practical applications and competitions.

⁴² HONORS CIVIL ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE (PLTW 3) Meets requirements: CTE/EL/d Grades: 10-12 Prerequisites: "C" in Principles of Engineering, previously taken or currently enrolled in a college prep math course. This course is designed to provide an overview of the fields of Civil Engineering and Architecture. Students will work in teams, exploring hands-on projects and activities to learn the characteristics of civil engineering and architecture. They will use the Revit Architecture and rendering software to document their designs. Students will develop a design for a piece of local property site, plan out public and private facilities, meet with industry professionals, and build models to enhance in-class learning.

⁴³ INTRODUCTIONS TO PRODUCT INNOVATION DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING Meets requirements: EL/CTE/g Grades: 9-12 Prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in Integrated Math 1 or higher In this course, students will receive introductory level exploratory instruction regarding product design using woods, metals, plastics, and composites. Students will learn to design, draw, and model products that they will build through the proper use of hand tools, machinery tools, 3D printers, and CNC machines. Students will demonstrate a thorough understanding of industry safety standards and will receive instruction regarding related career paths. Students who successfully complete Introduction to Product Innovation and Design will

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have the opportunity to take a level two course that advances the student's ability to design and build products using a variety of materials. (Appears heavier on engineering design concepts as opposed to a mixed media art course)

- ⁴⁴ ADVANCED DRAFTING AND ARCHITECTURE Meets requirements: CTE/EL/FA/f Grades: 11-12 Prerequisite: Civil Engineering and Architecture or teacher recommendation This is an advanced course in which students will continue to develop both the hands-on application of engineering and artistic appreciation of architecture. Students will expand their knowledge and experience in Civil Engineering and Architecture, especially involving drafting and building design. This course allows for practical visual and performing arts applications for career technical education pathway students. Students taking this course are preparing for higher education in architecture and building design. (Drafting course title is on unacceptable list and while this course does use engineering applications, this appears to be more of a "drafting" class with applications of design software programs.)
- ⁴⁵ INTRODUCTION AND ADVANCED PRODUCT INNOVATION DESIGN & MANUFACTURING Meets requirements: USAD considers this an Engineering Class Design Class.
- ⁴⁶ This course will count if it is a part of an Engineering Design class. If a course is a combined Graphics/Design class or Drawing/Design class it will count.
- ⁴⁷ Courses included in the Acceptable/Unacceptable categories:
Acceptable Courses: Engineering.
Unacceptable Courses: Drafting/Learning Software. Graphing Design (added to Graphing).
- ⁴⁸ 9-5-2024, Updated Acceptable Social Studies Course to include Ethnic Studies (including African American Studies and Latin American Studies).