

GET ON THE

# FAST TRACK

TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS—  
EXCELLENT GRADES ARE WITHIN YOUR REACH!

Students taking college classes, especially those newly out of high school, are often unsure how to earn excellent grades. And yet this is the very thing that will get them into the top grad schools, jobs, or scholarship programs. In addition, more students are attending college than ever before—and scrambling to go after the same schools, jobs, and scholarships. Without a solid GPA, you only stand to be left behind.

Here are ten tips for maximizing your GPA:

**1.** Sit in the front of the class. It's the first step in getting the instructor to personally know you; you will be more attentive (especially if it's a huge lecture hall); and you'll take better notes.

**2.** Get to know the instructor. You want to be a person in his or her mind, not just a name and number. When your grade is on the borderline—whether it's a test, a paper, or the whole semester—it'll be far more likely to be rounded up to the next grade.

**3.** Ask questions after class, in addition to in class. This doesn't have to be every day, or a ton of questions. But just asking a question every now and then will show the instructor you really care, and put him or her on your side.

**4.** Always question an instructor about grading in private. I don't know how many times I saw a student beg for a grade change or favor

in class. If you have any chance of getting a break, it isn't going to be in front of other students.

Be business-like: set up an appointment at the instructor's office and be there on time.

**5.** Make a weekly study schedule. Planning is vital for tackling the challenge of improving your GPA, or achieving a perfect one. You will have so much to do, you must put it on the calendar. Give yourself a couple hours once a week to map out the week ahead, and make

sure to include relaxation time.

**6.** Plan 2 to 3 times the length of class for studying. It's a simple but accurate equation: if you have lecture or lab three hours a week, allow six or nine hours for studying for that class. This is why 15 semester hours is called "full time."

**7.** Schedule classes using a map. You don't want 15 minutes between classes to be a sprint across the campus lugging 25 pounds of books. Better to have that time for other things or getting to class early.

**8.** Register for classes as early as possible. This is absolutely critical, and this action alone will greatly determine how well you will manage your time over the semester. Getting the classes you want, when you want them, will give you a tremendous organizational (and psychological) edge.

**9.** Be true to yourself. If you have trouble getting up early, don't take a class that starts at 8 a.m. If you get tired after lunch, don't schedule classes then.

**10.** Eat right. College meal programs can tempt you to overeat, loading up on sugar and fat. Not only will this bring your body down, but your mind too. It's better to eat a little throughout the day. Save the

spurges and big meals for special occasions—when you don't have studying or a class

afterwards.

Just by incorporating the advice given here, you will set yourself apart from 90% of the other students. Make no mistake about it. If you want to get into a good grad school, good job, or good scholarship program, you had better get real about your grades. Luckily, good grades are within your reach—it's not about being smart, but working smart.

By Andrew Chapman

Andrew Chapman earned an associate's degree and a bachelor's degree with perfect 4.0 GPAs in both—in only three years and while working part-time. He is the author of *How to Earn Straight A's in College: 75 Tips for Academic Success*. For more information visit: [www.MaximizeYourGPA.com](http://www.MaximizeYourGPA.com)

