



## American Heritage School COVID-19 Coursework & GPA Adaptations FAQ 4<sup>th</sup> Term 2019–20

Updated April 25, 2020

In light of extraordinary and unexpected circumstances for families and faculty presented by the COVID-19 global pandemic, and after careful consideration of feedback from families, faculty, and numerous other private and public schools in Utah, we have decided to implement the following coursework and GPA adaptations for Term 4 of the 2019–20 school year. The primary objectives these adaptations are *choice and personal control* so that families are able to make at least some decisions for themselves under circumstances where they may now have little to no choice over so many other outcomes in life. Like other educational institutions, we are conscious of the much-needed pressure-valve release that this kind of flexibility can have for families, students, and teachers. Additionally, it is important that students at American Heritage do not have an unfair *disadvantage* compared to other schools in the college application process.

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**No Failing Grades K–12.** No students will receive failing grades on their transcripts for Term 4 in grades K–12.

**Pass/No-Grade Option for Grades 9–12.** At the end of Term 4, teachers in grades 9–12 will submit a letter/percentage grade for each student per the standard grade submission protocol. **After Term 4 grades are submitted by faculty, students may choose to keep the standard grade given by the teacher, which will have the same weighted impact on the student's cumulative GPA as it has in the past, OR, for Term 4 only, the student may choose the following pass/no-grade option for each specific course, at the parent's and student's discretion:**

Standard Grade: A–D = Pass

Standard Grade: F = No Grade (NG)

Credit in grades 9–12 will be awarded for any letter grade A–D (affects weighted GPA) and also for "Pass" if elected (does not affect weighted GPA). Students in grades 9–12 who receive an F in a course for Term 4 will instead have an "NG" ("No Grade") placed on their transcript. NG will not affect GPA, but credit will not be awarded for the term unless appealed by the student (we will be very flexible here, particularly with seniors who have special circumstances).

*The net effect of this option is that although a student's GPA may increase as a result of Term 4 performance, no student's GPA should be negatively affected by Term 4 grades.*

The above adjustments mirror some aspects of the public system approach to Term 4, but are more in keeping with the approach taken by the Utah private K-12 schools in our association. A 60% (D-) pass threshold is also consistent with the pass threshold for BYU. Given that many educational institutions are moving to modified grading systems for Term 4, a Pass/NG on high school transcripts for Term 4 this year will be both understandable and acceptable as students apply to colleges and universities.

**Letter Grade/Pass Option for Grades 7–8:** For Term 4, 7–8 report cards will have the option of a letter grade or a Pass in each subject.

**Pass Grade for Grades K–6:** Prior to Term 4, K–6 report cards included some graded subjects with a percentage and others on a three-point scale (1–3) to evaluate various different performance metrics. For Term 4, K–6 report cards will only reflect a Pass in the three subjects of math, language arts, and literature. Specialty teachers in grades K–6 will continue to provide instruction online but will not be required to submit grades.

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**Option to Drop High School Elective Courses (Grades 9–12).** Before AHS moved to an online platform due to COVID-19 (prior to Term 4), we only allowed students to drop courses within the first week of a new semester (August and January). **This new policy adaptation for Term 4 will allow students the option to drop any elective courses (defined below) until Friday, April 17 (mid-term).** If students do drop an elective course, they will NOT receive credit for it during Term 4. The policy for AHS before these adaptations was that a student received a WP (withdrawal pass) if they dropped a class sometime after the deadline at the beginning of the semester and they were passing the class at that time. Alternatively, they received a WF (withdrawal fail) if they dropped a class sometime after the deadline at the beginning of the semester and they were not passing the class at that time. With this new temporary policy adaptation in place for Term 4 of the 2019–20 year, students will NOT receive a WP (withdraw pass) or a WF (withdraw fail) for withdrawing from a class, so long as they request the drop by Friday, April 17. Please note that from now through April 17, students may request withdrawal from an elective course for any reason including the necessity of reducing workload without penalty and without any notation on their transcript.

**What high school courses qualify as an elective that can be dropped?** The following courses qualify as electives in grades 9–12 that may be dropped by request: Fine Arts electives including Photoshop, Photography, Digital Media, Tech Crew, Mixed Choir, A Cappella, Chamber Choir and Drama; Athletics electives including Ballroom, Basketball, Volleyball, Conditioning, Physical Education, Women’s Yoga, Foods and Nutrition; and other electives including Middle Earth Studies, ACT Prep, Journalism, and Improvisation.

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We will be dropping the Digital Media/Yearbook and Debate classes for Term 4. Students who were enrolled in this course will receive a Pass on their transcript for Term 4 based on work that they did in Term 3.

Please note that if a student chooses to drop an elective course, the student may need to take a replacement elective course in subsequent high school years to qualify for graduation. If you have any questions about how this might apply to you, our assistant principals and academic counseling office are happy to help discuss with you. Contact Mrs. Acuña at [eacuna@ahsmail.com](mailto:eacuna@ahsmail.com), Mr. Hunsaker at [bhunsaker@ahsmail.com](mailto:bhunsaker@ahsmail.com) with questions.

**What is the process for dropping a high school elective?** If a student desires to drop an elective course in grades 9–12, the student's parent should email the teacher by April 17 and copy Mrs. Acuña ([eacuna@ahsmail.com](mailto:eacuna@ahsmail.com)) or Mr. Hunsaker ([bhunsaker@ahsmail.com](mailto:bhunsaker@ahsmail.com)) on the request email. Please explain in the email to the teacher the reasons for the request. We will accept most reasons, including a desire to decrease workload because of personal or family circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic or personal or family challenges adapting to online courses. If the teacher approves dropping the course and Mrs. Acuña or Mr. Hunsaker confirms that the course is not required for the student's personal graduation plan, we will drop the course, and it will not be reflected on the student's transcript so long as the request is received by Friday, April 17.

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**Option to Drop Middle School Elective Courses (Grades 7–8).** Before AHS moved to an online platform due to COVID-19 (prior to Term 4), we only allowed middle school students to drop courses within the first week of a new semester (August and January). **This new policy adaptation for Term 4 will allow middle school students the option to drop any elective courses (defined below) at any point in Term 4 without effect upon their GPA and without requiring them to repeat coursework in these elective areas to advance to the next grade level.**

**What middle school courses qualify as an elective that can be dropped?** Students in Grade 7 may request to drop the following elective courses: Music, PE, Speech, and/or Computer Skills. Students in Grade 8 may request to drop the following elective courses: Music Explorations, Art, Ballroom, Conditioning, PE, Shakespeare, and/or Tech Crew.

**What is the process for dropping a middle school elective?** If a student desires to drop an elective in grades 7 or 8, the student's parent should e-mail Nancy Morrill, [nmorrill@ahsmail.com](mailto:nmorrill@ahsmail.com) with your request. The request may be received at any time during Term 4 (no deadline).

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**GPA Scale Modification for Grades K–12:** In the past, American Heritage School granted an A for a student who received a 94% or higher and an A- for anything between 90–93%. We have been researching GPA thresholds used by other institutions, including BYU and public schools in the area, and we have decided to adopt the same thresholds used by these schools. Therefore, going forward, an A will be granted for 93% or higher. We will also retroactively apply this grading scale to high school grades for all of our current high school students in grades 9–12. Therefore, if a current AHS student received a 93% and was awarded an A- on their transcript for any years in grades 9–12, we will raise that grade to an A. Seniors: please note that we will closely monitor whether this impacts your overall GPA. If it does, we will notify you immediately and resubmit transcripts to any university of your choice.

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Thank you, AHS faculty and families, for your tremendously helpful feedback. We are listening! Keep up the great work, keep communicating, and keep smiling!

**Questions?** Contact Elizabeth Acuña, 7–12 Asst. Principal, at [eacuna@ahsmail.com](mailto:eacuna@ahsmail.com); Blaine Hunsaker, 7–12 Asst. Principal, at [bhunsaker@ahsmail.com](mailto:bhunsaker@ahsmail.com); Charné Adams, K–6 Asst. Principal, at [cadams@ahsmail.com](mailto:cadams@ahsmail.com); or Teresa Carr at [tcarr@ahsmail.com](mailto:tcarr@ahsmail.com).