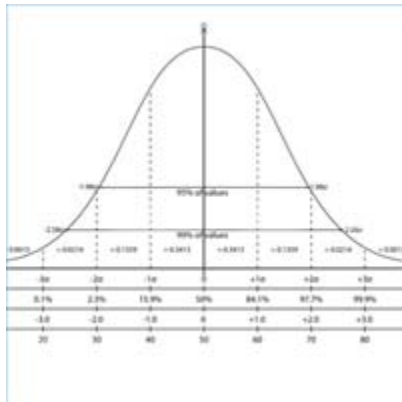


How to Work the Curve

The best way to determine how you will be assessed is by reviewing the assignment. If your professors offer a rubric (a chart designating how A-F are assigned), use it! Create a checklist of items you need to make the highest grade possible.



Most grades, when charted, form a bell curve shape.

Teachers sometimes find a certain test or assignment was more difficult than expected and the students received a lower score than anticipated. In this situation, the teacher might choose to “equalize” the scores to represent the actual learning ability of the students more effectively. When graded on a curve, most students will receive a higher score than before.

Some tips:

1. Review your professor’s syllabus. Most professors tell you who they are and how they do things. If you know your professor can appreciate your poetic voice, use it. If there are writing issues they can’t stand, make they do not appear in your paper.
2. Determine the most important facets of the assignment. If it isn’t clear to you, ask one of your peers, followed up by a question to the professor.
3. See if another peer wants to peer review. You might be able to better understand components of the assignment you may have overlooked, or misunderstood.
4. Use an editor. If your writing turnaround is short, another pair of eyes is essential. Hiring a professional editor for important assignments may help you maintain your GPA, use the document for future opportunities like scholarships or as a writing sample for graduate school.
5. Speak up. If, upon receipt of your grade, you notice that many of your classmates did poorly, bring it up with the professor. Most professors want you to succeed. Do not expect a curve though. Try asking the professor if they could identify two or three students who do well on assignments to contact you. You can pick their brain for how to improve.