

THE SUMMIT LEARNING GRADING POLICY

THE “WHY” BEHIND OUR GRADING POLICY

Summit Learning’s grading policy prioritizes the development of **Cognitive Skills** that students need for success in college and career. Because these are lifelong skills, Cognitive Skills cut across subjects, courses, and grade levels. A student’s score on the **Cognitive Skills Rubric** comprises 70% of a student’s grade. Summit’s focus on Cognitive Skills is supported by learning science and developed through **Real-World Projects**; students, teachers and families can track a student’s progression on these skills throughout their entire tenure in Summit Learning.

In order to put Cognitive Skills to work, students must develop a broad **Content Knowledge** base. A foundational component of Summit Learning is that students demonstrate competency on standards-aligned Content Knowledge across all core subject areas. Mastery of Content Knowledge comprises 30% of a student’s grade.

Grades demonstrate both the competencies students have and the growth they have made: Summit Learning’s grading policy is designed to reflect a growth mindset and celebrate student improvement.

In addition to Cognitive Skills and Content Knowledge, Summit Learning students develop Habits of Success and a Sense of Purpose. Though these outcomes are not yet graded, we are researching and developing structures for students to demonstrate measurable progress in these areas.

HOW DOES THE GRADING POLICY WORK?

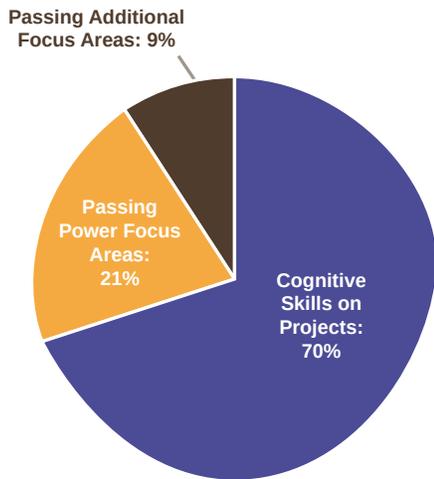
Grades reflect mastery developed over the entire school year, with a focus on Cognitive Skills developed through Projects and mastery of Content Knowledge through **Power Focus Areas**.

CALCULATING GRADES (NON-MATH COURSES)

The Summit Learning Platform automatically calculates student grades (in percentage and letter grade) based on student progress in:

- Mastering Content Knowledge through the completion of Content Assessments in **Focus Areas**, and
- Cognitive Skills scores that teachers assess for each Project based on the Cognitive Skills Rubric.

These grades are updated in real time and can be accessed by teachers, students, and families. For non-math courses, grades are calculated as follows:



Contributing factor to grades	Expectation	Percentage of student's grade for that course
Cognitive Skills on Projects	Submit all Projects for the course, with grade-level performance Cognitive Skills according to the Rubric	70%
Passing Power Focus Areas (Content Knowledge)	Pass 100% of Power Focus Areas	21%
Passing Additional Focus Areas (Content Knowledge)	Additional Focus Areas are not required to pass a course, but they are highly encouraged	9%

ASSESSING COGNITIVE SKILLS IN PROJECTS

Students in Summit Learning develop Cognitive Skills by working on Real-World Projects. Teachers give feedback to students as they work through the Checkpoints of a Project and assess each Project based on the 4–5 Cognitive Skills (on average) the student has demonstrated in that Project.

The Cognitive Skills Rubric specifies grade-level and interdisciplinary expectations for each Cognitive Skill. Students progress through the year and through the grade levels along a continuum, demonstrating competency in a Cognitive Skill as appropriate for their level of development, with the goal of becoming college- and career-ready. Each Cognitive Skill is assessed multiple times during the year in different subjects so that students, teachers, and families can track growth. Each Skill has a score between 0 and 8 based on the Cognitive Skills Rubric, and students must score at least a 6 on a 0- to 8-point scale to demonstrate college and career readiness.

THE 36 COGNITIVE SKILLS WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE DOMAINS

DOMAINS	Textual Analysis	Products & Presentations	Inquiry	Analysis & Synthesis	Speaking/ Listening	Composing/ Writing	Using Sources
DIMENSIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme/central idea Point of view/ purpose Development Structure Word choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Style & language (tone, academic language, syntax) Oral presentation Multimedia in written production Multimedia in oral presentation Conventions Precision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking questions Hypothesizing Designing processes & procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying patterns & relationships Comparing/ contrasting Making connections & inferences Critiquing others' reasoning Justifying/ constructing explanations Interpreting data/info Modeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion/ contribution Preparation Norms/active listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argumentative claim Narrative Counterclaims Information/ explanatory thesis Selection of evidence Integration of evidence Organization (transitions, cohesion, structure) Introduction & conclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selecting relevant sources Contextualizing sources Synthesizing multiple sources

The Skills in the Cognitive Skills Rubric are organized across seven cross-disciplinary domains.

The Cognitive Skills score is translated to a percentage grade in the Summit Learning Platform based on the student's grade level. The overall Cognitive Skills grade is based on the weighted average of all the Cognitive Skills assessed in a course and represents 70% of a student's grade.

Aligned to the emphasis on growth mindset, no grades are finalized in Summit Learning until the end of the academic year. This allows for students to demonstrate growth over a longer period of time without being held accountable at arbitrary points during the school year, such as a quarter or semester.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR THE COGNITIVE SKILL "SYNTHESIZING MULTIPLE SOURCES"

Domain: Using Sources								
Dimension: Synthesizing Multiple Sources								
High-Level Description: Integrating information across multiple sources to support an argument or explanation								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No evidence of synthesizing information from multiple sources. One source dominates the work.	Makes note of key points or details from two sources on the same topic.	Integrates information from two sources on the same topic by comparing information.	Integrates information from several sources on the same topic by sorting and comparing information.	Connections among sources are made by comparing information from multiple sources and/or comparing the type of sources (e.g., format, genre, time period, etc.).	Connections among sources are made by grouping similar information/positions from multiple sources or identifying significant differences between sources (in content and/or type).	Information from multiple sources is compared and grouped to deepen or extend an argument or explanation.	Information from multiple sources is compared, grouped, and synthesized with the student's own claims or ideas to form a cohesive, supported argument or explanation.	Significant and nuanced connections are made among sources and synthesized with the student's own claims or ideas to form a cohesive, supportive, compelling argument or explanation.

Each Cognitive Skill is graded on a 0- to 8-point scale. This is the rubric for the Cognitive Skill "Synthesizing Multiple Sources," which falls in the domain of "Using Sources." For each Cognitive Skill, students must score at least a 6 to demonstrate college and career readiness. Students progress along a continuum demonstrating competency in a skill as appropriate for their level of development and growth.

ASSESSING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

Teachers and mentors guide students in learning content through Content Playlists with a variety of available resources (primary sources, videos, text, etc.) as well as preparing for Content Assessments to ensure that they are practicing good study habits.

The Content Assessments in Summit Learning are designed to promote a growth mindset. There is no limit to the number of times a Summit student can take an assessment because Summit believes that a large percentage of learning happens in letting students persist through struggles and challenges. However, if a student fails an assessment more than a few times, his or her teacher or mentor will intervene to help them determine how to move forward.

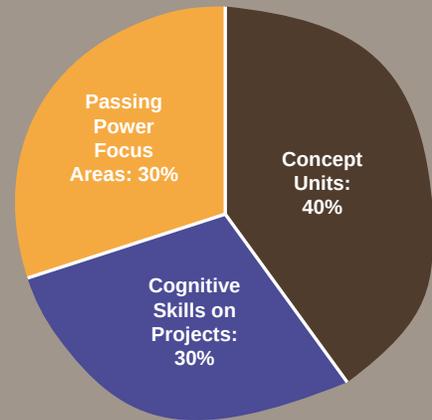
The 10-question Content Assessments are graded in the Platform, and results are immediately accessible by teachers, students, and parents. Students must score at least an 8 out of 10 on the Content Assessment to show mastery.

Teachers can use real-time test results to easily identify which students need help on specific Focus Areas and provide additional scaffolding on those topics. For the Content Knowledge portion of a student's grade, Summit Learning measures a combination of the Content Assessments from Power Focus Areas (21%) needed to be college-ready and **Additional Focus Areas** (9%) to deepen a student's understanding for each subject.

MATH COURSES

For Math Courses, in addition to developing Cognitive Skills through Projects and Content Knowledge through Power Focus Areas, students complete **Math Concept Units** to fully develop an understanding of complex mathematical ideas.

40% of a course's grade is based on a student's score in Concept Units, 30% of a course's grade is based on a student's Cognitive Skills in Projects, and 30% of a student's grade is based on mastering Content Knowledge in Power Focus Areas.



FOCUSING ON YEAR-LONG PROGRESS

In the spirit of growth mindset, no grades are finalized in Summit Learning until the end of the academic year (or semester for semester-long courses). This allows students to improve and demonstrate growth over a longer period of time.

Throughout the year, students set weekly goals toward meeting expectations to pass courses and reflecting on their progress with their mentor. Students will have an Incomplete grade in a subject until they submit overdue Projects, revise their Project work, and/or are on pace to complete their Power Focus Areas by the end of the year.

Year

	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	AUG	SEP
English								
PROJECTS	Astronomy 1		Climate Change Project		Sall Car Challenge		Gettin' Triggy Wit It...	
POWER	Char...	Char...	Inverse Tri...	Invers...				
ADDITIONAL	Vocabulario Avanzado		Vocabulario Avanzado...	Vocabulario Avanzado...				
History								
PROJECTS	Astronomy 1		Climate Change Project		Sall Car Challenge		Gettin' Triggy Wit It...	
POWER	Char...	Char...	Inverse Tri...	Invers...				
ADDITIONAL	Vocabulario Avanzado		Vocabulario Avanzado...	Vocabulario Avanzado...				
Science								
PROJECTS	Astronomy 1		Climate Change Project		Sall Car Challenge		Gettin' Triggy Wit It...	
POWER	Char...	Char...	Inverse Tri...	Invers...				
ADDITIONAL	Vocabulario Avanzado		Vocabulario Avanzado...	Vocabulario Avanzado...				

Projects

Power Focus Areas

Line indicates if students are on track to complete coursework by end of the school year

Within the Summit Learning Platform, students can easily see if they are on track to complete Projects and Focus Areas and which ones they have attempted but not yet mastered.

LETTER GRADE BREAKDOWN

Summit Learning is based on the belief that all students should have the opportunity to persist until they have demonstrated true mastery with a grade of A, B, or C. Aligned to this belief, there are no letter grades “D” or “F” in Summit Learning. Instead, if a student has not demonstrated C-level mastery, that student’s grade is “Incomplete.” This emphasizes that the student is expected to persist with a growth mindset, rather than accepting failure as a final outcome.

Students can receive the following letter grades in a course:

- A+ to C-
- “N/A”: There is no Project graded yet for that course.
- “I” (Incomplete): C-level mastery has not yet been achieved.

Below are the letter and percentage grading bands:

A+	97–100%
A	93–96
A-	90–92
B+	87–89
B	83–86
B-	80–82
C+	77–79
C	73–76
C-	70–72

SCHOOL VARIABILITY OF GRADING POLICIES

Summit Learning schools may need to add specifications to the Grading Policy so that they can accommodate determination of sports eligibility, report card period requirements, or connection with their existing learning management system.

KEY CONCEPTS

Additional Focus Areas

Content that students complete after they have completed a Power Focus Area. It is not required to pass a course, but they make up 9% of a student's grade, so they are highly encouraged.

Cognitive Skills

Interdisciplinary, higher-order skills such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills needed for college and career success. In Summit Learning, Cognitive Skills represent 70% of a student's grade.

Cognitive Skills Rubric

A single, research-based Rubric for grading the Cognitive Skills demonstrated in a Project. Cognitive Skills are interdisciplinary, higher-order skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills needed for college and career success. In Summit Learning, Cognitive Skills represent 70% of a student's grade. The Rubric was developed by educators in partnership with the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE). For each Cognitive Skill, students must score a 6 on a 0- to 8-point scale to demonstrate college and career readiness. Students progress along a continuum demonstrating competency in a skill as appropriate for their level of development and growth.

Content Knowledge

The ideas, vocabulary, and concepts for an academic subject. In Summit Learning, mastering Content Knowledge is 30% of a student's grade.

Focus Area

A unit of content that includes learning objectives, a diagnostic Assessment, a Content Playlist, and an Content Assessment in the Summit Learning Platform.

Math Concept Unit

The collection of math tasks that leads to students learning key concepts before they begin working on their Focus Areas.

Power Focus Area

Core content that every student needs to learn to complete a course and be college ready. Students must pass all Power Focus Areas to pass a course. Power Focus Areas make up 21% of student's grade.

Real-World Project

An investigation into an authentic real-world question or problem. Projects culminate in a performance-based assessment such as an essay, lab report, or presentation. In Projects, students work in teams to apply Content Knowledge and develop the Cognitive Skills needed for college and career success.



TO UNDERSTAND MORE
ABOUT THE LEARNING
SCIENCE BEHIND
SUMMIT LEARNING,
READ THE SCIENCE OF
SUMMIT WHITEPAPER.