

# How Important Are Grades?

SAM NEWLUND

There is no accurate, concrete method of measuring academic achievement. It certainly cannot be done by issuing grades at certain intervals throughout the course of our formal education. This practice, it seems to me, has certain limited values, but its importance is greatly over-emphasized by students, and even by instructors.

It has been suggested that grades should be of two degrees only, — passing or failing. Whether this is the solution or not, the suggestion is based on the idea which I consider important; we have achieved in a particular course only in proportion to the good we have derived from that course. The letter grade means absolutely nothing unless the course has added to the vast store of knowledge and experience which go into the making of an educated person, and into the making of a secure existence. After all, the whole issue centers on one question: What are we in school for? We are not

in school for grades. A "B" average will not necessarily make us certain of a good job. Neither is a "B" average proof that we are educated.

It seems to me that letter grades have but three minor functions to perform. Aside from these functions they could be dispensed with altogether. In the first place they tell that we are either passing or failing. Secondly, they provide a goal to work for. Were all students mature enough to work only for personal achievement, this function would be unnecessary, but such is not the case. Lastly, grades provide a permanent record of our scholastic achievement which can be referred to by schools and by prospective employers.

One thing could be done under the present system. Instructors could actually conduct "campaigns" to decrease the importance of grades. They could minimize the significance of an A, B, C, or a D and emphasize personal achievement as the prime goal of education.

## The Attack

WILLIAM E. LAYCOCK

A slight salt spray came over the bow and dampened my face. There was a fresh breeze and I could see whitecaps on the rolling blue sea. It was the Pacific ocean and I was standing on the bridge of the U. S. S. Bashaw, a submarine of the United States Navy. The mighty ship pitched a little, then a slight

roll. I looked over to the Officer of the Deck. He, like I, was slightly tense. The radio message had said a Jap tanker was coming through — right here where we were! I scanned the horizon again for the seemingly thousandth time looking for that tell tale trace of smoke from her stack. No sign. Above me on the "A