



Greeting Card Association

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Greeting Cards and Mortarboards Are Staples of American Graduations

More than 5 million U.S. students will graduate from high school or college this year, and most of them will mark this important rite of passage with family celebrations, keepsake mortarboard tassels and greeting cards.

Overall, the Greeting Card Association estimates that more than 75 million graduation cards will be purchased in 2008.

Because graduation from high school remains the most celebrated of all commencement occasions in the U.S., it's not surprising that high school grads receive the vast majority of graduation cards every year. On average, high school graduates receive 18 cards each, while college grads typically receive closer to 7.

For grads of all ages, the most popular gift accompanying a graduation card is money. In fact, graduation is the most widely-celebrated occasion in the U.S. for which money is considered an appropriate gift. Approximately one-quarter of all graduation cards are specifically designed as money or gift-card holders.

Graduation Ceremonies in the U.S.

Most high school and college graduation ceremonies in the U.S. occur in May or June, and follow commencement traditions established in the 13th century at universities in Europe.

The long black gown, hood and mortarboard are believed to reflect the early manner of academic dress at Oxford and Cambridge universities, where students wore robes similar to those of the clerical orders.

In the U.S., an Intercollegiate Commission was formed in 1894 to establish a standardized dress code for college commencement exercises. Today, an Academic Costume Code, last revised in 1959, remains the standard for cap, gown and hood use at college commencement ceremonies in the US.

American high schools began adopting the use of caps and gowns for graduation ceremonies in the early 1900s.

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