What would you rather?

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W and F... both letters that appear on your transcript, but what do they mean?! Which one “looks better” to employers or grad schools? Should I “take the F” or get a W? If you’ve ever asked yourself any of these questions, keep reading!

First, let’s separate these two different grade indicators. An F means you stayed enrolled in a class for an entire semester, but did not earn a passing grade. This negatively affects your GPA, your financial aid and possibly even your ability to retake the course. A W simply means you withdrew (or dropped) the course after the university deadline. Withdrawing (or dropping) a course does not negatively affect your GPA. But it may or may not affect your financial aid. Click the link to be taken to the Office of Student Financial Aid webpage on eligibility, or contact the financial aid office at 785-864-4700. (Please note that dropping a single course and withdrawing from an entire semester are different – we are talking about withdrawing from a single course).

Deadlines were mentioned above – you may be wondering, “what deadlines?” KU has two deadlines for dropping courses each semester: 1) the last day to drop a course WITHOUT a W and 2) the last day to drop/withdraw from a class WITH a W. Click the link to be taken to Spring 2016’s academic calendar – here you will find the exact dates of these deadlines. These deadlines are important because it helps KU gather data about enrollment trends.

Now that you have the above information, you should be able to make an informed decision about which grade indicator would be best for you. But you shouldn’t do it alone – contact your academic advisor via email, by attending their walk-in hours or by scheduling an appointment to see them (be sure to schedule before the deadline!!) Generally speaking, a W says there were circumstances, within or beyond your control that inhibited your ability to complete the course to the best of your ability, but you had the foresight to take action, before letting it negatively affect your overall academic performance. It is simply a historic record that indicates you were enrolled in that course for a period of time.