ToolGPA

NOVEMBER 2026

Canvas LMS

The Insider’s Guide

Instructure's LMS for schools, universities and training programs



Every plan, grade, refund rule and rival among course and community platforms, read from Canvas LMS’s own pages.

Made by Instructure · checked Nov 13, 2026 · toolgpa.com

2.6
GPA



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Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

ToolGPA put this guide together from Canvas LMS's own pages, its app-store listings and our grades. Every fact in it is on Canvas LMS's page too, where it is kept up to date. Checked Nov 13, 2026.

Welcome

What it is, who it suits, its grades and the ten things to know first

2.6

GPA, above 83 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade

Canvas is a learning management system made by Instructure for K-12 schools, universities and organizations running professional training. Educators get a gradebook, SpeedGrader, modules, quizzes and course sharing across a school or district. Institutions license it in three tiers, and individual teachers can sign up for a free account called Canvas Lite.

To get you started, here are **8 things to know about Canvas LMS**, taken from its own pages and our grades.

> **Institutional prices are not published, and it is aimed at schools rather than selling courses.**
>
> From our report card of Canvas LMS

1 **Best for schools and universities**

Canvas is a school LMS with SpeedGrader, a gradebook and blueprint courses, plus a free Canvas Lite for individual teachers.

2 **There is a free plan**

Canvas Lite is a free account for individual educators teaching their own class, tutoring or piloting a course, with no school license needed.

3 **It runs on Web**

Web.

4 **SpeedGrader and Gradebook**

Grade submissions, annotate documents and leave comments in one place, with a gradebook that handles assignment weightings.

5 **Blueprint courses**

Push course updates across a school, district or institution at once, so central curriculum stays consistent.

6 **Reporting and Canvas Data**

In-app reports on course activity and engagement, and raw event-level data files for a data warehouse.

7 **A 2.6 GPA, above 83 of 98**

That is against the other course and community platforms we grade, on value, the free plan, features, ease of use and platforms.

8 **Your call**

You could make the core of Canvas LMS for yourself: online courses and reports.

Canvas LMS at a glance

PRICING Free plan	FREE PLAN Yes
FREE TRIAL None stated	RUNS ON Web
MADE BY Instructure	CATEGORY Courses & Communities
OUR GRADE 2.6 GPA, good	

The report card

Best for schools and universities

Canvas is a school LMS with SpeedGrader, a gradebook and blueprint courses, plus a free Canvas Lite for individual teachers. Institutional prices

are not published, and it is aimed at schools rather than selling courses.

TOOLGPA REPORT CARD	Canvas LMS	Graded Nov 13, 2026
SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENT
Value for money	C	Institutional pricing is not published, so this sits in the middle. Sales quotes three tiers.
Free plan and trial	B	Canvas Lite is free for individual educators teaching their own class, with no school license.
Features	B	SpeedGrader, the gradebook, blueprint courses, reporting and Canvas Data, and integrations. The listing shows no gap in the core job.
Ease of use	C	A web app that a school sets up, with no store rating on record.
Platforms and integrations	B	Web and mobile apps, with Google Drive, Zoom and Microsoft Teams on the list.
Grade point average		Good, out of 4.0 **2.6**

An A is worth 4 points, a B 3, a C 2, a D 1 and an F nothing. The GPA is the average of the five.

Who Canvas LMS is for

- ✓ Fits if you teach at a school or university
- ✓ Works for a single teacher piloting a class on Canvas Lite

Who it is not for

- ✕ Skip it if you want to sell courses to the public, as the vendor aims at K-12 and higher education
- ✕ Not for you if you want to license a whole school on Lite, which is for individuals
- ✕ Watch out: institutional prices are not published
- ✕ Watch out: AI and some analytics are tied to higher tiers and the IgniteAI add-on

Good to know

Good for

- ✓ Schools, districts and universities running one LMS
- ✓ Individual teachers who want a free course space
- ✓ Institutions that want to share curriculum across courses

Worth knowing

- ⓘ Institutional pricing is not published and is sold through sales in three tiers.
- ⓘ Canvas Lite is meant for individual educators, not for licensing a whole school.
- ⓘ The vendor positions Canvas for K-12, higher education and organizations rather than for selling courses to the public.
- ⓘ AI and some analytics features are tied to the higher Canvas tiers and the IgniteAI add-on.

What it costs

Every plan, the free plan, ways to pay less and how prices have moved

2
plans to choose from

Canvas LMS has a free plan.

> **Institutional pricing is not published, so this sits in the middle.**
>
> From our grade for value for money

CANVAS LITE

$0

Free for individual educators: modules, SpeedGrader, rubrics, announcements, discussions and the mobile apps.

The free plan

Canvas Lite is a free account for individual educators teaching their own class, tutoring or piloting a course, with no school license needed.

CANVAS (INSTITUTIONAL)

Custom

Licensed to schools and organizations in three tiers; no price is published and it is sold through sales.

Read from instructure.com on Nov 13, 2026.

What it does

Its main features, where it runs, what it works with and who makes it

1

Place it runs: Web

Instructure's LMS for schools, universities and training programs. Here is what it does, as its own site describes it, and what it covers: public API, reports, online courses.

> **SpeedGrader, the gradebook, blueprint courses, reporting and Canvas Data, and integrations.**
>
> From our grade for features

SpeedGrader and Gradebook

Grade submissions, annotate documents and leave comments in one place, with a gradebook that handles assignment weightings.

Blueprint courses

Push course updates across a school, district or institution at once, so central curriculum stays consistent.

Reporting and Canvas Data

In-app reports on course activity and engagement, and raw event-level data files for a data warehouse.

Integrations

Canvas says it connects with over 1,000 external tools, including Google Drive, Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Mobile apps

Free Student, Teacher and Parent apps cover grades, assignments, messaging, quizzes and mobile SpeedGrader.

Message Students Who

Sends messages to students by teacher-set criteria, such as missing assignments or low scores.

Where it runs

Web

What it works with

Google Drive

Zoom

Microsoft Teams

Canvas LMS is made by Instructure.

PART 04 · STANDING

Where it stands

Its grades against its category, and whether to keep it or make your own

83/98

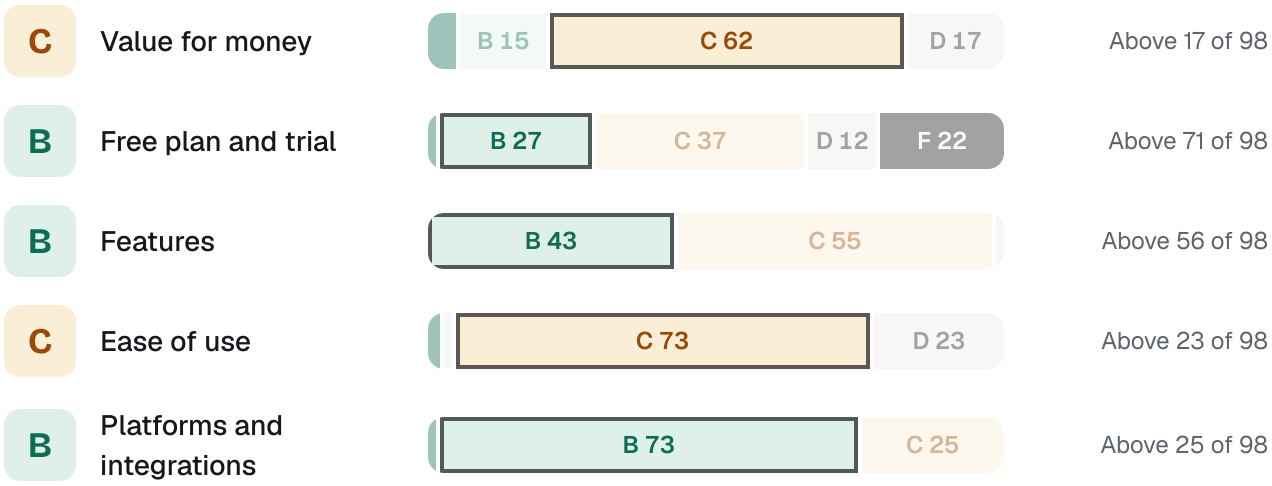
Other course and community platforms it is graded above

Canvas LMS's GPA of 2.6 is higher than 83 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade, and level with 8.

It stands best on free plan and trial (B, above 71 of 98) and worst on value for money (C, above 17).

Each grade against the category

Every bar is all 99 course and community platforms we grade, cut by the letter each got. Canvas LMS's own letter is outlined.



Keep it, or make your own?

Whether this is something you could build for yourself with an AI app builder, and what you would give up.

Your call

You could make the core of Canvas LMS for yourself: online courses and reports.

What you would give up is listed below. Whether that is worth the price is your call.

What you could make

- Online courses and reports: an app builder makes these well.
- It runs in a browser, which is where something home-made would run too.

What you could not

- ✕ It plugs into other products, Google Drive, Zoom and Microsoft Teams among them, and has an API.
- ✕ The depth: we grade its features B, which means it covers the whole job.

What this rests on. Canvas LMS's listing: what it does, where it runs, what it plugs into and what it costs. It is a judgement about the kind of software this is. We have not built a replacement for it, and making your own means looking after it too. How we decide, and every tool's verdict.

The alternatives

The tools it is most often weighed against, side by side



Moodle, Open edX, TalentLMS and Docebo

The 4 tools Canvas LMS is most often weighed against, with where each one differs from it.

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Moodle

Free plan

Open-source learning platform you host yourself or on MoodleCloud.

- Moodle is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.
- Canvas LMS also covers reports.

Canvas LMS and Moodle compared in full

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Open edX

Free

Free open-source learning platform stewarded by Axim Collaborative.

- Open edX is open source and self-hostable, according to its own site.

Canvas LMS and Open edX compared in full

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TalentLMS

Free plan · from $119/mo

Cloud LMS for employee, partner and customer training.

Canvas LMS and TalentLMS compared in full

2.0
GPA

Docebo

Paid

AI-powered learning platform for employees, customers and partners.

- Canvas LMS has a free plan. Docebo does not.

Canvas LMS and Docebo compared in full

PART 06 · QUESTIONS

Quick answers

The questions people ask about it, each answered in a line or two

12

Questions, each answered in a line or two

The short version of everything above, for when you only need the answer. Each one is told in full in its part of the guide.

Is Canvas LMS free?

Canvas LMS has a free plan. Canvas Lite is a free account for individual educators teaching their own class, tutoring or piloting a course, with no school license needed.

How much does Canvas LMS cost?

Canvas LMS lists 2 plans. Canvas Lite: $0.

What platforms does Canvas LMS work on?

Canvas LMS is available on Web.

Does Canvas LMS have an Android app?

No Android app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Canvas LMS is listed for Web.

Does Canvas LMS have an iPhone app?

No iPhone app was listed when its pages were read on Nov 13, 2026. Canvas LMS is listed for Web.

Is Canvas LMS open source?

Canvas LMS is not described as open source on its own site, as read on Nov 13, 2026.

Does Canvas LMS have an API?

Yes. Canvas LMS offers a public API, according to its own site.

What does Canvas LMS integrate with?

Canvas LMS's listing names Google Drive, Zoom and Microsoft Teams. A listing names up to eight integrations, so it may connect to more.

Who makes Canvas LMS?

Canvas LMS is made by Instructure.

What are the alternatives to Canvas LMS?

The closest alternatives to Canvas LMS in our directory are Moodle, Open edX, TalentLMS and Docebo.

How does Canvas LMS compare with other course and community platforms?

Canvas LMS's GPA of 2.6 is higher than 83 of the 98 other course and community platforms we grade, and level with 8.

Could I make my own version of Canvas LMS?

You could make the core of Canvas LMS for yourself: online courses and reports.

Where this guide comes from

The prices, plans, platforms and features were read from Canvas LMS's own pages on Nov 13, 2026, and the grades were given on Nov 13, 2026. Graded from this listing, whose facts were read from Instructure's own pages on 13 November 2026. Not based on using the product, and shorter than our full reviews.

Every tool we list gets five grades, A to F, each with its reason, and a GPA that averages them. How each is decided is at toolgpa.com/grades. This guide is ToolGPA's own work; it is not made, paid for or approved by Instructure. Prices change, so check instructure.com before you buy.

instructure.com/canvas

instructure.com/try-canvas

PART 07 · ABOUT

About ToolGPA

Who made this guide, what else is on the site, and how to cite it

7,721

Tools graded, in 95 categories

ToolGPA grades software the way a school report grades a pupil: five subjects, a letter for each with the reason written beside it, and a GPA that averages them. Prices, plans and platforms are read from each maker's own pages and dated, so you always know how fresh a figure is.

Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Every tool on the site has a guide like this one, free to download and pass on. It all lives at **toolgpa.com**.

7,721	95	739	579
tools graded	categories	price changes on record	apps priced in 12 countries

What else is on toolgpa.com

Canvas LMS, kept up to date

Everything in this guide, with prices and grades as they are today

toolgpa.com/tools/canvas-lms

How grades are given

The rules behind every letter and every GPA

toolgpa.com/grades

Value charts

What each tool costs against what it scores, for every category

toolgpa.com/charts

Compare

Any two tools side by side, plan by plan

toolgpa.com/compare

Price changes

Every price rise and cut on record, each with its source

toolgpa.com/price-changes

Prices by country

What apps cost on the App Store in 12 countries

toolgpa.com/prices-by-country

Pay less

Every public discount: yearly billing, students, nonprofits

toolgpa.com/save

Keep or make

Which tools are worth paying for, and which you could build yourself

toolgpa.com/keep-or-make

Scan for the live page

Prices and grades as they are today

Quoting this guide?

Please name ToolGPA and link to the live page, so readers can check the figures for themselves:

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ToolGPA, "Canvas LMS: The Insider's Guide",
checked Nov 13, 2026.
https://toolgpa.com/tools/canvas-lms
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Know someone choosing between course and community platforms?

Send them this guide:
toolgpa.com/tools/canvas-lms/guide

ToolGPA elsewhere: youtube.com/@toolgpa

See our other guides

The best-graded course and community platforms after Canvas LMS, each with an Insider's Guide of its own.

Courses & Communities Insider's Guide

Every one of the 99 course and community platforms we grade, compared

Hylo Insider's Guide

Free open-source platform for community groups and coordination

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Academy LMS Insider's Guide

WordPress LMS plugin with a free core and Pro licenses by site count

2.8 GPA

Circle Insider's Guide

Community platform with courses, events, payments and branded apps

2.8 GPA

ToolGPA

Choosing software? Every tool graded, every price dated.

Compare tools at toolgpa.com ›

Everything in this guide is ToolGPA's own summary of what Canvas LMS's pages, its app-store listings and public reviews said on the dates shown. Grades are our judgement under the rules at toolgpa.com/grades. Every grade, review and ranking on ToolGPA is our own judgement. No company can pay for a grade or change one. Canvas LMS is a trademark of its owner, and this guide is not made, paid for or approved by Instructure. Prices and plans change: check instructure.com before you buy.