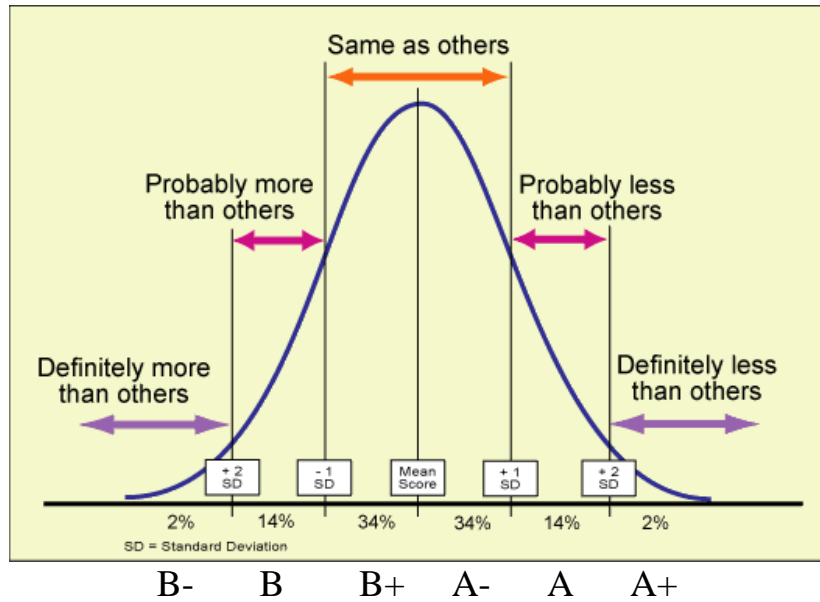
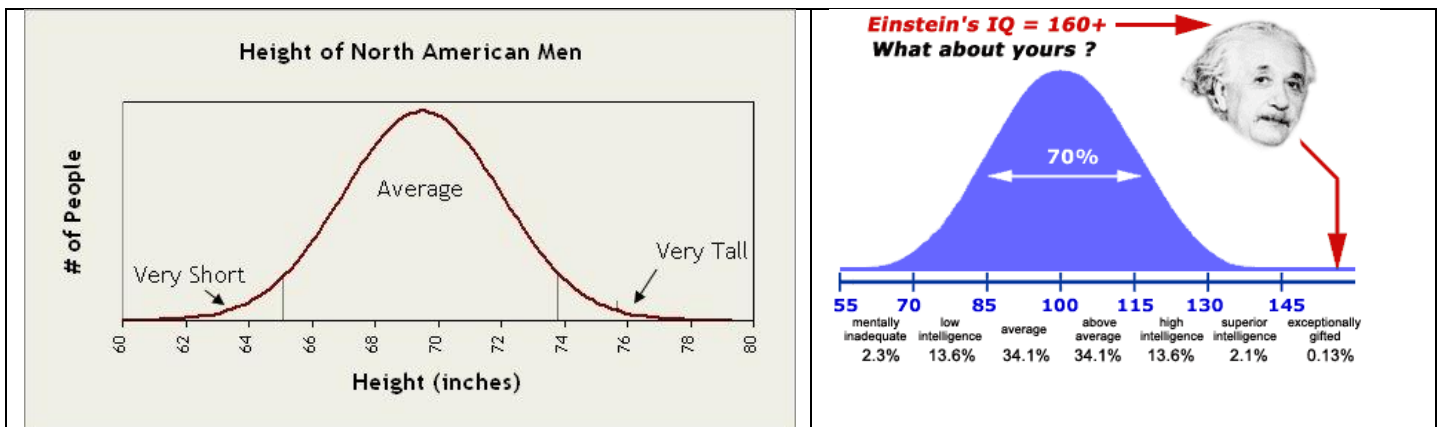


## Normative and Criterion Based Grading

- I. Normative based grading takes its name from the ‘normal’ distribution depicted by the ‘bell curve’.



The underlying premise for using normative grading comes from the belief that if we measure a large number of people for human characteristics (such as height, weight and even IQ) the distribution graph we get when we plot the results takes the shape of the bell curve.



The assumption used for many years is that since academic performance was attributed to intelligence then student grades should also fit the normal curve. This led to the belief that when assessing students the number of letter grades received should reflect the “normal distribution”. Teachers were even cautioned to scale their marks to make this happen.

II. Criterion based grading takes its name from the fact that each student is assessed by their ability to meet specific learning criteria. The criteria go by many names - outcomes, learning targets, lesson objectives, or unit topics. The common factor is that teachers must be able to identify what will be taught, how students will learn it and how it will be assessed.

The major difference between criteria based assessment is that student achievement is measured against standards rather than against others who are being assessed. This means that in one group of students there could be many high grades, while in another group of students there could be many low grades. The pattern you get depends upon the level of achievement and in small groups may be skewed toward one end of a graph.

