

AP[®]

The AP[®] Program: **Insights for Parents and Families**



AP[®] Courses Introduce Students to New Possibilities.

In High School. In College. In Career Opportunities. In Themselves.

What Is AP?

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®]) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both — while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. A score of 3 or higher on an AP Exam can typically earn students college credit and/or placement into advanced courses in college.

Myth

Reality

AP is for students who always get good grades.

AP courses are for any student who is academically prepared and motivated to take on college-level courses.

Taking AP courses could hurt my child's GPA.

Many schools use GPA weighting to acknowledge the additional effort required by AP. In addition, a decision to take an AP course shows admission officers a willingness to take on the academic challenge of college-level course work and expectations.

AP courses are too stressful.

It's no secret that AP courses are challenging, but the support students receive from their classmates and teachers can help ease their worries.

I don't know if my child will score high enough on the AP Exam to get college credit.

You don't need to score a 5. Many colleges grant credit — and placement as well — based on a 3 or better on an AP Exam.

Benefits of AP

1 AP can set students apart in the college admission process.

Students who take AP courses send a signal to colleges that they're serious about their education and that they're willing to challenge themselves with rigorous course work. Eighty-five percent of selective colleges and universities report that a student's AP experience favorably impacts admission decisions².

2 The financial benefits of AP are important to consider.

Students who take five years or more to graduate can spend \$21,500 for each additional year in college, to cover tuition, fees, living expenses, transportation and other costs³. Research shows that students who take AP courses and exams are much more likely than their peers to complete a college degree on time⁴.

3 AP teaches more than subject-area facts. Students build skills that last a lifetime.

AP courses give students access to rigorous college-level work, but with the support of high school teachers and peers. Students build confidence and learn the essential time management and study skills needed for college and career success. Students have the opportunity to dig deeper into subjects that interest them, develop advanced research and communication skills, and learn to tap their creativity and their problem-solving and analytical skills to address course challenges. AP students learn what will be expected of them in college.

Exploring the Benefits

- College credit for qualifying AP Exam scores
- Competitive advantages in the college admission and scholarship process
- Better preparation for college-level work
- An opportunity to deeply explore subjects students enjoy
- Opportunities to advance further and faster once a student is enrolled in college

Tips for AP Success

1 Sometimes all it takes is a little encouragement.

Often, students don't believe that they're AP "material." But the truth is that many students have the ability and motivation to succeed in AP courses, if they give themselves a chance. Students do need solid academic preparation and, of course, the commitment to meet the challenge head on. Parents can build students' confidence by reminding them that they already show that determination when they do the things that matter to them in areas such as sports, music or school subjects they're passionate about. That commitment, creativity and curiosity can make all the difference in AP courses.

3 Set reasonable expectations.

AP courses require students to do research and reading outside of class, and many students participate in study groups or tutoring sessions to stay on track. It's important for students to think about the amount of work they'll have so they can succeed in the courses they choose. You can support your child by designating specific areas in your home for schoolwork and study, and helping prioritize classes, activities, and home and work commitments.

2 Talk to your child about AP.

It's always a good idea to remind students to pick courses that match their interests, talents and priorities. Remind them to consider the classes they've already taken and the ones they were strong in, enjoyed more or found to be most interesting. Chances are, those courses can be launching pads for successful AP experiences.

4 It's never too early to start thinking about and planning for AP.

Students can consider taking AP throughout high school, but it's never too early to start the process. There may be honors-level courses or other academic opportunities that can start a student on the road to AP. You can talk to your child's counselor in middle school or high school to map out a course plan.

In 2012, **954,070** U.S. public high school graduates took at least one AP Exam.¹

AP Resources and Support



Financial help for AP Exams is available.

AP Exam fees for 2013 are \$89 per exam — for students with financial need, the College Board provides exam-fee reductions. There are also additional sources of federal and state funding that may be available for your child. Be sure to check with your child’s counselor or AP counselor or AP Coordinator early to arrange for assistance if needed.



Connect AP, college majors and careers.

At exploreap.org, your child can make connections between AP, college majors and careers that can open a world of ideas and inspiration.



Check out the AP credit policies of the colleges your child is exploring.

The College Board has created a website so you and your child can gather information about AP credit and placement policies at many colleges and universities.

You’ll find this resource at collegeboard.org/apcreditpolicy.

“ I chose to take AP courses because I love to challenge myself ... I feel thoroughly prepared for college because of the rigor of my AP classes. ”

— Anica, Senior, Denver

Take the Next Steps Together



Start the conversation.

Encourage your child to talk to peers, counselors and teachers to learn more about the challenges and benefits of participating in AP courses. Each school has specific processes for enrolling students in AP. Your child will need to speak with a counselor or teacher to get the details about your school's AP program. If your school offers AP informational events or other resources, take advantage of these to learn more. You might also want to talk to parents of AP students to learn more about a parent's perspective on AP. Ask a counselor or teacher to put you in touch.



Did your child take the PSAT/NMSQT®?

Performance on this test can be an indicator of success in specific AP courses. Talk to your child's counselor for details or go to collegeboard.org/quickstart.



Visit exploreap.org.

Share this helpful site with your child. It's a great place to start a successful AP journey.



Current AP Courses and Exams

Arts

Art History
Music Theory
Studio Art: 2-D Design
Studio Art: 3-D Design
Studio Art: Drawing

English

English Language & Composition
English Literature & Composition

History & the Social Sciences

Comparative Government & Politics
European History
Human Geography
Macroeconomics
Microeconomics
Psychology
United States Government & Politics
United States History
World History

Math & Computer Science

Calculus AB
Calculus BC
Computer Science A
Statistics

Sciences

Biology
Chemistry
Environmental Science
Physics B
Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism
Physics C: Mechanics

World Languages & Cultures

Chinese Language & Culture
French Language & Culture
German Language & Culture
Italian Language & Culture
Japanese Language & Culture
Latin
Spanish Language
Spanish Literature & Culture

Mission Statement

The College Board's mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. We are a not-for-profit membership organization committed to excellence and equity in education.

“The AP courses I took were definitely a lot harder than my regular courses so I was able to handle the pressure in college ... And AP helped me save a lot of money, which is a big issue now that I'm paying my own way through college.” *Dawn, Student, Rutgers University*



¹ The College Board, *The 9th Annual AP Report to the Nation*, February 13, 2012. ² Unpublished institutional research, Crux Research Inc. March 2007.
³ The College Board, *Trends in College Pricing 2011*, Figure 1. ⁴ The College Board, *College Outcomes Comparisons by AP and Non-AP High School Experiences 2008*.

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