

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT

The term "Advanced Placement" is used to identify those courses that prepare students to take the Advanced Placement Test in the spring of the junior or senior year. As a result of this test, students may qualify for college credits at various colleges and universities. A score of five is accepted by some colleges and college credits are awarded while in other schools a score of three, four, or five is accepted for college course credit. All students are encouraged to strive to complete A.P. courses.

### ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS

There are twenty-eight (28) examinations offered by the The College Board in the Advanced Placement (A.P.) Program. Courses included the following:

American History	Government & Politics
Biology	(2 courses)
Calculus (2 courses)	History of Art
Chemistry	Latin (2 courses)
Computer Science (2 courses)	
Economics (2 courses)	Music Theory
English (2 courses)	Physics (2 courses)
European History	Psychology
French (2 courses)	Spanish (2 courses)
German	Studio Art (2 courses)

All A.P. exams (except Studio Art) contain both multiple-choice questions and free-response questions that require essay writing, problem solving, and other skills. A.P. exams are given every year at the high school during two weeks in May. *Only tests for which students register are offered. Students may take A.P. exams even though a course may not be offered in high school. A.P. Studio Art requires a year-long commitment by a student.*

### ADVANTAGE OF TAKING (A.P.) EXAMS

If students are doing college-level work in an honors course, through independent study, or with a tutor, taking A.P. exams may offer the following benefits:

- Exemption by college or university from beginning courses and permission to take higher-level courses in certain fields.
- Academic credit awarded for exams taken.
- Tuition savings, up to a year of credit may be given for three or more qualifying A.P. grades.
- Time to explore undergraduate subject areas that students wouldn't otherwise be able to study because of the college time they have saved.

- Eligibility for honors and other special programs open to students who have received A.P. recognition.

### STEPS TO TAKE TO SIGN UP FOR THE EXAMS

1. Shortly after January 1 of the senior year, students should discuss plans to take A.P. exams with teachers and counselors.
2. Students should notify the counselor that he/they wishes to be a candidate. The counselor orders the necessary materials, collects fees, informs students when and where to appear for exams, and administers them.

### ADVANCED PLACEMENT GRADES

Grades on the Advanced Placement examinations are reported on a five-point scale:

#### Examination Grade

Extremely well qualified	5
Well qualified	4
Qualified	3
Possibly qualified	2
No recommendation	1

Approximately 100,000 junior and senior students take A.P. exams each year in the United States.

### NOTE TO STUDENTS:

The multiple-choice questions are sufficiently challenging so that, on the typical exam, you will need to answer about fifty to sixty percent of the questions correctly to earn a score that is comparable to a total grade of three. Should you guess if you are unsure about the answer to a question? Your scores on the multiple choice sections of A.P. exams are based on the number of questions answered correctly minus a fraction of the number answered incorrectly. For questions with five answer choices, one-fourth of a point is subtracted for each wrong answer. For questions with four answer choices, one-third of a point is subtracted. Thus, haphazard or random guessing on questions is unlikely to change your grade. However, if you have some knowledge of the question and can eliminate one or more answer choices, guessing from among the remaining choices is usually to your advantage.

## SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM

### 1. What is the Advanced Placement (AP) Program?

AP is a program of college-level courses and exams that gives high school students the opportunity to receive advanced placement and/or credit in college. About 400,000 students participate in the AP Program each year, usually through an AP course. Some students prepare for the AP exam by taking an honors class, an intensive regular course, a tutorial, or independent study. In a study of 400 former AP students interviewed at their colleges, more than 90 percent ranked their AP experiences as the most valuable of their high school studies.

### 2. What programs are offered in the AP Program?

Art	History
History of Art	European
Studio Art	United States
Drawing Portfolio	Latin
General Portfolio	Vergil
Biology	Literature
Chemistry	Mathematics
Computer Science	Calculus AB
Computer Science A	Calculus BC
Computer Science AB	Music Theory
Economics	Physics
Microeconomics	Physics B
Macroeconomics	Physics C
English	Mechanics
Language and Composition	Electricity &
Literature and Composition	Management
French	Psychology
Language	Spanish
Literature	Language
German Language	Literature
Government and Politics	
Comparative	
United States	

### 3. How many high schools offer these courses?

About 50 percent of the nation's 21,000 high schools offer some college-level AP course work; the average is five courses.

### 4. Why take an AP Exam?

Satisfactory grades on AP Examinations may offer many benefits. Advanced placement in college allows you to skip work you've already done in high school and move on to high-level courses. You'll also gain time to explore subject areas that you wouldn't otherwise be able to study, and to participate in internships or study abroad. If you earn the college's required grade on the AP Exam, you may receive the equivalent of credit for a one-year course, which might

otherwise cost up to \$2,500. If you're granted full year of college credit, the savings can be more than \$18,000 – the equivalent of a year's tuition, room, and board. But the basic reasons for taking an AP course are to learn a subject in greater depth, to develop analytical reasoning skills, and to form disciplined study habits appropriate for continued success at the college level. Studies undertaken by individual colleges have shown repeatedly that AP students who take advanced courses in their first year of college do as well or better than upper-class students. Most AP students do extremely well throughout their college careers, and a good number graduate with honors.

### 5. How much credit can I expect to get from an AP Exam?

Each college decides which AP Examination grades it will accept for credit and/or advanced placement. Most institutions accept grades of 3 and above. To find out which AP grades are considered acceptable by the colleges of your choice, write to the Director of Admissions.

### 6. Can I really get a year of college credit for AP work?

Definitely. Each year, more than 30,000 AP students are potentially eligible for sophomore standing in college. About 1,300 institutions – including some of the most selective colleges in the country award a full year's credit to students presenting satisfactory grades (as determined by the institution) on enough AP Examinations.

### 7. What are AP Exams like? When are they given?

All AP Exams (except Studio Art) contain both multiple-choice and free-response questions that require essay writing, problem solving, and other skills. In Studio Art, students submit portfolios of their work instead of taking an exam. History of Art has questions based on projected color slides. The foreign language exams and Music Theory use tape recordings for certain portions.

Most of the examinations are three hours long, but those for semester courses take only one-and-a-half or two hours. They are given each May, at any school that wishes to order and administer them.

### 8. Are AP courses very difficult?

AP courses are introductory college courses, so they are not easy, but neither are they impossibly difficult. Compared with your regular high school courses, the AP courses will probably be more demanding – and

more rewarding. AP courses often require more time and work, but they give you greater opportunity to master a subject and to explore it in greater depth. Meeting the demands of an AP course is an investment of effort that will be amply repaid.

## 9. How are the exams graded?

The multiple-choice sections are scored by machine. The free response booklets are evaluated by nearly 2,300 carefully selected college professors and AP teachers – called faculty consultants – who spend a week each June scoring answers in nearly 600,000 booklets. Each answer is scored individually by a faculty consultant who has been specially trained to assess that question with accuracy and consistency; typically, each booklet is evaluated by four professors and teachers. No faculty consultant knows the scores given by another faculty consultant or whose booklet is being scored.

Every examination receives an overall grade on a five-point scale. 5 (extremely well qualified); 4 (well-qualified); 3 (qualified); 2 (possibly qualified); and 1 (no recommendation). AP Grade Reports are sent in July to each student's home address, high school, and, if the student has requested it, to the designated colleges.

## 10. How do AP grades compare with grades given in college courses?

The AP program has conducted grade comparability studies in various AP subjects to compare the performance of AP candidates with that of college students in related courses. In general, these studies indicate that an AP grade of 3 is approximately equal to a college course of B at many institutions. At some other institutions, an AP grade of 3 is more nearly comparable to a college course grade of C.

## 11. If I don't get a good grade on an AP Exam, will it hurt my chances for college admission?

It is generally to your advantage to submit all evidence of your college-level course work because:

- Your grade may be as good as or better than what you would have received in an easier course because many schools weight the grades given in AP courses to compensate for the increased difficulty.
- College officials know very well that all courses are not equal. Their evaluation of student grades focuses as much on the quality of the courses as on the grades received.
- If you choose to report AP grades received before your senior year, you will be alerting the colleges to the fact that you undertook a difficult course and that you are serious about your studies. Overall, two-thirds of the test

takers receive an AP grade of 3 or higher, which is an indicator of successful work for most colleges.

Remember, too, that if you take an examination as a senior, colleges will not receive your grade before July – probably well after you have been admitted – and only if you request it.

## 12. What if I decide I don't want a college to receive my AP Examination grade?

You control the reporting of your AP Examination grades. At the time of the examination, you indicate on your answer sheet the name of the college you wish to receive your grades. After the exam, you can write to the AP Program and request that your grades be sent to the colleges of your choice. Until June 15, you also have the option of telling the AP Program to cancel or withhold a grade before it is sent to a college. However, college admission officials understand the rigor of an AP Examination, and you will be taking a positive step toward your potential admission by sending them your grade.

## 13. Can I take an AP Examination if I haven't taken an AP course?

The best preparation for an examination is an AP course in which students and teachers focus on college-level work. But some students who have taken strong courses other than AP may be able to perform quite well on the AP Examination.

## 14. How do I get involved in AP? How do I sign up for an AP Exam?

Your teacher, counselor, principal, or AP Coordinator – whoever knows about AP at your school – can fill you in on the AP Program and help you decide which AP courses may be good for you. It's a good idea to plan ahead as far as possible – in the ninth or tenth grade – so you'll have the appropriate background courses for the AP experience in your junior or senior year. In any given year, your AP Coordinator must order your AP Exam(s) by April 1.

For further information about AP, write to the address below for free copies of the **Guide to the Advanced Placement Program** and the **Bulletin for Students**.

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