

AP® Fact Sheet

Overview

- The Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) allows students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school.
- More than 15,000 schools worldwide participate in the AP Program, including 60 percent of U.S. high schools.
- One in three high school graduates takes an AP course in high school. In 2005, more than 1.2 million students worldwide took more than 2.1 million AP Exams.
- Most of the nation's colleges and universities, and institutions in more than 30 countries, have an AP policy granting incoming students credit, placement, or both for qualifying AP Exam grades.

AP Courses and Exams

- Thirty-five AP courses and exams are offered in 20 subject areas.
- A diverse committee of college faculty and experienced AP teachers develops each course and exam.
- AP Development Committee members represent a wide range of colleges and universities, including prestigious institutions such as Dartmouth, Duke, Harvard, Princeton, Swarthmore, University of California: Berkeley, and Yale.
- A new course and exam in AP Italian Language and Culture will be offered in fall 2005. Three other courses and exams are being developed: Chinese Language and Culture (2006-07), Japanese Language and Culture (2006-07), and Russian Language and Culture (launch date to be determined).

Benefits of the AP Program

- Students experience a rigorous, college-level curriculum and have the chance to earn credit, placement, or both for college.
- Many teachers who participate in AP professional development improve as teachers in general, not just as teachers of AP classes.
- AP schools often experience a diffusion of higher academic standards throughout the entire curriculum.
- Colleges admit students prepared to tackle rigorous course work. According to a U.S. Department of Education study,¹ participation in AP or other rigorous courses is a stronger predictor of success in college than test scores or grade point average.

1. Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education (1999).

Preserving AP Quality

- An annual AP Course Audit will be implemented in the 2007-08 academic year to help teachers and school administrators ensure the quality of their AP courses and preserve the use of the “AP” designation for courses that provide college-level rigor for students.
- Colleges and universities are surveyed every few years to determine the breadth of information, skills, and assignments covered by corresponding college courses. Development Committees use the survey results to ensure that AP Exams reflect current course content at colleges and universities nationwide.
- To ensure that students’ AP Exam grades accurately correlate to college-level achievement, portions of the AP Exam are administered to college students who have completed the corresponding college course, so that their performance on the AP Exam can be compared to their performance in the college course (as measured by their test and course grades). This information is used to guide the setting of the AP Exam grades.

Improving Educational Opportunities for All Students

- The College Board and the Advanced Placement Program encourage teachers, AP Coordinators, and school administrators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs. The College Board is committed to the principle that all students deserve an opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically challenging courses and programs. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be given consideration for admission to AP courses. The College Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.
- The total number of students taking AP Exams increased by 10.8 percent in 2005. The growth of AP participation among traditionally underrepresented students is even more impressive:
 - The number of African American students taking exams increased by 18.8 percent.
 - The number of Latino students taking exams increased by 14.5 percent.
 - The number of Native American students taking exams increased by 13.7 percent.
- As of 2004, Latino students are no longer underrepresented in the pool of AP Exam takers. Nationwide, the percentage of Latino students taking AP Exams exceeds the percentage of Latino students in the overall student population.
- College Board programs such as Pre-AP[®] are preparing an unprecedented number of middle school and high school students, especially those from underserved populations, for challenging college-level course work.

AP and College Success

- New research² conducted by the University of California: Berkeley—which looked at a pool of “similar” students created by removing differences of GPA, school quality, parental education level, and family income—“emphatically supports” many earlier studies’ findings that an AP Exam grade of 3 or higher is “a remarkably strong predictor of performance in college.” This study concludes: “The subject-specific, curriculum-intensive AP Exams are the epitome of ‘achievement tests,’ and their validity in predicting college performance should not be surprising.”
- A 2002 study³ by the University of Texas at Austin shows that among students with the same academic abilities (same SAT[®]/ACT scores; same class rank), AP students scoring 3 or higher perform better in advanced college courses than students who participated in concurrent enrollment or students who did not skip any college courses.

2. Saul Geiser and Veronica Santelices, “The Role of Advanced Placement and Honors Courses in College Admissions,” Center for Studies in Higher Education. Paper CSHE-4-04 (July 1, 2004).

3. Barbara G. Dodd, Steven J. Fitzpatrick, R.J. DeAyala, and Judith A. Jennings, “An Investigation of the Validity of AP Grades of 3 and a Comparison of AP and Non-AP Student Groups,” College Board Research Report No. 2002-9 (2002).