A photograph of three students in a classroom setting. A young man in a green shirt is leaning over a desk, looking down at a book or paper. A young woman in a light blue shirt is sitting at the desk, looking down. Another student is visible in the background, also looking down. The image has a blue tint.

The Value of **AP[®] Courses** and **Exams**



Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) courses give you a head start on college while you're still in the supportive environment of a high school classroom. Taking the end-of-course AP Exam sends a powerful message to colleges and universities that you're ready for them, and can enable you to gain admission, college credit, and placement into advanced courses.



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 considered for admission to AP courses. The 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.



Get ready now to succeed in college

A number of studies show that students who take AP® courses are much more likely to earn a bachelor's degree. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education found that students participating in rigorous, college-level courses in high school—and specifically AP courses—are much more likely to complete college.¹ And here are the results of an even more recent study:

Did you know...

If you earn a high school diploma, you're likely to earn \$9,200 more annually than students who don't complete high school.

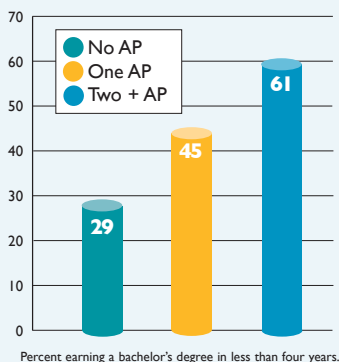
But if you earn a bachelor's degree at college, you're likely to earn \$19,100 more annually.

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004, PINC-03)

AP and College Success

Students who take AP courses and exams are much more likely than their peers to complete a bachelor's degree in four years or less.*

*Source: Camara, Wayne (2003). *College Persistence, Graduation and Remediation. College Board Research Notes (RN-19)*. New York, NY: College Board.



What's the difference between AP and other college-prep or honors courses?

Many schools have created valuable honors courses for their students, but AP courses are the only ones actually designed by teams of college professors, who work alongside expert secondary school teachers. Plus, college faculty participate in the scoring of the AP Exam you'll take at the end of your course, comparing you to their own college students, verifying your mastery of the same level of curriculum.

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





Who designs the AP courses and exams?

The AP Program offers what no single school can—a portfolio of courses and examinations that are developed by committees of college professors and experienced AP teachers. The AP committees are composed of leaders in their fields who bring cutting-edge content knowledge and expert teaching practices to the development of AP courses, which are reviewed and revised annually. AP committee members currently teach at dozens of the nation's top colleges, universities, and secondary schools, including:

- Dartmouth College
- Hamilton College
- Princeton University
- Spelman College
- University of Virginia
- University of Washington
- Yale University
- The Spence School
- St. Louis University High School
- Phillips Exeter Academy
- Thomas Jefferson High School

Some specific examples include David Kennedy, Stanford University's Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, who chaired the AP U.S. History committee, and Harvard's prominent economist N. Gregory Mankiw, former chairman of the federal Council of Economic Advisers.

What's the cost of taking an AP course?

The College Board, which develops AP courses and exams, is a not-for-profit membership association dedicated to helping students make the transition to college. Students do not pay a fee to take an AP course, but do pay an end-of-course AP Exam fee, which the College Board uses to score the exams, report the student's grade results, offer teacher training, develop classroom resources, and so on. The College Board partners with states and the federal government to reduce and/or waive the exam fee for





Put Your Knowledge to the Test

students from low-income households.

You've spent the year tackling rigorous AP courses. Now it's time to put your knowledge to the test. Take the AP Exams and earn college credit or placement before you even set foot on campus.

Most of the nation's colleges and universities, and colleges and universities in more than 30 other countries, grant students credit, placement, or both for qualifying AP Exam grades.

So whether you plan to attend a public or private university, a small liberal arts college, a state school, or an international university, taking the AP Exams pays off.

What's the difference between credit and placement?

Colleges and universities formulate an AP policy appropriate to their institution:

- Some award "credit" for qualifying AP Exam grades. This means you actually earn points toward your college degree.
- Others award "advanced placement." This means you can skip introductory courses, enter higher-level classes, and/or fulfill general education requirements.

Many colleges and universities offer both credit and placement. At Princeton University, for example, students can use qualifying AP Exam grades to:

- Graduate in three or three-and-a-half years.
- Enter upper-level courses.
- Fulfill a foreign language requirement.





Can I earn college credit or placement just by taking the AP course?

Colleges and universities only give credit or placement for qualifying AP Exam grades, not AP course grades. Without a corresponding AP Exam grade, they can't verify that the AP courses you take are true college-level courses.

"One of the best standard predictors of academic success at Harvard is performance on Advanced Placement Examinations."

William R. Fitzsimmons, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid, Harvard University

"The confirmation that college-level learning took place is in the published results. The AP Exam grade is a national standard that I can understand and rely upon."

Joellen L. Silberman, Dean of Enrollment, Kalamazoo College

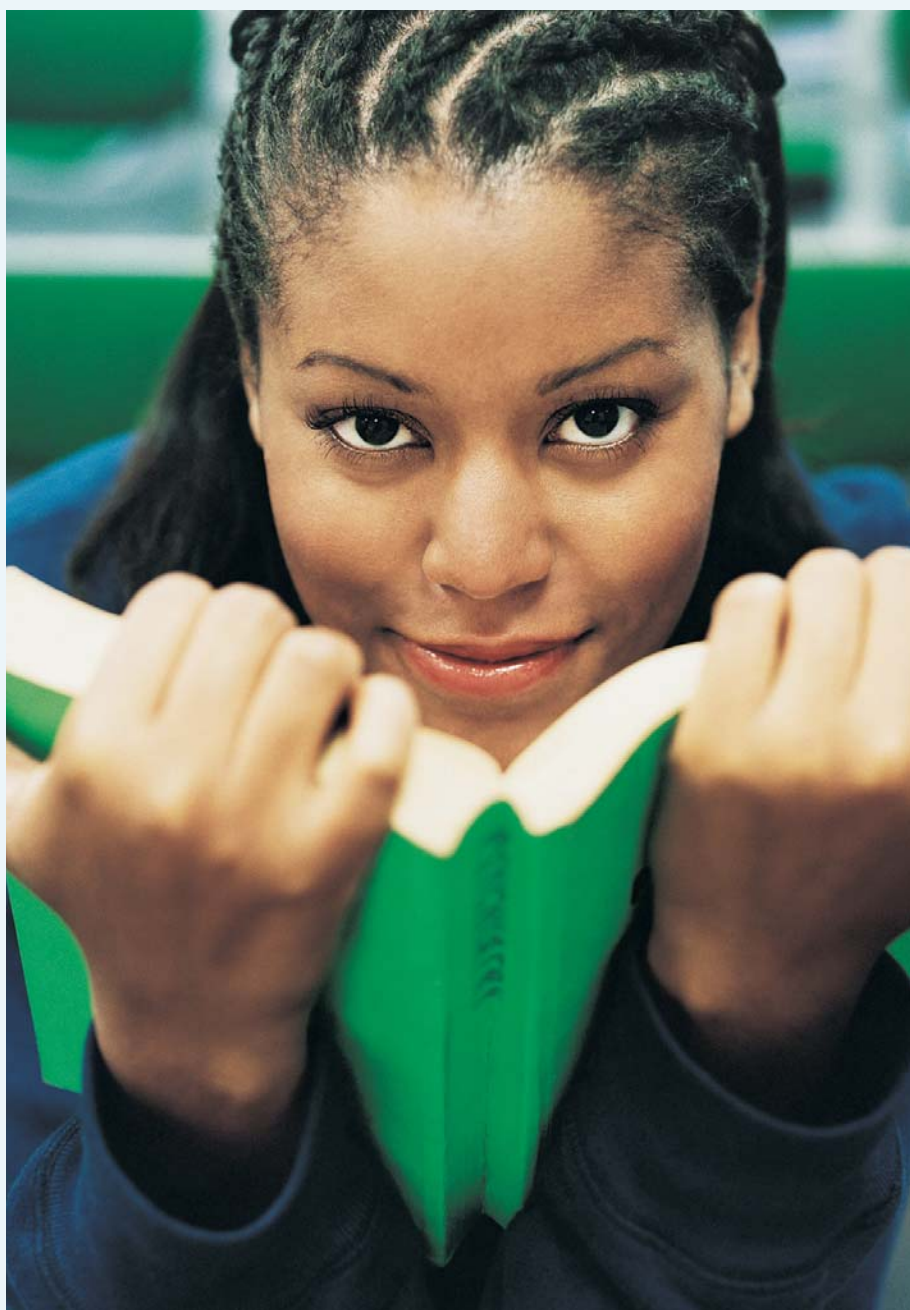
What can I do with college credit or placement?

Increase your options

College credit or placement can allow you to move into upper-level courses sooner, pursue a double major or a combined B.A./M.A. program, and gain time to study and travel abroad.

"As a freshman, I was able to skip general ed requirements, and head straight into the higher-level classes I wanted to take. Taking AP Exams literally saved me semesters of time."

Brent Wiese, University of Iowa





Save money

If you earn a qualifying grade on an AP Exam, you can receive credit for the equivalent course at thousands of colleges and universities. This could save you as much as \$3,000 per course.

"I took AP throughout high school because it was the most interesting and well-taught program offered. When I reached college, I realized that I had accumulated a year's worth of credits. I graduated from Michigan's undergraduate business school a full year early, saving \$30,000 and a year's time."

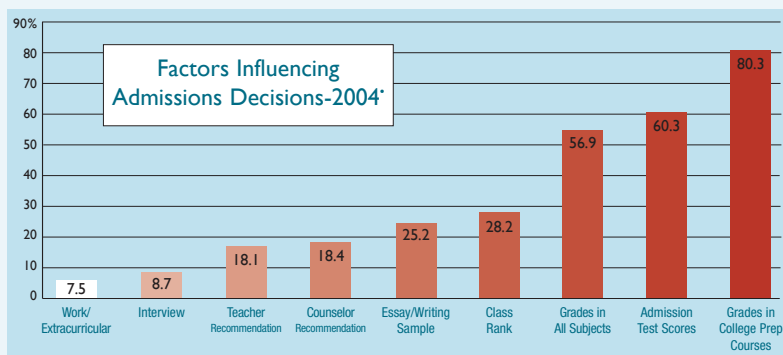
Nikki Baker, University of Michigan

Why should I take the AP Exam if I'm not looking to earn credit or placement?

Even if earning college credit or placement isn't your goal, you can still benefit from taking the AP Exams.

Stand out in the admissions process

Everyone wants to get into the college of their choice. Those that make it take the most challenging courses.



*NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2004. Reprinted with permission from the National Association for College Admission Counseling, 2005.



Did you know...

You can use your AP Exam grades to gain admission to any university within Germany. High school graduates who earn grades of 3 or higher on a specified number of AP Exams in particular content areas will be granted the same consideration as German nationals with an *Abitur* (*Gymnasium* diploma). Learn more at www.collegeboard.com/apgermany.

In fact, more than 500 universities outside the U.S., in more than 30 countries, recognize AP. A full listing of these institutions, with their policies and current contact information, is available at www.collegeboard.com/apintl.

Also, universities worldwide utilize the AP International Diploma (APID) in admissions. The APID is a globally recognized certificate for students interested in international studies who display exceptional achievement on AP Exams across several disciplines. For more information, see www.collegeboard.com/apid.

The AP Exams provide colleges and universities with additional information about your ability to succeed in college-level study.

"AP Exams affirm the rigor of a student's course work. Though admissions policies vary, if I were a student, I wouldn't assume that the college of my dreams didn't care about AP Exam grades in the admissions process."

Bruce Walker, Vice Provost and Director of Admissions, University of Texas at Austin

Earn academic scholarships or awards

Some of the most competitive scholarship awards consider your AP Exam grades. Many colleges also use AP Exam grades to place students into honors classes.

"Having the AP Exam grade can make the difference when it comes down to awarding precious scholarship dollars."

Edwina Harris Hamby, Dean of Admission, Fisk University

Experience a college-level test

The intensity of college exams catches far too many freshmen by surprise. Taking the AP Exams will put you a step ahead, and give you a clear understanding of what you need to succeed on a college exam.

"Students who have prepared for and taken the AP Exams more easily adapt to taking college essay exams, and are especially skilled in including a thesis and a well-developed argument. They are also less intimidated by sophisticated, college-level multiple-choice questions that seek to test understanding over memorization."

Robert Blackey, Professor of History, California State University, San Bernardino



Be a step ahead

If you decide to take the corresponding college course after taking the AP Exams, you'll have the tools to excel.

What about courses that aren't AP?

Your school may offer excellent, rigorous courses for which there's no AP equivalent (for example: dance, theater, or business). If the College Board has not developed an AP course in a particular subject, you should not be discouraged from taking that class. Talk with your school counselor and teacher to identify ways to help college and university admissions offices gauge the quality and rigor of your non-AP courses.

"I received a 3 on my AP English Exam, but since I love English and hope to take all the English courses that I could possibly get my hands on, I decided to take English 111 in college. My college class is covering the same material I studied in AP English. Thanks to my experience preparing for the free-response questions, my frequent essay exams are a breeze. By taking AP, I'm a step ahead of the others in my class. I know the material and I know the process."

Anne Elliott, Freshman, University of Connecticut

"Students should take the AP Exam if for no other purpose than to know how well they mastered the material. Even if they decide not to pursue college credit, the exam grade gives them feedback on a national standard rather than just on that of the local high school."

R. Scott Verzyl, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Services, University of Alabama at Huntsville

How can I find out the specific value of AP Exam grades at the colleges that interest me?

For the most up-to-date information check directly with the college or university office of admissions. Go to www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy to find out more about the credit and placement policies of individual colleges and universities—just type in the name of the institution or browse by letter of the alphabet.



Talk to your school counselor, teacher, or AP Coordinator to register for AP courses and exams.



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