



What You Need to Know About the Advanced Placement Program



"Students who complete Advanced Placement courses are much more prepared for the problem-solving and self-motivation required to succeed in college... They are more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than peers who were similar on measures of income and college-placement exam scores but who did not participate in an AP class." Dr. Ken James, former Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner

Advanced Placement classes are college level courses taught in high school by high school teachers with additional, advanced training. At the end of the course, students take an AP exam which is scored 1-5. Students with high enough scores (generally a 3 or better) receive college credit for that course.

The curriculum of AP courses is standardized across the world, so your AP student is prepared to compete nationally and globally with an equal quality of education. The challenge and rigor of these courses make them more interesting and engaging for students.

Pre-Advanced Placement courses are taught by teachers with additional, advanced training to prepare students with the content knowledge, skills, and study habits to succeed in AP classes.

Students who take an AP course and the exam receive a weighted credit of 1 (A=5.0). Pre-AP students are given a weighted credit of .5 for in-district honor rolls and other recognition. Students who receive a score of 3 on at least 3 AP exams will receive recognition as AP Scholars—they are sought out and recruited by colleges.

Advanced Placement is the BEST preparation for college.

College graduates earn, on average, \$15,000 more per year than those with some college and \$20,000 more than those with only a high school diploma. Consider the extra earnings over a forty-year career!

Average college GPAs in Arkansas: 2.31 for those who did not take an AP course; 2.75 for those who took an AP course but scored only 1-2; 3.26 for those who took an AP course and scored a 3 or higher. Only 27% of students who did not take an AP course graduated from college in four years. Forty-five percent of students who took one AP course graduated in four years; and 61% of students who took more than one AP course graduated from college in four years. Students who took the AP courses in high school continue to do better in college as upperclassmen (higher GPAs) than students who took the introductory courses offered by the colleges. This is true even if the student did not score a 3+ on the exams.

College admissions rely most heavily NOT on overall GPA and NOT on class rank. They look most closely at grades in AP courses and in the essay (for which AP English and social studies classes prepare the students). AP students earn higher GPAs in their college courses than students who have the same SAT scores.

§ Advanced Placement saves you money. §

Students who take AP courses are better prepared for college entrance exams such as ACT and SAT. Scores on those exams often determine scholarships.

Both college and independent scholarship award committees look for AP courses on the application to demonstrate ability and motivation.

Students who earn college credit in high school can enter college as second semester freshmen, sophomores or even higher. This saves in tuition costs.

What courses should my child take?

Students should take as many AP courses as possible (thus as many pre-AP courses before) also considering their extracurricular activities. Your child will be competing for college entrance and scholarships against high school students across the state and across the nation who are taking MANY AP courses.

Because students will change their minds on careers several times before high school (and sometimes college) graduation, they need to take pre-AP and AP courses in all content areas.

Students should take pre-AP and AP courses in areas of great interest and at which they excel.

Students should take pre-AP and AP courses in weaker areas to improve before college and to get some of those pre-requisites out of the way so that they may concentrate on their major courses when they are on the college campus.