

Advanced Placement Questions and Answers (Q & A)

The following Q & A are being provided as a guide for Advanced Placement courses.

Q: What is the Advanced Placement Program?

A: The Advanced Placement Program, administered by The College Board and taught at local high schools, allows students to participate in a college level course and possibly earn college credit while still in high school. Secondary schools and colleges cooperate in this program to give students the opportunity to show mastery in college-level courses by taking the AP exam(s) in May of each school year.

Q. What are the benefits of taking Advanced Placement (AP) classes?

A. There are a number of benefits to students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses to including the following:

- Save money on college tuition
- Early graduation
- Develop college-level academic skills
- Increase chances for college-specific merit aid
- Flexibility in college
- College admission decision

Q: What are the advantages of taking an AP course?

A: The main advantage of taking an AP course is better preparation for college. It has been shown that students master in depth content at the college level more easily after completing AP courses in high school. Students also acquire sophisticated academic skills and increased self-confidence in preparation for college. Additionally, students who take AP exams may receive college credit while still in high school, saving both time and money. Credit on AP exams can save up to \$1,500 in college tuition alone and/or count as credit for one or more courses. However, check with the college you are interested in to see if they accept AP exams for credits.

Q: How does an AP class compare to other high school courses?

A: AP classes are more challenging and stimulating, but they take more time and require more work. AP classes require energetic, involved, and motivated students.

Q: Why should a student take an AP class? How will it affect a student's GPA?

A: Students who succeed in AP courses generally do well in college as a result of rigorous academic preparation. Many high schools give extra grade point weight on the GPA for taking an AP course and exam. In this way, a student's GPA is not adversely affected by taking accelerated AP courses. Colleges look favorably on students who tackle AP courses.

Q: What background does my child need in order to succeed in an AP course?

A: The content of AP courses is more rigorous than that in typical high school honors courses. Students should have had practice in analyzing content, drawing comparisons, and reasoning through problems. They must be able to read perceptively and independently. Additionally, students will need to be proficient in writing clear, concise essays. Students who are not skilled in these areas must be even more highly motivated to make up deficiencies at the same time they are taking more rigorous courses. The earlier students prepare for AP or college courses by taking the most rigorous classes available, the more likely will be their success. The keys to success are motivation, self-discipline, and academic preparation.

Q: What AP courses/exams do high schools offer?

A: High schools are not required by the state to offer AP courses though the state offers an incentive program for schools that do. However, many high schools are adding AP courses each year. There are 31 AP exams in 16 disciplines coordinated and administered by The College Board. These exams contain both multiple choice questions and free-response items that require essays, problem solving and other skills. The exams include Biology, Chemistry, (Macroeconomics), English (Language and Composition, Literature and Composition), Environmental Science, French (Language), Government and Politics (Comparative), U.S. History, European History, Calculus AB and BC, Statistics, Physics BC, Psychology, and Spanish (Language, Literature).

Q: How much does it cost to take an AP course? Exam?

A: There are no charges for the courses if they are part of the student's program. All Savannah-Chatham County Public School students take AP exams at no cost.

Q: Will my child receive college credit?

A: The AP exams are given every year in May. Scores are reported to the colleges designated by the student and range from 1 (no recommendation) to 5 (extremely qualified). Each college determines the scores to be accepted for credit, but most consider a score of at least 3. Colleges may award three, and sometimes six, hours of credit per test. Students should contact individual colleges to find out about the policy of each.

Q. Do I have to take the AP exam?

A. No. However, colleges do not use AP scores for admission purposes, so you really have nothing to lose by taking the exam.