



AP Capstone™

Research, Academic Rigor, Distinction

The College Board's AP Capstone™ is an innovative and engaging college-level program for high school students that complements and enhances discipline-specific AP courses. It's built on two new courses—AP® Seminar and AP Research—that immerse students in the practice of critical skills needed to distinguish themselves in college and life.

AP Capstone is the pinnacle of the high school experience, encouraging a passion for learning and transforming students into curious, collaborative, and independent thinkers with skills that are valued and sought after by colleges and universities.



Combining Scholarly Practice with Academic Intensity

AP Capstone was developed in response to feedback from the College Board's Higher Education membership. The two AP Capstone courses, with their associated performance tasks, assessments, and application of research methodology, complement the rigor of AP courses and exams by challenging students to:

- Think critically and creatively to construct meaning or gain understanding
- Plan and conduct a study or investigation
- Propose solutions to real-world problems
- Plan and produce communication in various forms
- Collaborate to solve a problem
- Integrate, synthesize, and make cross-curricular connections

Benefits of AP Capstone



FOR STUDENTS

- Fosters the **critical and creative thinking, argumentation, and research skills** at the core of college readiness and essential for lifelong learning
- Provides a setting to build on the knowledge and rigorous course work of AP in an **interdisciplinary** format
- Offers a unique opportunity to **distinguish** oneself to colleges and universities



FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

- Builds **professional excellence** through participation in an intensive, weeklong collaborative professional development institute
- Offers a flexible curricular content model with room for creativity and student input
- Affords schools and districts the distinction of offering a rigorous, widely recognized diploma program



FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- Helps identify students who are prepared to enter college with the research, writing, and collaboration skills necessary for successful college completion
- Provides consistent, externally validated measures of student ability
- Demonstrates student research and writing abilities through a 5,000-word scholarly research paper

Building Skills Identified by Leading Educational Organizations

AP Capstone has collaborated with colleges and universities to define its content and standards. It utilizes frameworks and learning objectives uniquely aligned with core AP skills and practices, and other skills-based learning objectives as identified by:

Advanced Placement Program®, Skills and Practices

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), *College Learning for the New Global Century, Essential Learning Outcomes*

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), *A Framework for 21st Century Learning*

Common Core State Standards Initiative, *Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12*

Council of Writing Program Administrators, *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*

AP Capstone Curriculum

AP Capstone Diploma™

Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both of the AP Capstone courses and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will receive the AP Capstone Diploma™.

AP SEMINAR (Year 1)

- Team Project & Presentation
- Research-Based Essay & Presentation
- End-of-Course Exam

AP RESEARCH (Year 2)

- Research Process Documentation
- Academic Thesis Paper
- Presentation & Oral Defense

4 AP COURSES & EXAMS
(Taken at any point throughout high school)

AP Seminar and Research Certificate™

Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both of the AP Capstone courses but not on the four additional AP Exams will receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate™, signifying successful performance in those courses.

AP Seminar

This foundational course, typically taken in grade 10 or 11, provides students with opportunities to think critically and creatively, research, explore, pose solutions, develop arguments, collaborate, and communicate using various media. Students explore real-world issues through a variety of lenses and consider multiple points of view to develop deep understanding of complex issues as they make connections between these issues and their own lives.

Students read articles, research studies, and foundational and philosophical texts; listen to and view speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experience artistic and literary works to gain a rich appreciation and understanding of issues.

Teachers have the flexibility to choose appropriate themes that allow for deep exploration based on student interests, local and civic issues, global or international topics, and concepts from other AP courses.

Sample Topics or Themes

- Education
- Innovation
- Revolution
- Sustainability
- Technology

Assessment

Students are assessed with two through-course performance tasks and an end-of-course exam. The AP Seminar score is based on all three assessments and is reported on the standard 1–5 AP scoring scale.

AP Research

(AP Seminar is a prerequisite for AP Research)

The second course in the AP Capstone experience allows students to design, plan, and conduct a yearlong research-based investigation on a topic of individual interest. Through this inquiry and investigation, students demonstrate the ability to apply scholarly understanding to real-world problems and issues.

Students further the skills acquired in the AP Seminar course by understanding research methodology; employing ethical research practices; and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information to build, present, and defend an argument.

Assessment

Students are assessed through culminating performance tasks:

- Academic thesis paper (approximately 5,000 words) with a defined structure
- Presentation, performance, or exhibition and oral defense of research and presentation

The AP Research score is based on these components and is reported on the standard 1–5 AP scoring scale.

Support for AP Capstone

"[Through this program] you get students turned on to higher education in a way they are not currently and they enter university with a different kind of attitude."

—Susan Roth, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, Duke University

"The AP Capstone program will help students to develop critical thinking skills that allow them to think independently, to analyze issues from different perspectives, to communicate clearly, and to conduct independent research. These are exactly the types of skills that they will be expected to utilize in college and the AP Capstone program will give them a terrific head start."

—Zina L. Evans, Ph.D., Vice President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost, University of Florida

"The ability to guide the student toward understanding where a research method is valid needs to be explicitly taught."

—Ellen Woods, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Director of Thinking Matters, Stanford University

"AP Capstone provides more of the learning students will need for success in college and beyond... We want them to come in ready to analyze issues from multiple perspectives, integrating disparate ideas and comfortable with innovation, so they can make real contributions when they get here."

—Ken O'Donnell, Senior Director, Student Engagement, California State University, Office of the Chancellor

For more information, visit
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The AP Capstone Program and its two associated courses are developed with the input and oversight of faculty from the following higher education institutions and secondary schools:

Higher Education

Bridgewater State University
Brown University
Columbia University
Duke University
Montana State University
Montgomery College
Purchase College (SUNY)
Stanford University
Truman State University
University of Delaware
University of Tulsa

Secondary Schools

Barbara Goleman Senior High School, Miami Lakes, FL
Bishop O'Dowd High School, Oakland, CA
Brooklyn Technical High School, Brooklyn, NY
Deerfield Academy, Deerfield, MA
Eleanor Roosevelt High School, Greenbelt, MD
Highlands High School, Fort Thomas, KY
Hong Kong International School, Tai Tam, Hong Kong
Hume Fogg Academic Magnet High School, Nashville, TN
Irving ISD, Irving, TX
Jack O. Singley Academy, Irving, TX
Lakewood High School, Lakewood, CO
McCracken County High School, Paducah, KY
North Central High School, Spokane, WA
North Oldham High School, Goshen, KY
Strathcona High School, Edmonton, Canada

Other Institutions

Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

