

AP[®] Seminar

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Capstone™ Program

AP Capstone™ is an innovative diploma program from the College Board that equips students with the independent research, collaborative teamwork, and communication skills that are increasingly valued by colleges. AP Capstone is built on the foundation of two AP courses — **AP Seminar** and **AP Research** — and is designed to complement and enhance the in-depth, discipline-specific study experienced in other AP courses. In AP Seminar, students investigate real-world issues from multiple perspectives, gathering and analyzing information from various sources in order to develop credible and valid evidence-based arguments. AP Seminar is a prerequisite for AP Research. Completing AP Seminar and all its required assessment components is necessary for students to develop the skills to be successful in AP Research. In AP Research, students cultivate the skills and discipline necessary to conduct independent research and inquiry in order to produce and defend their scholarly work.

Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research and on four additional AP Exams of their choosing will receive the AP Capstone Diploma™. Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research but not on four additional AP Exams will receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate™.

AP Seminar Course Overview

AP Seminar is a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives. Using an inquiry framework, students practice reading and analyzing articles, research studies, and foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; listening to and viewing speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and experiencing artistic works and performances. Students learn to synthesize information from multiple sources, develop their own perspectives in written essays, and design and deliver oral and visual presentations, both individually and as part of a team. Ultimately, the course aims to equip students with the power to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisite courses for the AP Seminar course.

AP Seminar Course Content

Students explore the complexities of one or more themes by making connections within, between, and/or among multiple cross-curricular areas and by exploring multiple perspectives and lenses (e.g., cultural and social, artistic and philosophical, political and historical, environmental, economic, scientific, futuristic, ethical) related to those themes. Teachers have the flexibility to choose one or more appropriate themes that allow for deep interdisciplinary exploration based on:

- Concepts or issues from other AP courses
- Student interests
- Local and/or civic issues
- Academic problems or questions
- Global or international topics

Exploring different points of view and making connections across disciplines are fundamental components of the AP Seminar experience. Students consider each topic through a variety of lenses and from multiple perspectives, many of which are divergent or competing. Analyzing topics through multiple lenses aids in interdisciplinary understanding and helps students gain a rich appreciation for the complexity of important issues.

Pedagogical Framework

Throughout the program, students consider and evaluate multiple points of view to develop their own perspectives on complex issues and topics through inquiry and investigation. The AP Capstone program provides students with a framework that allows them to develop, practice, and hone their critical and creative thinking skills as they make connections between various issues and their own lives.

Students use the following framework as they explore issues and topics:

- **Question and Explore**
- **Understand and Analyze**
- **Evaluate Multiple Perspectives**
- **Synthesize Ideas**
- **Team, Transform, and Transmit**

AP Seminar Assessment Structure

Students are assessed with two through-course performance tasks and one end-of-course exam. All three assessments are summative and will be used to calculate a final AP score (using the 1–5 scale) for AP Seminar.

Format of Assessment

Team Project and Presentation | 20%

- Individual Research Report
- Team Multimedia Presentation and Oral Defense

Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation | 35%

- Individual Written Argument
- Individual Multimedia Presentation
- Oral Defense

End-of-Course Exam (2 Hours) | 45%

- Analyzing an argument (3 short-answer questions); suggested time 30 minutes
- Synthesizing and creating an evidence-based argument (1 essay question); suggested time 90 minutes

Overview of Assessment Tasks

Team Project and Presentation

Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, and analyze an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each team designs and/or considers options and evaluates alternatives; develops a multimedia presentation to present the argument for their proposed solution or resolution; and provides an oral defense to questions posed by the teacher. Each team develops a team research question, conducts preliminary research, and divides responsibilities among themselves for individual research that will address the team's research question.

For the Individual Research Report, students individually investigate their assigned approach, perspective, or lens on the issue or topic of the team research question. Students present their findings and analyses to the group in a well-written individual report that

- identifies the area of investigation and its relationship to the overall problem or issue;
- summarizes, explains, analyzes, and evaluates the main ideas and reasoning in the chosen sources;
- identifies, compares, and interprets a range of perspectives about the problem or issue; and
- cites all sources used and includes a list of works cited or bibliography.

For the Team Multimedia Presentation, the team considers all the research and analyses from individual team members for the purpose of proposing one or more solutions or resolutions. The team:

- collaboratively synthesizes and evaluates individual findings and perspectives to create a collective understanding of different approaches to the problem or issue;
- considers potential solutions or resolutions and conducts additional research in order to evaluate different solutions within the context of the problem; and
- proposes one or more solutions or resolutions and prepares an argument to support their proposal.

The team develops an 8–10-minute presentation that presents a convincing argument for their proposed solutions or resolutions.

team should ensure the claims made are supported by evidence, which should be attributed or cited (orally or visually). They should ensure they have considered different perspectives and the limitations and implications of their proposed solutions or resolutions.

For the Oral Defense, following the presentation, teachers should ask one question of each student. The questions are designed to prompt student reflection on their experiences with group collaboration. Each team member should be prepared to answer questions about any part of the presentation.

Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation

College Board's AP Program will annually release cross-curricular stimulus material (texts) representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme. Students read and analyze these stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among them and possible areas for inquiry. Their inquiry must be based on a thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Students then compose a research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions.

The following domains will be represented in the cross-curricular stimulus material (texts):

- Natural Sciences, Technology, Mathematics, Environment
- Social Sciences, Politics, Economics, Psychology
- Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Theater)
- Culture, Languages, Linguistics
- History
- Literature, Philosophy, Critical Theory/Criticism

The following will be represented in the texts: multimedia text (e.g., photographs, artwork, video, music) and/or quantitative data.

For the Individual Written Argument, students read and analyze the provided stimulus materials to identify thematic connections among them and possible areas for inquiry. Their inquiry must be based on a thematic connection between at least two of the stimulus materials. Students then compose a research question prompted by their analysis of the stimulus materials; gather additional information through research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence; and develop a logical, well-reasoned argument of 2,000 words. The final paper must refer to and incorporate at least one of the sources provided.

For the Individual Multimedia Presentation, each student develops a 6–8-minute presentation to convey their perspective and present their conclusions from their individual written argument. Students should use and attribute, either orally or visually, evidence to support their claims and situate their perspective in a larger context, rather than merely summarizing their research. The presentation and the media used to enhance the presentation should consider audience, context, and purpose.

For the Oral Defense, teachers should ask two questions of the student, assessing the student's response to and understanding of two criteria: reflection on the research process, and extending argumentation through effective questioning and inquiry.

End-of-Course Exam

During the AP Exam administration window, students will take the AP Seminar End-of-Course Exam. The exam consists of four items (three short-answer and one essay question). The three short-answer questions assess analysis of an argument in a single source or document. The essay question assesses students' skills in synthesizing and creating an evidence-based argument.