



AP Capstone™

Research, Academic Rigor, Distinction

AP Capstone™ is an innovative 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 a new, two-course high school sequence — **AP® Seminar** and **AP Research** — and is designed to complement and enhance the in-depth discipline-specific study provided through AP courses. It cultivates curious, independent, and collaborative scholars and prepares them to make logical and evidence-based decisions.



Combining Scholarly Practice with Academic Intensity

AP Capstone was developed in response to feedback from higher education. 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

Team Project & Presentation
Research-Based Essay & Presentation
Written Exam

AP RESEARCH

Academic Thesis
Public Presentation & 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 cross-curricular lens 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
- Sustainability
- Technology
- Revolution

Assessment

Students are assessed through two through-course performance tasks and a written exam. The AP Seminar Exam score is based on all three components 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 their 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
- Public presentation, performance, or exhibition and oral defense of research and presentation

The AP Research Exam 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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