

## About the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> (AP<sup>®</sup>)

The Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies — with the opportunity to 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 to receive college credit, advanced placement, or both in college. 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<sup>™</sup> Program

AP Capstone<sup>™</sup> 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.

In AP Research, students cultivate the skills and discipline necessary to conduct independent research in order to produce and defend a scholarly academic thesis.

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 may also be taken as a stand-alone option.

## AP Research Course Overview

AP Research allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, or issue of individual interest. Through this exploration, students design, plan, and conduct a yearlong mentored, research-based investigation to address a research question.

In the AP Research course, students further their skills acquired in the AP Seminar course by understanding research methods; employing ethical research practices; and accessing, analyzing, and synthesizing information as they address a research question. The course culminates in an academic thesis paper of approximately 5,000 words and a presentation, performance, or exhibition with an oral defense.

### PREREQUISITE

Students must have completed the AP Seminar course.

## AP Capstone Research Course Content

Although the topic of each research study will vary, the course requires students to plan and conduct a study or investigation.

The course provides opportunities (activities/assignments) for students to

- Understand principles of qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Employ appropriate disciplinary research methods to develop, manage, and conduct an in-depth study or investigation in an area of student's own interest, culminating in an approximately 5,000-word paper.
- Present (using appropriate media), exhibit, or perform and defend the research design, approach, and findings.
- Document and reflect upon the research process and communication with mentor using a research log.

## 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 Arguments**
- **Evaluate Multiple Perspectives**
- **Synthesize Ideas**
- **Transform and Transmit**

## AP Research Assessment Structure

Students are assessed on the research process; academic thesis paper; public presentation, performance, or exhibition; and oral defense of research and presentation. The academic thesis paper is approximately 5,000 words, and the presentation and defense take approximately 15 minutes.

### Assessment Overview

- Research Process Documentation — 15% of score
  - Research Proposal
  - Research Log
  - Work with Mentor
  - Final Reflection
- Academic Thesis Paper — 70% of score
- Public Presentation and Oral Defense — 15% of score

### Format of Assessment

- Research Process Documentation
- Academic Thesis Paper
  - Introduces and contextualizes the research question
  - Synthesizes information and perspectives related to the research question
  - Explains and rationalizes the research method
  - Analyzes and interprets the evidence
  - Illustrates a cogent argument that uses a clear line of reasoning based on evidence provided. Reflects on the research project and the implications and limitations of the conclusion(s) reached.
  - Acknowledges and cites sources
- Public Presentation and Oral Defense
  - Students choose an appropriate format or medium (e.g., multimedia presentation, performance, exhibition)
  - The defense will include three to four questions from a panel of a minimum of two trained evaluators