



ADVANCED STUDIES

Students have the option of choosing courses from two advanced studies programs at Fairmont High School. Both Advanced Placement (AP) classes and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes were developed to challenge students with college level content and skills. Some students may choose to take only Advanced Placement while others may choose to take only International Baccalaureate courses. Some students choose to take classes and tests in both programs. For more information on either AP or IB, contact Mr. Darren McGarvey at 499-1662.

What is the Advanced Placement Program?

AP courses are taught at high schools across the United States and allow students to participate in college level courses. Students could 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 exams in May of each school year. Colleges and universities may grant students college credit and/or accelerated placement on the basis of their AP test scores. It is important to note that these policies vary among institutions of higher learning. Neither Fairmont High School, the AP Program, nor the College Board have any input into those university policies regarding credits or placement for AP high school work. It is advised that students check with the colleges and universities they are interested in to see if they accept AP exams for credits.

What is the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program?

The IB Diploma Program is a rigorous, two-year comprehensive curriculum for students in grades 11 and 12 that seeks to prepare students for post-secondary study through courses and instructional techniques that emphasize:

- critical thinking and application of knowledge
- effective self-expression
- reflection on one's learning, and
- an interdisciplinary approach with strong international focus.

Students complete course work in IB subjects, complete all internal assessments and external examinations which are scored by International Baccalaureate assessors. To receive the IB Diploma, students must successfully take one course from each of six groups, three one-year courses at Standard Level (SL) and three two-year courses at Higher Level (HL). These courses are chosen from six different groups listed below. This requirement ensures a broad exposure across the liberal arts spectrum.

Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature

Group 2: Language Acquisition

Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Group 4: Sciences

Group 5: Mathematics

Group 6: The Arts

Students who do not want to earn the IB Diploma may also take individual IB classes for which they will earn course credit upon successful completion of the IB components. Earning IB course credit is often comparable to gaining credit for an AP exam.

What are the advantages of taking an AP or IB course?

The main advantage of taking an AP or IB 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 or IB courses in high school. Students also acquire sophisticated academic skills and increased self-confidence in preparation for college.

How does an AP or IB class compare to other high school courses?

AP and IB classes are more challenging and stimulating, but they take more time and require more work. These classes require hard-working and motivated students.

Why should I take an AP or IB class? Will it hurt my GPA?

Students who succeed in AP or IB courses generally do well in college as a result of rigorous academic preparation. Fairmont High School gives extra grade point weight on the GPA for taking an AP or IB course. In this way, a student's GPA is not adversely affected by taking accelerated courses (see page 15). Colleges look favorably on students who embrace AP or IB courses.

What are the prerequisites for becoming an AP or IB student at FHS?

Fairmont High School has an open enrollment policy for both AP and IB candidates. There are no courses specifically designated as pre-AP or pre-IB. Nevertheless, students should read carefully each department's program and choose their courses carefully with advice from their counselor. There will be courses in some instances that must have been taken to be prepared for selected AP or IB courses. In addition, participation in Honors courses is encouraged.

Students in grades 9 and 10 interested in AP classes or the IB program should take as many graduation requirements as possible to free up time in grades 11 and 12 for these classes. Each IB Diploma Program candidate will sit with the IB Coordinator in grade 10 to plan a full IB Diploma Program schedule for grades 11 and 12. (See the sample choices for Fairmont Advanced Studies on the next page.)

What are the differences between AP and IB classes?

Diploma Candidates in the IB program take courses from across a broad curriculum and that they must complete the three core components (Theory of Knowledge class, Extended Essay, and CAS [Creativity, Activity, Service]). This integrated curriculum distinguishes the IB program from a collection of individual AP courses. However, these two programs do not necessarily conflict with one another and, in many cases students can satisfy the requirements of both programs in the same course and sit for both exams if they elect to do so.

IB students experience courses conforming to international standards across the broad curriculum. The courses and the core components ensure that these students are well prepared regardless of their college or their career pathway. IB courses offer the advantage of allowing the student various opportunities to exhibit his/her capabilities, instead of having one standardized test be the total assessment as in AP classes.

Students electing to take individual IB classes instead of pursuing the Diploma Program requirements receive course credit for successfully completing each course that they take. Many colleges grant college credit (similar to AP credit). Diploma Program candidates often have advantages in competing for college admission and scholarships; many colleges, in fact, go so far as to grant sophomore status for incoming IB Diploma recipients. The amount of college credit given for the program rests entirely with each individual university. Neither Fairmont High School nor the IB Organization has any input into those university policies regarding credits or placement for IB high school work.

In addition to the course work from the six core groups, IB Diploma candidates must successfully complete three additional core components to earn the IB Diploma. These include:

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE (TOK): Theory of Knowledge is a two-year course, taken throughout the junior and senior years. The purpose of the Theory of Knowledge course is to engage the learner in ways of knowing while exploring areas of knowledge. By equipping the student with the tools of inquiry, discernment, analysis, and insight,

this course aims to lead the student to processes and activities that stimulate independent thinking. This course is taught seminar style and leads to both a formal presentation and a formal paper.

EXTENDED ESSAY: This is an independent research project of some 4000 words on a topic of a student's choice and related to one of the IB courses that he/she has studied. Members of the teaching staff at FHS will mentor students preparing for their essays. The Extended Essay Coordinator and the IB Coordinator will also offer guidance to the student.

CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY, SERVICE: The IB goal of educating the whole person and fostering a more compassionate citizenry comes alive through the CAS requirement. CAS requires students to reach beyond themselves and their academics and encourages them to share their energy and special talents with others. CAS activities begin in the summer between grades 10 and 11 and continue through the senior year. A system of self-evaluation and reflection enables students to critically evaluate the understanding and insight they acquire. Students will have the support of a CAS Coordinator.

GRADE 11 & GRADE 12

AP COURSES

Art: AP Studio Art- Drawing,
AP Studio Art- 3-D Design

English: AP English Language and Comp

World Languages: AP French IV, AP German IV, AP Latin IV,
AP Spanish IV

Math: AP Calculus (AB), AP Statistics

Science: AP Biology II, AP Chemistry II, AP Physics
II Lecture, AP Physics II Lab

Social Studies: AP U.S. History, AP U.S. Government
and Politics

Information on this page about the AP can
be found on:
www.collegeboard.org.

Information about the IB can be found on
www.ibo.org. For more information about
either program please visit the organiza-
tion's website.

IB COURSES

Group 1: Studies in Literature –
English, Theory of Knowledge**

Group 2: Second Language (language acquisition) –
French, Spanish, German, Latin, Chinese

Group 3: Individuals and Societies - History,
Psychology, IB Business Management,
Environmental Systems and Societies,
IB Global Politics

Group 4: Experimental Sciences - Biology,
Environmental Systems and Societies, Physics

Group 5: Mathematics – Math Studies SL, Math SL,
Math HL

Group 6: Fine Arts - Visual Art, Music, Theatre

** Theory of Knowledge offered only to
IB Diploma Candidates