

AP® Higher
Education



AP Capstone™

An innovative program for high school students designed to build the analytic and creative thinking skills necessary for college success.

 **CollegeBoard**

AP Capstone™ Overview

AP Capstone™ is a new program from the College Board that helps students develop the independent research, collaborative teamwork, and communication skills valued by colleges.

The program is built on the foundation of two new 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 valid evidence-based arguments. In AP Research, students cultivate the skills and discipline necessary to conduct independent research and to produce and defend a scholarly academic thesis.

The AP Capstone™ program offers students the opportunity to:

- engage with rigorous college-level curricula focused on the skills necessary for successful college completion;
- synthesize information and apply skills in new situations and cross-curricular contexts;
- collect and analyze information with accuracy and precision;
- craft, communicate, and defend evidence-based arguments; and
- practice disciplined and scholarly research skills while exploring topics that appeal to their interests and curiosity.

AP Capstone Students Will

1

Develop a critical, questioning approach to information

2

Investigate issues from multiple, interdisciplinary perspectives

3

Craft, communicate, and defend evidence-based arguments



AP Capstone is built on the foundation of a new, two-course high school sequence — AP Seminar and AP Research.

Structure of the AP Capstone Program



Curriculum and Assessment

AP Seminar



Curriculum

AP Seminar engages students in a cross-curricular exploration of academic and real-world topics. The course aims to equip students with the skills to analyze and evaluate information with accuracy and precision in order to craft and communicate evidence-based arguments.

Using an inquiry framework, students are encouraged to consider multiple points of view in reading and analyzing articles; research studies; foundational, literary, and philosophical texts; speeches, broadcasts, and personal accounts; and artistic works and performances. Students will:

- Investigate topics from multiple perspectives
- Gather and analyze information from various sources; evaluate evidence
- Develop evidence-based arguments
- Collaborate in teams
- Communicate using appropriate media

Topics are selected locally and could include:

- Diversity
- Education
- Identity
- Immigration
- Liberty
- Myth
- Networks
- Revolution
- Sustainability
- Wealth and Poverty



Assessment

Students are assessed by two through-course performance assessment tasks and a written exam:

Team Project & Presentation

Students work in teams of three to six to identify, investigate, analyze, and evaluate an academic or real-world question or issue. Each team designs an approach; develops a written report and multimedia presentation to communicate its conclusion, solution, or recommendation; and offers an oral defense to questions posed by the teacher.

Research-Based Essay & Presentation

Students develop a research question based upon cross-curricular source material, which may include visual items and/or quantitative data, provided by the College Board. Students gather additional information; analyze and select evidence; and develop a well-reasoned written argument of approximately 2,000 words. They also develop a 6–8 minute presentation, situating their research and perspectives in a larger context, and deliver it to an audience.

End-of-Course Exam

The three-hour AP Seminar Exam consists of three short-answer questions and two essays based on source material. Students are required to:

- **Short-answer questions:** Analyze an argument in a single source or document.
- **Essay 1:** Perform a close reading of two documents; analyze and evaluate the authors' arguments.
- **Essay 2:** Synthesize source material and create an evidence-based argument.

AP Research

(AP Seminar is a prerequisite for AP Research)



Curriculum

AP Research allows students to deeply explore an academic topic, problem, or issue of individual interest. Students design, plan, and conduct a yearlong mentored investigation addressing a research question of their choosing. The course allows them to further the skills they acquired in the AP Seminar course by employing research methods and ethical research practices, and by analyzing and synthesizing information as they address a research question. Students must:

- introduce and contextualize their research question;
- synthesize information and perspectives related to the research question;
- explain the research method;
- analyze and interpret the evidence;
- illustrate a cogent argument based on a clear, evidence-based line of reasoning;
- reflect on the research project and the implications and limitations of the conclusion(s) reached; and
- acknowledge and cite sources.



Assessment

Students are assessed on:

Research Process Documentation

- Research proposal
- Research log
- Work with mentor
- Final reflection

Academic Thesis Paper

The course culminates in an academic thesis paper of approximately 5,000 words and a presentation, performance, or exhibition with an oral defense. While the topic of each research study will vary, the course requires all students to use the same skills to plan and conduct a study or investigation.

Public Presentation & Oral Defense

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

Ellen Woods

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

Pedagogical Framework

Throughout the AP Capstone program, students consider and evaluate multiple points of view through inquiry and investigation to develop their own perspectives on complex issues. The program provides a process framework that allows them to develop, practice, and hone their analytic and creative thinking skills. This process is recursive, not linear — students may move back and forth between stages as they encounter new information.

AP Seminar and AP Research teachers participate in **mandatory professional development** before they are authorized to teach the courses. They attend a weeklong course on curriculum and pedagogy and participate in an online training that covers assessment scoring. In addition, teachers must submit their course syllabi for approval through the AP Course Audit process.

“[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

Duke University, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, AP Capstone Curriculum Advisory Committee

QUESTION AND EXPLORE

Begins with an initial exploration of complex topics. Differing perspectives and questions emerge that spark a student’s curiosity, leading to investigation that challenges and expands the boundaries of their current knowledge.

UNDERSTAND AND ANALYZE ARGUMENTS

Contextualizing arguments and evaluating the authors’ claims and lines of reasoning.

EVALUATE MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Considering and evaluating multiple perspectives both individually and in comparison to one another.

SYNTHESIZE IDEAS

Synthesizing others’ ideas with students’ own ideas leads to new understanding that forms the foundation for a well-reasoned argument.

TEAM, TRANSFORM, AND TRANSMIT

Combining personal strengths and talents with those of others to reach a common goal. Thoughtful reflection leads to transformation and growth. Transmission requires students to adapt their message based upon audience and context.

Expert Input

Faculty from colleges and universities around the country contributed to the development of the AP Seminar and AP Research curriculum and assessment.

AP Seminar Curriculum and Assessment Development Committee Members

Teresa Reed, *Co-Chair*, University of Tulsa
David Miller, *Co-Chair*, Deerfield Academy
Maria Albano, Barbara Goleman Senior High
Melvin Butler, University of Chicago
Stephanie Carter, McCracken County High School
Rita C. F. Davis, Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School
Janet Eldred, University of Kentucky
Ellen Woods, Stanford University

AP Research Curriculum Review Committee

Whitney Arnold, University of California, Los Angeles
Liz Dawes Duraisingh, Harvard Graduate School of Education
Michael Dorff, Brigham Young University
Kenneth Sacks, Brown University

AP Capstone Advisory Committee

The AP Capstone Advisory Committee reviewed and provided valuable feedback on the learning objectives for the AP Capstone courses.

Rakesh Bhandari, University of California, Berkeley
Stephanie Carter, McCracken County High School
Hui-Ching Chang, University of Illinois at Chicago
Janet Eldred, University of Kentucky
Alice Hearst, Smith College
Luis Martínez-Fernández, University of Central Florida
Teresa Reed, University of Tulsa
Susan Roth, Duke University
Nicole Wallack, Columbia University
Ellen Woods, Stanford University

Building Skills Identified by Leading Educational Organizations

AP collaborated with college faculty and high school teachers to define content and standards for the two AP Capstone courses. The curriculum also incorporates frameworks and learning objectives identified by leading educational organizations, including:

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

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

Association of College and Research Libraries, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*



AP Capstone Student Recognition



AP Capstone Diploma™

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



AP Seminar and Research Certificate™

Students who earn scores of 3 or higher in both AP Seminar and AP Research will receive the AP Seminar and Research Certificate™.

**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

Public Presentation & Oral Defense

4 AP COURSES & EXAMS

(Taken at any point throughout high school)

**AP Seminar
and Research
Certificate™**

Scoring and Score Reporting

Scoring

Students will be issued final AP scores for AP Seminar and AP Research. Each final AP score is a combination of all course assessment components.

Students receive an AP score from 1–5.

AP SEMINAR ASSESSMENTS	SCORING METHOD	WEIGHT
Team Project & Presentation Individual Research and Reflection Written Team Report Team Multimedia Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All components are teacher-scored• The College Board validates the scoring for the Individual Research and Reflection and the Written Team Report	 25%
Research-Based Essay & Presentation Individual Written Essay Individual Multimedia Presentation Oral Defense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All components are teacher-scored• The College Board validates the scoring for the Individual Written Essay	 35%
End-of-Course Exam Three Essays	Scored by the College Board	 40%
AP RESEARCH ASSESSMENTS	SCORING METHOD	WEIGHT
Research Process Documentation	Teacher-scored	 15%
Academic Thesis Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher-scored• College Board validates the scoring	 70%
Public Presentation & Oral Defense	Oral defense is scored by a panel of school-based evaluators	 15%

Score Reporting to Colleges

Score reports are issued to colleges for the assessments associated with each component of the AP Capstone program. Colleges receive a single cumulative score for AP Seminar and a single cumulative score for AP Research.

All scores will be reported on the 1–5 AP scale.

COMPONENT	COLLEGES RECEIVE
AP Seminar	A score report that includes a cumulative score for the three scored components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team Project & Presentation• Research-Based Essay & Presentation• End-of-Course Exam
AP Research	A score report that includes a cumulative score for the three scored components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research Process Documentation• Academic Thesis Paper• Public Presentation & Oral Defense
Additional AP Exams	These score reports will look exactly the same as the AP Exam score reports you currently receive.
AP Capstone Diploma or AP Seminar and Research Certificate	A report indicating that the student has earned the AP Capstone Diploma or the AP Seminar and Research Certificate, with final scores for all elements.

For a list of high schools participating in the AP Capstone program, visit www.collegeboard.org/capstone.

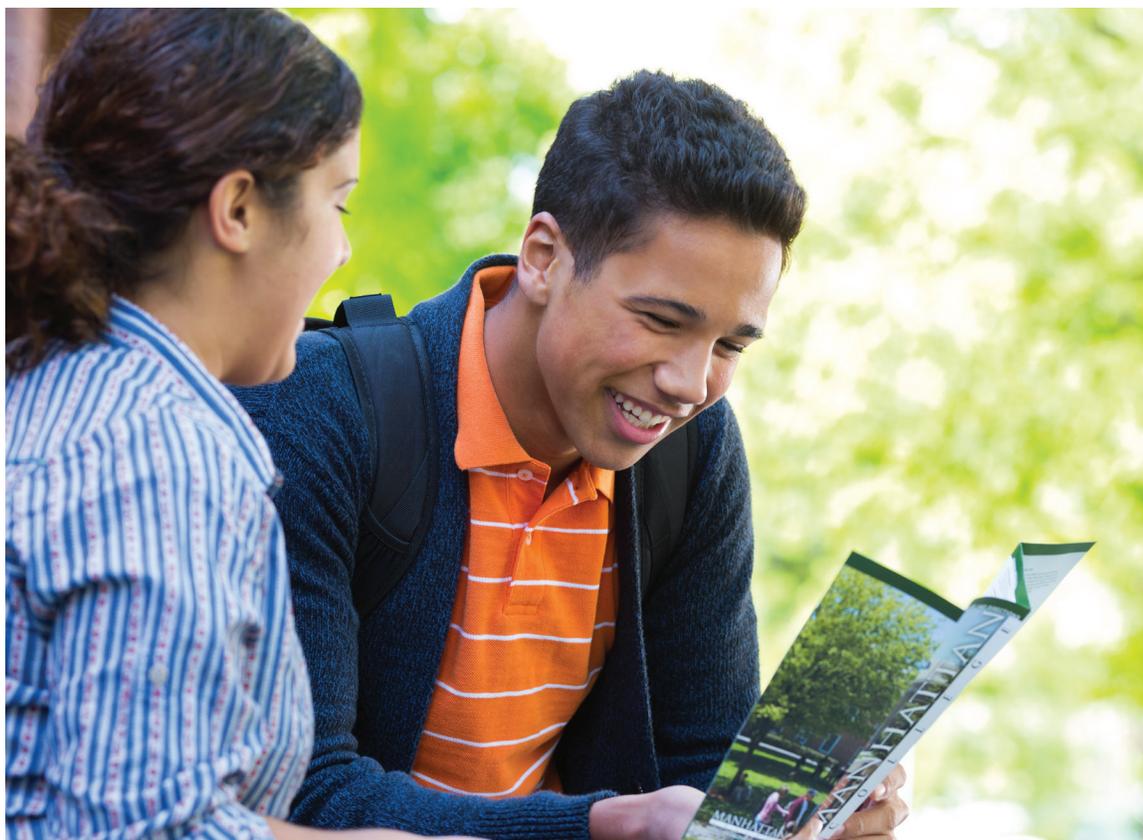
New AP Capstone Exam codes:

AP Seminar: 22

AP Research: 23

College Admission and Recognition

Encourage students to participate in rigorous course work like AP Capstone by supporting the program through an admission statement and by offering recognition to students.



Statement of Support from Colleges and Universities

Higher education leaders have already expressed interest in this program by signing the statement below. To see a list of the signatory institutions and to add your institution to the list, visit www.collegeboard.org/apcapstoneHED.

You can also submit your own statement of support that recognizes student achievement in the program and encourages Capstone students to apply to your institution.

Students who have challenged themselves with rigorous curricula and engaged in interdisciplinary learning will be poised to make the most of their college experience.

The AP Capstone program provides an excellent opportunity for high school students to develop the research, collaboration, and communication skills that are essential to success in college and in today's complex and interconnected world.

The program is built on the foundation of two new AP courses — AP Seminar and AP Research — and is designed to complement and enhance the in-depth, discipline-specific study provided through other AP courses. AP Seminar provides sustained practice in investigating issues from multiple perspectives. In AP Research, students cultivate the skills and discipline necessary to conduct independent research, write a scholarly academic thesis, and present and defend their findings.

AP Capstone Program Goals

- *Engagement with rigorous college-level curricula*
- *Promotion of a critical, questioning approach to information*
- *Development of scholarly research skills*
- *Cultivation of the ability to synthesize knowledge and apply skills in cross-curricular contexts*
- *Empowerment of students to collect and analyze information with accuracy and precision*
- *Cultivation of student writing abilities so they can craft, communicate, and defend evidence-based arguments*

Additional Support for AP Capstone

“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

University of Florida, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost

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

California State University, Office of the Chancellor; Senior Director, Student Engagement

Best Practices for Recognizing AP Capstone

Many colleges and universities are committed to recognizing students who achieve passing scores in AP Seminar and AP Research. As a result, these institutions are considering how the new AP Capstone program’s curriculum and assessments — focused on critical analysis of information, independent research, collaboration, and communication — might map to their own courses, earning students credit and placement.

After reviewing the AP Seminar and AP Research curriculum frameworks, your institution may want to consider “course-match” models that allow for direct alignment between each AP Capstone course and a campus-based course, or “block” alignment, where the successful completion of the AP Capstone Diploma yields certain automatic course credit or placement. These decisions will be influenced by the degree programs available at your university.



Course Matches

Consider matching AP Seminar and AP Research to courses at your institution.

AP Seminar

- Interdisciplinary study courses or electives
- Writing-intensive first-year courses, especially those that are interdisciplinary
- Communications courses that develop public speaking and oral defense skills
- First-year seminar
- Critical thinking courses

AP Research

- Research methodology courses
- Independent study and special topics courses



Other Options for Recognition

Your institution may also choose to recruit and reward the academic effort of AP Capstone students by considering some of the following options:

AP Capstone Diploma

- Similar credit and/or placement as that granted for successful completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma

Admission and scholarships

- Academic scholarships for completion of the AP Seminar and Research Certificate and/or AP Capstone Diploma
- Placement into honors colleges or programs
- Weighted consideration in the admission process
- Placement into undergraduate research programs

Resources

A complete curriculum framework, which includes detailed information about objectives and learning outcomes for both courses, is available for review at www.collegeboard.org/apcapstoneHED.

This document can help you determine which of your campus courses might best align with the new AP Capstone curriculum.

To learn more, email aphighered@collegeboard.org





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