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AP Capstone: Seminar
Summer Assignment 2026

APCAP Seminar

In Seminar, we will be on a QUEST together to better understand the academic research process. Together we'll:

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

One of the most exciting parts of this class is that it is truly *your* class! You'll be using the QUEST framework and applying it to what interests you and sparks your own curiosity.

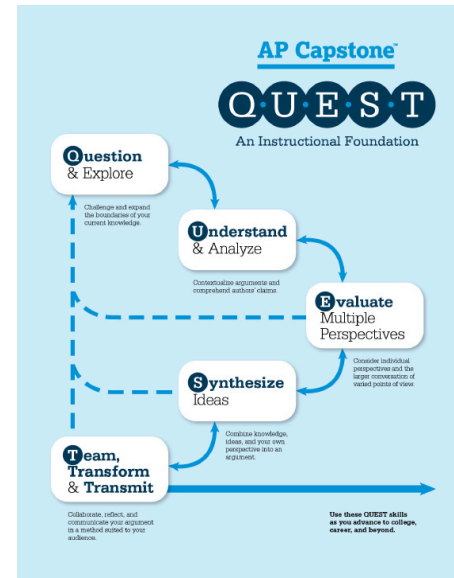
This summer assignment is intended to model and set us up to practice the five “Big Ideas” in AP Capstone: Question & Explore, Understand & Analyze, Evaluate Multiple Perspectives, Synthesize Ideas, and Team, Transform & Transmit. Before we go any further, you'll want to assemble some tools:

- A. Join our Google Classroom at Find some colored pens, pencils, and Post It Notes for annotating.
- B. An open mind to new ideas and perspectives! Let's begin!

News - 50 points

There are 10 weeks over summer break. Each week, read an article on one of the following topics. You must select a source that comes from the top, green box of the [Interactive Chart | Ad Fontes Media](#) bias chart. Aim for articles that are at least two pages in length.

- Immigration
- Politics, Protest, and Power
- Culture / Entertainment / Media / Social media
- Food
- Sustainability / Climate Change / The Environment
- Technology
- Poverty
- Government
- Health and Wellness / Mental health



You may choose to do one or a few topics, or change topics weekly - whatever is of interest to you! Some items may fall into multiple categories (for example, food and climate change). Start a project in Noodletools (MLA Advanced Style) and create a Citation for each one. In the annotation section, respond to the following:

- a. Theme(s)
- b. Argument: What is the overall argument of the piece? What is it trying to prove? Some examples of argument types are...
 - i. Fact: Did it happen? Does it exist?
 - ii. Definition: What is it? ...
 - iii. Cause: What caused it? ...
 - iv. Value: Is it good or bad? ...
 - v. Policy: What should we do about it?
- c. Evidence: What is one piece of evidence that your article uses to support its claim? Is it effective or ineffective? Why?
- d. Evidence: What different types of people or perspectives does the article include?

LISTEN: Podcast of your Choice 50 points

Much of your success in this class will come from intellectual curiosity and exposing yourself to new and novel ways of thinking. Choose a Podcast series (or two) to listen to regularly.

Download them to your phone to listen to while you're taking your dog for a walk, cooking, or can't fall asleep at night! Use your notebook to jot down interesting ideas, thoughts, or observations. Aim for listening to 8 podcast episodes and about one-half page of written notes per episode. Here is a link to some of my favorites ([Podcasts](#)), but feel free to search out your own favorites. You will receive a formative assessment grade for your notes when we return to school in the fall!

Podcasts

I love Podcasts! They're an easy and engaging way to dive deeply into interesting topics and hear new perspectives! I use Google Play to subscribe to the ones I like, and they auto-download to my phone so I can play them in the car, the kitchen, or on headphones. Here's a list of Podcasts I've listened to over the years or that were recommended to me. Use the Document Outline feature so you can search by different areas of interest: Specific Historical Topics, General History, Humanities and Culture, Politics and Government, Science, Arts Music and Culture, and Business and Economics.

If you don't know where to start, I'd suggest...

This American Life - *This American Life* is a weekly public radio program and podcast. Each week they choose a theme and put together different kinds of stories on that theme. They've been on the air since 1995, so there are a lot of episodes. Here is their [Recommended List](#). There is a lot of variety in topics so it's a great place to start if you don't know what you're interested in. They also choose several different stories and perspectives on a single topic each week, which mimics PT1 for APCAPS.

Specific Historical Topics

Presidential (by the Washington Post) - Produced in 44 episodes leading up to Election Day 2016, this podcast explores the character and legacy of each of the American presidents.

Constitutional (by the Washington Post) - This series (a follow-up to "Presidential") explores the Constitution and the people who framed and reframed it — revolutionaries, abolitionists, suffragists, teetotalers, protesters, justices, presidents — in the ongoing struggle to form a more perfect union across a vast and diverse land.

More Perfect (by NPR) - Each episode deep dives into the history of the Supreme Court and some of its more famous or influential decisions. How does an elite group of nine people shape everything from marriage and money, to safety and sex for an entire nation? Radiolab's series dives into the rarefied world of the Supreme Court to explain how cases deliberated inside hallowed halls affect lives far away from the bench.

Uncivil - A Civil War podcast dedicated to bringing you "stories that were left out of the official history of the Civil War." Stand out episodes include topics like take-downs of Civil War myths, female soldiers, the guy who wrote the Confederate national anthem, and the "Black Dutch."

Hist 119: Civil War and Reconstruction - Not a podcast per se, but if you feel like saying you've taken a course at Yale University, their "Open Courses" includes the really stellar History 119 on

[Open Preview](#)

Set out below is an overview of the AP Seminar Course. We will discuss this in greater detail when we return to school in the fall.

Big Idea 1 - Question and Explore: From the AP Framework, *Inquiry and investigation begin when students encounter information about complex issues and problems that stimulates their intellectual curiosity. They then continue the research process by developing a critical question about one or more of those complex issues or ideas. Seeking answers to such questions requires exploration of numerous, often competing perspectives; the context surrounding those perspectives; and the reliability and credibility of the perspectives. Through this exploration, students begin to develop their own perspectives, rather than simply accept those of others. They consider the purpose of their research--what is supposed to be achieved and why. Ideally, they also develop additional questions that lead to further inquiry. The intrinsic value of asking and answering questions cannot be overstated. Giving students the opportunity to dig deeper and feed their curiosity makes for meaningful discoveries and discussions.*

Big Idea 2 - Understand and Analyze: From the AP Framework, *Developing understanding starts with comprehension of the concepts and perspectives under examination. Being able to summarize by identifying and explaining the salient ideas in a text is foundational. When students summarize and explain an author's perspective to others, they are building understanding. Students must comprehend a perspective or argument in order to be able to analyze it. That analysis--including consideration of the author's point of view and purpose, the reasoning and details the author selects, develops, and conveys, and the way the author chooses to situate those details--in turn leads to greater understanding of the topics or concepts being explored. Students evaluate the strength of an argument by examining the line of reasoning and the quality of the evidence the author uses. This level of understanding allows students to recognize the implications and predict the consequences of an argument.*

→ Much of your annotations should focus on understanding the salient ideas, perspectives, and arguments which can help us comprehend the text.

When we return in the fall, we will use these assignments to continue exploring the APCAPS Big Ideas:

Big Idea 3 - Evaluate Multiple Perspectives: From the AP Framework, *Understanding the complexity of an issue, idea, or problem requires students to compare and contrast different perspectives. These multiple perspectives, which may support, oppose, compete with, or otherwise vary from one another, come together to create the conversation on the issue. Students must consider the biases and assumptions behind those perspectives in order to evaluate their relevance and importance in the conversation. Evaluating multiple perspectives and arguments allows students to better understand the complexities of an issue of topic.*

Big Idea 4 - Synthesize Ideas: From the AP Framework, *Once enough information is gathered and evaluated, students synthesize their accumulated knowledge, emerging ideas, and perspectives to form conclusions of their own. In order to situate their perspectives within the larger conversation, students must consider other perspectives and points of view. Strong arguments have a clear purpose and are grounded in a logical*

line of reasoning supported by carefully chosen and relevant evidence. Effective arguments analyze the material and develop a perspective on it. Information from other sources should not stand in for students' own thinking. The goal is for students to think critically about the information and then add to, not simply repeat, the ideas of others. Building arguments on the ideas of others recognizes and acknowledges their perspectives while also establishing one's unique voice in the conversation.

Big Idea 5 - Team, Transform, and Transmit: From the AP Framework, *Collaboration, communication, and reflection are skills that provide opportunities for students to develop their learning. When collaborating, students draw upon their own strengths and the strengths of teammates to achieve a common goal. An argument is effectively communicated when its purpose is clear, it is tailored to a specific audience and context, and it is conveyed through a medium appropriate and appealing to the intended audience. Adhering to standard language conventions and engaging delivery techniques establishes a writer's or speaker's credibility with his or her audience. Whether working alone or in a group, students reflect on their work and learning processes, which can lead to personal growth as well as even more effective inquiry, learning, and collaboration.*

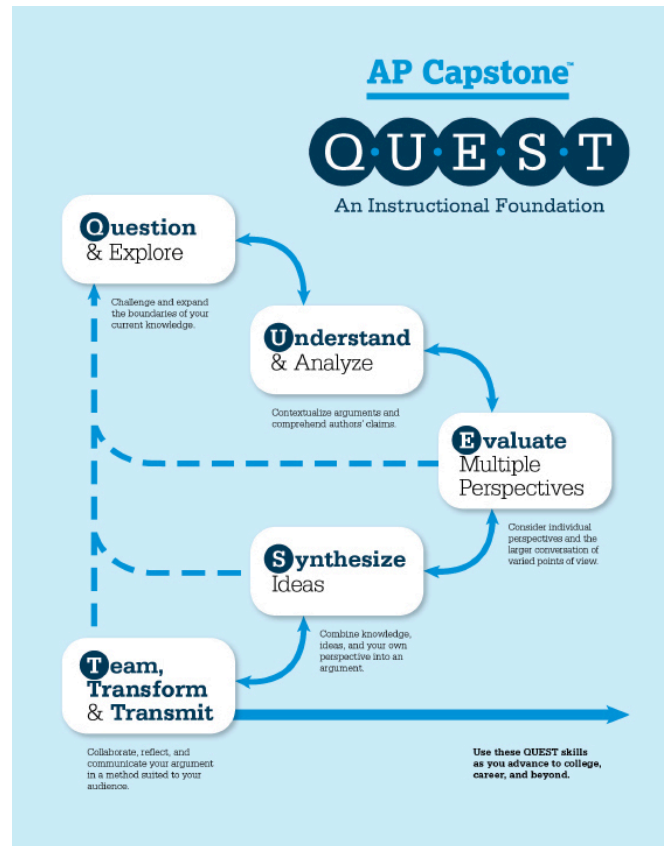
AP Capstone Overview

AP Capstone Program

QUEST Framework

Students will

- Question and explore
- Understand and analyze
- Evaluate multiple perspectives
- Synthesize ideas
- Team, transform, and transmit



Lenses

West Essex's Capstone program will expose you to all of the different lenses in Seminar and will allow you to explore any and all of them for your research projects based on *your* interests! You can see how your course work supports the lenses.

Making Connections within AP

Some teachers may wish to make cross-curricular connections with other AP courses, although there is no specific requirement to do so. The graphic below illustrates possible cross-curricular connections. The AP Seminar course topics can be viewed through different disciplinary lenses which relate to courses in the AP Program. Two additional lenses, Ethical and Futuristic, are not shown in the diagram below but have potential links with many AP courses.



Student Evaluation - AP® Seminar Score Overview

Students complete two performance assessment tasks (in class) and one end-of-course exam. All three assessments will be used to calculate a final AP® Score using the 1-5 scale for AP® Seminar.

Performance Task #1: Team Project and Presentation 20%

Students work in teams of three to five to identify, investigate, and analyze an academic or real-world problem or issue. Each student will complete an Individual Research Report (1200 words) scored by the College Board. Each team then creates a multimedia presentation that considers diverse options and evaluates alternatives and ultimately argues for their own proposed solution or resolution followed by an oral defense to questions posed by the teacher.

Individual Research Report (IRR) - 50%

Team Multimedia Presentation (TMP) - 50%

Performance Task #2: Individual Research-Based Essay and Presentation 35%

The College Board's AP® Program releases cross-curricular source material (texts) in January representing a range of perspectives focused on a single theme. Students will use these texts to identify an individual research question of their own; conduct research; analyze, evaluate, and select evidence to develop an argument; and present and defend their conclusions. The final paper (2000 words) must refer to and incorporate at least one of the provided sources.

Individual Written Argument (IWA) - 70%

Individual Multimedia Presentation (IWP) - 20%

Oral Defense - 10%

End-of-Course Exam (2 hours) 45%

The exam consists of four items (three short-answer responses 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.

Part A (SAQ) - 30%

Part B (Synthesis) - 70%

Timeline of Events

December	Performance Task I Presentations
March	Performance Task II Presentations
April	AP® Digital Portfolio Submissions
May	AP® Seminar End of Course Exam
May - June	AP® Research Topic Exploration and Prep