

The Power of Starting Early with Just One AP Course



AP[®] courses let you explore subjects in a deeper, more meaningful way. They're a place to ask questions, try new ideas, and build confidence in how you learn. Many students start early in high school with just one AP course to explore an interest, challenge themselves in a manageable way, and see what they're capable of.

Taking AP in high school can help you:

- Explore topics, ideas, and subjects you're curious about.
- Build confidence and skills for high school, college, and career.
- Challenge yourself to think and learn differently.
- Discover future interests, majors, and career paths.
- Earn college credit in high school.

There's an AP Course for You

Many AP courses are especially great for a first AP experience because they are:

- Open to students of all experience levels with few or no prerequisites.
- Designed for students with different interests and strengths.
- Connected to real-world skills, topics, and careers.



RESEARCH SHOWS:

Taking even one AP course can improve students' first-year college GPA and chances of graduating in four years.



HAILEY, AP ALUM:

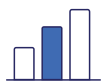
"If a student was on the fence about taking AP, I would tell them it's not as scary as it seems. The teachers are there to support you and taking an AP course can only help you enhance your skills, no matter what grade you may receive."

Six AP Courses to Consider for Your First:

Course	What You'll Learn	Why This Works as Your First AP Course
AP World History: Modern	Learn to analyze big ideas, historical events, and global change.	Strengthens reading and writing skills used across AP courses
AP Computer Science Principles	Learn how technology and computing impact everyday life—no coding experience required.	Introduces AP for students interested in STEM
AP Seminar AP Seminar: English	Learn to analyze literary and informational texts, research topics you care about, and strengthen communications skills.	Boosts academic performance in future coursework
AP Spanish Language and Culture	Learn practical communication skills while developing your language abilities.	Deepens language fluency you may already have
AP Business with Personal Finance	Learn to make smart financial and business decisions that connect to everyday life.	Connects coursework to everyday life
AP Human Geography	Learn to use maps, landscapes, and geographic data to explain how places are connected and change over time.	Builds early experience with data and real-world analysis

4 Reasons to Take Your First AP Course

The impact lasts beyond high school.



Stronger College Start

Research shows that taking even one AP course can improve your first-year college GPA and can increase your likelihood of graduating college in four years with a degree.

“One of the biggest benefits from taking AP courses and exams was that I got to skip a lot of general requirements when I got to college because my test scores covered my credits. Beyond that, I feel as if I was prepared for college work expectations. My writing and research skills were at a college level and a lot of my peers who did not take AP classes often struggled to adapt to expectations, while I felt that I was right on track.”

— Hailey, AP alum



Stand Out to Colleges

Taking an AP course—regardless of your exam score—shows colleges you’re ready to challenge yourself. It proves you take the initiative and are curious.

“It shows colleges you can handle a rigorous courseload, gives your GPA a boost, and improves your abilities as a student.”

— Abida, AP alum



Save Money

A qualifying AP Exam score can earn you college credit—potentially saving you thousands in tuition, letting you skip courses about material you already know. In 2025, U.S. students earned nearly 4.2 million qualifying AP Exam scores for college credit. That’s a potential savings of \$5 million in tuition for students and families.

“Taking AP courses helped me get ahead in college. I bypassed a lot of courses that I would have had to take as a freshman because I had AP credit. I’m now going to be a senior and I saved a lot of money on courses that I was able to take in high school.”

—Briana, AP alum



More Time for What You Love

By skipping intro classes in college, you free up time to explore majors, study abroad, join clubs, and take courses in subjects that excite you.

“AP classes are so helpful. I skipped so many classes in college because I have so many AP credits coming in now as an undergrad, I’m taking many graduate level classes. It really opens up the opportunity for you to learn even more in college. Or you can graduate early if you want to.”

— An, AP alum

All motivated students can succeed in AP: Half of students entering four-year colleges are starting school with some credit from AP courses. Join them!

How to Get Started

- ☐ Look at the AP courses offered at your school.
- ☐ Talk to an AP teacher or a student who’s taken AP.
- ☐ Visit apstudents.org/map to see if AP is right for you.
- ☐ Talk to your school counselor.
- ☐ Sign up for one AP course to start.



Visit cb.org/explore-ap to tell us you’re interested.