

# About Advanced Placement (AP) Exams

One of our goals at Classical Conversations is to encourage homeschooling parents to equip students learn well so they may be prepared for any college or university. Hopefully, some of our students will actually attain some university-level knowledge while still in high school. One proof of the level of knowledge in specific subjects is the passing of the Advanced Placement (AP) exams administered by the College Entrance Examination Board. A student who passes the Board's exams is almost always awarded college credit.

There are two ways homeschool students can take the exams; either by taking a year-long course or by preparing for an AP Exam.

"Because the College Board is committed to providing access to the AP Exams to homeschooled students and students whose schools do not offer AP, it does not require students to take an AP course prior to taking an AP Exam.

You should study the kinds of skills and content outlined in the Course Description for your subject, because they represent the basis for the AP Exam. The best way to do so is in a year-long AP course in which the students and teachers focus on college-level work. However, if you have taken strong courses and/or have studied in depth on your own, you may be able to perform quite well on the AP Exam. Get to know the exams by reviewing free practice questions. Complete released exams are available for a fee in the College Board Store."

—College Board, Frequently Asked Questions, 2014

"You may be able to take the AP Exam you want by arranging to test at a participating school. Here's how:

- Contact AP Services no later than March 3 to get the names and telephone numbers of local, participating AP Coordinators willing to test outside students. Prepare a list of the AP Exams you are interested in taking before you call.
- Call the AP Coordinators identified by AP Services no later than March 17.

When calling Coordinators to arrange testing, make sure to tell them:

- You are trying to locate a school willing to administer exams to homeschooled students or students from schools that do not offer AP Exams.
- The exams you plan to take.

- If you have a documented disability that will require testing accommodations at the exam, and if you have been approved by the College Board to test with accommodations.

Once you locate an agreeable school, that school's AP Coordinator is responsible for ordering your exam materials, telling you when and where to report for the exams, and collecting your fees, which may be higher to cover the school's additional proctoring or administration costs. That school must administer the exams for you; the school cannot forward them to you or your school for handling."

The College Board, 2014

<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/takingtheexam/registering-for-exams>

All exams are offered in early May and have a significant fee per exam, so check with the testing school. This fee is expensive enough to dissuade unprepared students from trying to earn an easy credit and yet very inexpensive compared to a college course fee.

If you are seriously interested in the AP exams, you can gain much information at the College Board website to start you on your way. Or, you may call the College Board and introduce yourself as a high school principal — remember, you are the principal of your private home school — who is interested in learning more about the AP exams. They will send you free information with specifics on a couple of exams if you request information on selected exams by name. Besides ordering AP materials, it is beneficial to check out one of the many AP preparation books at the library or in bookstores. In fact, they are a great way to design a home high school course, as the texts are very detailed and concentrate on the most important points of a subject.

The students must be motivated to do extra on their own, and parents may have to pay for extra materials or tutoring. The point of the exams is not to see if the students have completed a high school course, but to see if they have gone beyond and completed college level work.

Classical Conversations is not interested in encouraging students just to pass a test. We want students to be able to study and learn any information and express it clearly and intelligently to others. Our goal is to foster rhetoric skills that lead to true wisdom rather than just head knowledge. If you simply want to pass an AP exam, there

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are better preparation sources than our seminars. On the other hand, if you are willing to work very hard at home, we can help by guiding you to resources and providing AP level assignments to complement our regular seminar work. However, we are not AP teachers. Do not list your director as an AP teacher. That would place the student in a different criteria of being expected to study the AP-specific course work. We do not deviate our Scope and Sequence to adhere to AP-specific coursework.

These are the specific exams. The AP information will give a complete description. Note: Not all AP course tests are listed here.

- Art History
- Biology (25% Evolution)
- Calculus AB (Saxon's Calculus) and BC
- Chemistry
- Computer Science A
- Economics: Macro and Micro
- English Literature (Emphasizes American & British Literature)
- English Language (Emphasizes English Grammar)
- Environmental Science
- European History
- French Language and Literature
- German Language and Culture
- Government & Politics: Comparative
- Government & Politics: United States
- Human Geography
- Latin: Virgil
- Music Theory
- Physics B (Saxon's Physics) or C
- Psychology
- Spanish Language and Literature
- Statistics
- Studio Art
- U.S. History
- World History

Contact information for AP Services:

Phone: 877-274-6474 for Educators

888-225-5427 for Students

E-mail: [apexams@info.collegeboard.org](mailto:apexams@info.collegeboard.org)

## Classical Conversations' AP Preparation

ENGLISH LITERATURE or ENGLISH LANGUAGE — Passing both of these AP exams should be within reach of most diligent students who take Challenges I and II, and all who take I, II, and III. Latin I and II provide a good review of English grammar along with increasing vocabulary skills. American Literature teaches the student to write a concise essay on a literary topic. Studying *The Taming of the Shrew* provides a thorough introduction to Shakespearean language and should enable students to understand most of his other writings. In British Literature, we continue to work on essay writing but include more of the vocabulary associated with literature analysis. In the American Drama seminar, we will look at modern play writing. All these topics and skills are on the English AP exams. During Challenge III, we will study poetry and Shakespearean works in a broad manner, completing all that is on the exams. If your child is already a prolific reader and can write well, we suggest you get an English AP preparation book, as it will reveal to you any gaps that you might want to work on in order to take this AP exam if you are not continuing with Classical Conversations.

CALCULUS — Saxon assures that a student who does well in the Saxon Calculus book will be prepared for the Calculus AB exam in May. In fact, the book is specifically shorter than their other texts so you can complete it by May and be equipped to take the exam.

PHYSICS — The above applies to the Saxon Physics text we use in Challenge IV.

LATIN VIRGIL—The four-year Latin focus in Classical Conversations grammar strand aids a diligent student who wishes to take the AP. Our Language and Literature course in Challenge IV studies passages from the *Aeneid*. The writings of Caesar and Cicero are translated in Challenge III.

The objective of the AP exam is to show proficiency in interpretation with the skills of reading, understanding, and analysis. The exam itself tests the student's ability to comprehend not only passages from the *Aeneid* of Virgil but also Caesar's Gallic War, other prose, and poetry readings. The exam chiefly entails about 20 to 30% grammar, 35–45% translation, and 20–30% recognition of references and allusions of understanding. The cultural, political, and social ideals of ancient Rome are examined in context with the literature. Literary techniques and familiarity with poetic style and structure are also tested. A student is encouraged to gain AP materials for exam preparation.

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**BIOLOGY** — Most high schools have their biology students learn about cell, plant, and animal anatomy, which are about half the AP Biology exam. We do the same in our Biology text and labs. The AP Biology exam is also one-quarter Evolution. Classical Conversations does not teach evolution as fact or worry about the grammar associated with the subject. On the other hand, we have looked at the theory very closely through our discussion of *Defeating Darwinism* during Challenge B. This work should enable the students to answer a number of questions from the AP exam. The other quarter of the exam covers biological processes such as mitosis, osmosis, and the environmental impact on biology. Keep in mind the exam is very anti-Christian and will be sure to indicate that man is only a burden and never an asset to life on earth. Generally, AP Biology students take a second year of biology in order to pass the exam. We believe a motivated student can finish the work in one year. To accomplish this through Classical Conversations' Biology seminar, we will study the usual high school biology topics and lab work. Plus, students create and maintain their own lab research, logs, and write-up of experiments or observations each week. Students who just want the high school credit can earn it, but those who want to do more will be directed in how to proceed to secure materials to study at home for the AP.

**AMERICAN HISTORY** — Preparation for the AP American History exam will come through many of our seminars. American literature introduced the students to most of the major periods in American history. Economics covered how Americans have incorporated free market theory and socialism into our lives, and American government covered all the important documents that established and maintain our executive, legislative, and judicial systems. During Challenge III, we study American history as a whole. Again, our philosophy is to encourage rhetorical skills from a biblical perspective, so some of the postmodern aspects of American history are examined through our policy debate preparations and Theology (Challenge IV).

We must reiterate our main concern — these exams are hard and you cannot depend only on Classical Conversations to prepare your students. You must be involved with your student. We will provide you with our resources, information, and direction along with weekly help in the context of a rhetorical education, while helping you give your student the chance to have a better-than-average high school education. Each student has different talents and interests, and only so much time. Each parent can put in

different amounts and types of guidance and instruction. All this will affect a student's progress, and so it is up to the individual home school to put forth the effort needed to pass an AP exam.

### Classical Conversations' SAT II Preparation

Students may also want to elect to prepare and take SAT II subject exams because of the quality and depth of our Challenge seminars. SAT II subject tests verify the depth of subject knowledge and competency at a high school level. Some colleges that are very selective may want these type exams especially for homeschool students. These would be the easiest tests to take because the material is more general than the streamlined, specific AP exams. Check with the college admissions of your college choices to see if they have these requirements. There are 20 different subject tests.

The student would need to get the appropriate support materials (practice tests or study guide) to have a good comprehension of the material the test covers. We do not "teach to the test," but it is recommended that the student take the exam shortly after completing the corresponding seminar in the subject area. The exams are given several times during the year at the same locations as the SAT exams and are not as costly as AP exams.

Information can be found at the following address:

Phone: (866) 756-7346

You can also contact SAT Program Customer Service by telephone Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time. Summer hours (after the June administration through August) for SAT Program Customer Service are Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET.

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests/sat-subject-tests>