


The Current Landscape of AP[®]



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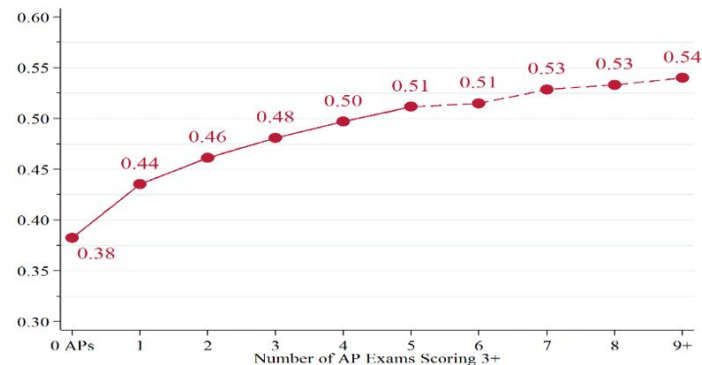
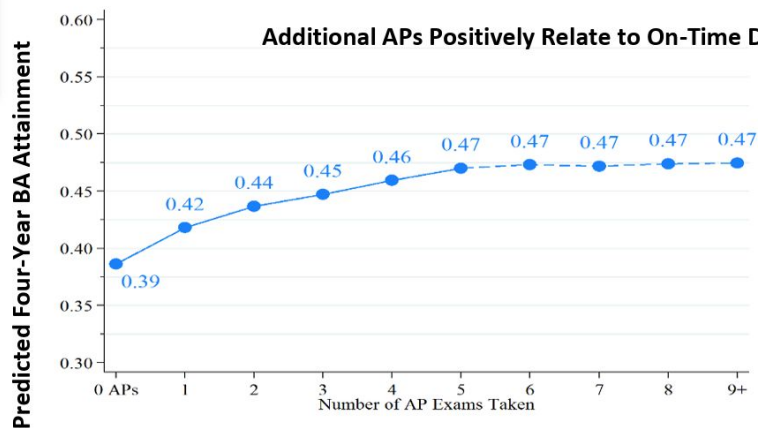
2025 AP Exam Performance

- The percentage of students earning a qualifying score of 3 or higher increased or stayed the same in 34 of 40 courses compared to 2024.
- The AP Program exists to provide college-level coursework in high school. AP courses and exams have been the gold standard for academic rigor in U.S. high schools for decades. Students earning an exam score of 3 or higher can be confident they've achieved a level of mastery that doesn't just meet but exceeds an equivalent grade in a college-level course.
- Typically, AP Program's high standards result in 60%–75% of AP Exams earning a score of 3 or higher, which is equivalent to a college C or better. By contrast, colleges in the standard setting studies award grades of C or higher to approximately 75%–90% of their students in similar courses.

What Makes a Score?

- Over the past few years, the AP Program has been transitioning to an evidence-based method for setting score standards (it's called Evidence-Based Standard Setting or EBSS). This approach replaces the small faculty panels (made up of about 15 college professors) in years past that would estimate AP students' knowledge and skills—which was a psychometrically valid method, but one that involved some degree of inconsistency.
- Now, instead of estimating, the evidence-based method uses large-scale data collection and analysis to identify specific levels of performance where students are demonstrating the knowledge and skills that should be expected for awarding credit.

Is 1 Enough?



Notes: Solid lines denote that the estimate for a given number of AP Exams is statistically significant from the estimate for one fewer AP Exam. Dotted lines denote that these estimates are not statistically significant from each other.

Takeaways

This research shows that the largest predicted boost in college grades and on-time degree completion comes from moving a student from 0 to 1 AP and from 1 to 2 APs. Introducing students to the rigors of AP courses is strongly associated with future college success and is associated with the largest return on college outcomes. We also show that taking and performing well on more than five AP Exams does not markedly alter first-year college grades and four-year degree completion.² This is important information for students, counselors, and higher education professionals to better understand potential benefits of taking multiple AP Exams.

A Waste of Time for College?

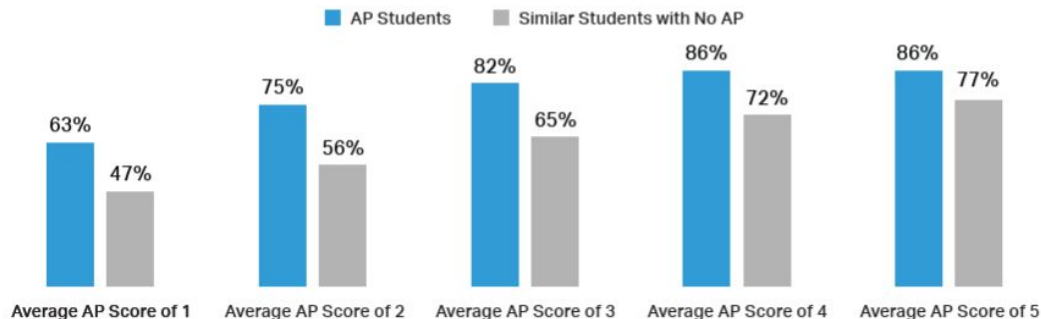
Findings

Key Takeaway: AP students who earn a score of 1 or 2, or average a score of 1 or 2 across their AP Exams in high school, have better college outcomes than academically similar college students who did not take an AP course and exam.

FINDING #1: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

AP students, including those with average scores of 1 or 2, are more likely to enroll in a four-year college compared to academically similar students who did not take AP in high school. AP students who average scores of 1 or 2 on their AP Exams are 16 and 19 percentage points, respectively, more likely to enroll in a four-year college than academically similar peers who did not take AP.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE ENROLLMENT PROBABILITIES, BY AVERAGE AP SCORE



NOTES: Probability of enrollment immediately after high school graduation is calculated for 1,560,229 students who graduated high school in 2017. Probabilities are calculated separately for the average student in each AP score sample conditional on gender, ethnicity, first-generation status, SAT score, and HSGPA.

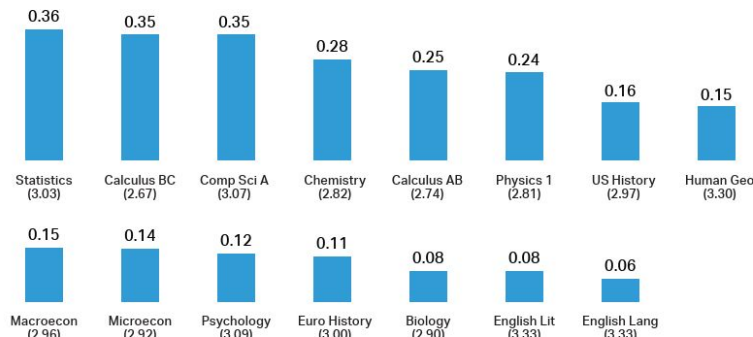
A Waste of Time for GPA?

FINDING #2: COLLEGE READINESS

Students who earn AP scores of 2 are well prepared to succeed in introductory college coursework.

Compared to academically similar college peers who did not take the AP course, AP students who earn scores of 2 perform as well or better when they take those introductory college courses. For example, students taking Introductory Statistics in college who did not take AP Statistics earn, on average, a course grade of 3.03 in Introductory Statistics (see value in parentheses under horizontal axis label), while students with a score of 2 on the AP Statistics Exam earn, on average, a course grade of 3.39 in Introductory Statistics: a 0.36 boost in course grade.

COURSE GRADE DIFFERENCE IN INTRODUCTORY COLLEGE COURSES AMONG AP STUDENTS SCORING A 2 RELATIVE TO ACADEMICALLY SIMILAR COLLEGE STUDENTS



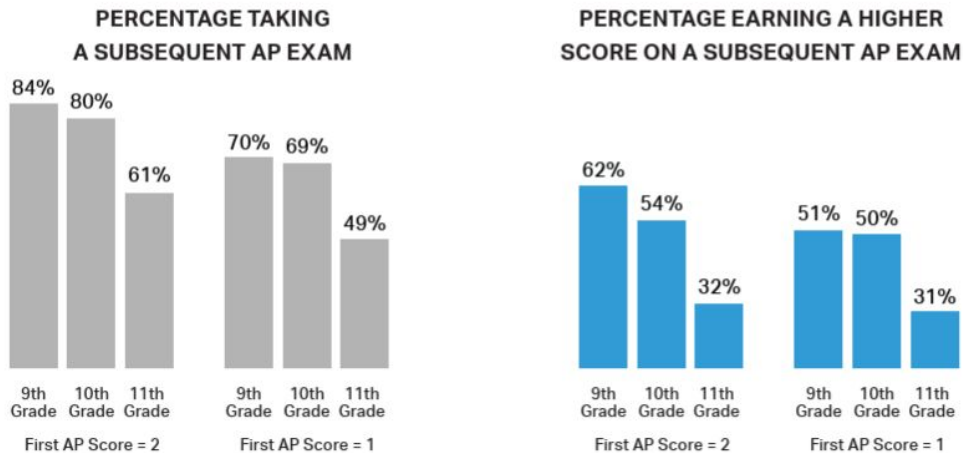
NOTES: Data for these analyses come from a sample of students who enrolled in one of 171 four-year colleges. Numbers in parentheses below the horizontal axis labels provide mean grade point averages for the students who did not take the AP Exam. All findings are statistically significant at alpha 0.10. Sample sizes range from 1,717 to 76,378 depending on the subject. AP subjects not listed had small sample sizes that prevented reporting, statistically insignificant results, or were recently redesigned. Results are based on regression models controlling for first-generation and underrepresented minority status, gender, SAT score, and HSGPA. A non-AP student in this analysis is defined as a student who did not take the AP Exam of interest. Non-AP students could have completed other AP Exams.

A Waste of Time for High School?

FINDING #3: PATHWAYS AND PROGRESS

Many students who first score a 1 or 2 on an AP Exam will take further AP courses and score higher.

Depending on when students take their first AP Exam, 61%–84% of students who earn a 2 on their first AP Exam will take another AP Exam in subsequent years. Students who earn a 1 on their first AP Exam are also very likely (49%–70%) to take more AP courses and exams in high school. Many students who first earn an AP Exam score of 1 or 2 will then earn a higher score on the subsequent AP Exams they take. This trend is particularly true for 9th- and 10th-grade students who earn a score of 2 on their first AP Exam.

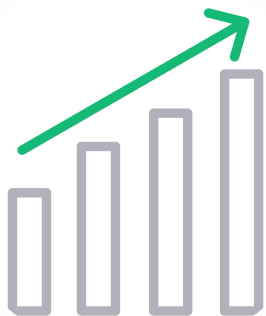


Exam Participation

- Overall, student participation in AP courses and exams grew by 7% from 2024 to 2025.
- The five AP courses with the largest growth this year were:
 1. AP Precalculus
 2. U.S. Government and Politics
 3. AP Seminar
 4. AP World History
 5. AP Biology

Kentucky Performance

<u>AP Precalculus</u>	<u>AP Seminar</u>
2,358 test takers (up 13% to 2024)	2,283 test takers (up 6% to 2024)
77.2% scores of 3+ (compared to 80.8% globally)	85.5% scores of 3+ (compared to 82.2% globally)



AP Precalculus & AP Seminar

AP Career Kickstart expands the AP Program by offering high schools a new set of career courses and exams by partnering with employers, college faculty, and high school educators to design courses that can lead to college credit and employer-endorsed credentials, and prepare students for high-demand jobs.

AP Career Kickstart (CK) credentials are designed with faculty and industry experts to meet the standards and expectations of employers and higher education. Each credential, based on exam performance, validates mastery of qualifying skills, the technical and professional skills needed for success in aligned occupations. Students who earn AP CK employer-endorsed credentials are empowered to succeed in multiple career and education pathways, such as apprenticeships, two- or four-year degree programs, or employment.



AP Career Kickstart:

- **AP Business with Personal Finance**
- **AP Cybersecurity**
- **AP Networking**

Thank You

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