

# Are advanced placement courses necessary?

Business



Introduction The educational system has been evolving over the last few decades.

With concepts like Honors, Pre-AP, AP and many more, students are left speculating: What should I take? Is the extra work worth it? Will this even help me? Schools provide a vast spectrum of possibilities for students, allowing them to choose their classes based on own preferences. The term “AP” stands for advanced placement; this means that the class moves at a fast pace, and at the same time it covers more advanced material. These classes allow students to pursue the topics that they feel most passionate about while challenging themselves academically. Anything from AP Studio Art to AP Calculus BC is available. However, the educational system wasn't always like this, according to an article published by the Washington Post, the number of public schools in the US using the AP program grew by 11% from 2000 to 2008 (Bidwell) . AP courses provide young adults with a unique opportunity to showcase their intellect to others, and most importantly, to universities.

Overtime, students have been inclined to take the toughest classes, mostly because they want to impress colleges rather than learning. Students have slowly been growing an obsession for something that is just a number, instead of pursuing their true passions. The question to be answered in this paper is: are AP courses necessary to get admitted into good university, or are they just another bullet point on a resume? Benefits AP courses have the ability to open a student's perspective and allow him to pursue interests that he feels strongly about. These classes cover more than just the standard material and thus, provide students with the opportunity to learn about

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topics that they are interested in. Moreover, AP classes can also yield personal skills in students who take them; according to the Tennessee Department of Education (TDE), “ Students who take rigorous college-level courses also build on skills such as confidence, time management, study skills, and are better equipped to handle challenging issues and problems.” One could argue that AP courses are only fit for “ academically gifted” students, however, the TDE also states that “ Students who have a high interest in a particular subject matter and are also willing to put in the extra commitment can be successful in AP courses.

“(Advanced Placement: Myths vs. Facts.) This goes to show that advanced placement classes can be challenged by all students regardless of their intellect. Furthermore, AP courses are beneficial for high school students because the California Career Center states that in order to get into the top colleges, “ You should carry as many challenging courses as you can handle —college prep, Advanced Placement (AP).” In other words, AP’s can open the doors to the best universities. A common fear among students in high school is that AP classes can hurt one’s GPA (12 Tips for Getting into the College of Your Choice).

Although this is a possibility, Federico Derby, a former ASFM student, currently attending Stanford university declared that “ Universities are more interested in students who regularly challenge themselves and take the hardest classes available, rather than the actual grades themselves.”

(Derby); to emphasize this point, Derby said that students looking to apply to top colleges should prioritize taking rigorous courses over having a high GPA.

All things considered, AP courses do take a toll on students, however, they

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also provide skills that benefit them long term. Drawbacks As the world grows, so does competition. Admission rates for the top colleges decrease every year. Students are more frequently enrolling in AP courses, making them a normal standard for universities around the globe.

A student who takes AP classes may ask, “ how many AP’s should I take to get into my ideal college?”. The answer is, there is no number. In some cases, no AP’s are needed. In the worst case, the application is not even read by the Dean of Admissions. Stanford explicitly declares, “ nor is there any specific number of AP or Honors courses you must have on your transcript that will secure your admission to Stanford.

” There really is no way to know (Stanford). Although AP courses can enhance one’s knowledge, there are many drawbacks that come with these types of classes. According to Halle Edwards from PrepScholar, taking too much AP’s will hinder the chances of getting admitted into a selective school more than it will help you. She states the reason for this is the huge detriment in grades (Edwards). Susan Hardy, a writer for UNC’s research center, also wrote about the downside of advanced placement classes. She wrote about a study that explains how taking an abundance of AP’s is not always the best choice.

The study includes two students who had a very similar average and SAT score in high school, but one person took 5 AP’s while the other one took none. In their first undergraduate year, the student with AP’s obtained a better average (3. 26 to 3. 07). But the problem is that the number doesn’t increase if the student would have taken 6 or 8, or even 10 AP’s (Hardy).

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Does this mean taking more than five will hurt you? Not at all, what's important is that students have a good balance of AP and regular courses. The thing about these classes is that they require the endurance of high stress levels, according to ASFM teacher Brad Brandvold, who is currently teaching 2 AP classes in the school. He explains that students need to be fully devoted to the class in order to thrive; meaning they will have little to no free time outside of school. Another downside mentioned in the interview with Mr. Brandvold is that if a student is taking various AP's and can't handle them, scores on the exams will be afflicted by his poor management; and when it comes to AP's, " quality always wins out quantity.

" (Brandvold). With this said, it is apparent that some drawbacks can be avoided, while others are just a consequence of the difficulty of an Advanced Placement course. Conclusion High school can be one of the most grueling experiences for a teenager. At a time where deadlines are just around the corner and tests are closing in, students who take AP courses are frequently living under stress and pressure; which is often accompanied by lack of sleep and fatigue. An article published by the US News found that on average, students taking AP classes have roughly three to four hours of homework per night(Hopkins).

This is an unreal amount of homework considering that these people are just teenagers who should be spending their afternoons on extracurriculars instead of having their nose buried in a book. The reason why AP courses have been growing over the past few years is because they have become a regularity in college applicants. Not everyone has the endurance to handle an advance placement course. It is extremely stressful and time consuming.  
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But then again, if they were easy, everyone would be taking them.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that every challenge comes with a reward.

Yes, AP's are only helpful to a certain extent. Workload will become more demanding and student's GPA might also drop. There might be some drawbacks to taking these classes, but the benefits that come with it are well worth the effort. For example, students get the opportunity to acquire greater knowledge of their favorite subjects. They also experience a college like environment, which will definitely ease the adaptation from high school to university. If a student does well in the AP exam, he can receive college credits, meaning he won't be needing to take the class again at University.

AP classes also increase student's odds of gaining a seat at the most selective schools, while simultaneously developing organizational and time management skills. After gathering all the facts, it is evident that there is one main difference between a student taking AP's and a student taking regular classes: these courses can open doors that are not necessarily open to regular students. In the end, they aren't a requirement in order to be admitted into the most selective college, but they are of great importance. Works Cited " 12 Tips for Getting into the College of Your Choice." California Career Center.

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