Short how my mind deteriorated: exhaustive and gratuitous ap exams

Business

Time’s up.

The second I put my pencil down the assistant principal took my test and guided me to my next testing location. It was noon and I. Was. Starving. I had the walk from the gym to the cafeteria to shove my salami and cheese sandwich down my throat. It was at most a 60 second speed walk.

I could feel the relief of finishing one test vanish as the stress of taking the next one appeared. As I entered the new testing location all I could focus on was the energy in the room and the whispered comments passed on between my peers containing their sympathy. I sat in my seat and analyzed my recent performance and I remember wishing that I could just go home with the rest of the AP English Language and Composition test takers. As my thoughts drowned out most of the proctors words, the next few were not ignored. “ You may begin.” Many students, including myself, have had the misfortune of having back to back AP Exams.

It is stressful, overwhelming–unfair. We work from September to May to prepare for these infamous AP tests–you would think we could at least be able to take them on different days–but no. So I ask myself, for what? Why suffer through emotional and mental breakdowns? Why spend hours studying, memorizing as much as you can? What is the point of it all? There is no point. Not only is that the worst part though, as useless as these tests are (according to most students and teachers), they will never go away. The decision to take an AP class, I think, is a wise one. I have nothing against the class itself.

It is challenging, but not so challenging where one is lost from the first day of class to the last. It emulates a college class but because we are in high school it is not genuinely a college course; you have most of the responsibility but not all of it.[p][q] It is the step before an actual college class. I have learned more than the material itself in each AP course that I've taken. However, as much as I appreciate the class, the only downplay is that an AP Exam comes with it.

I always wondered why we had to take an AP test. The most logical reason would be to test our understanding of the subject; what we know and how well we know it. FALSE. If that was all that was intended from an AP exam why would it have to be a 3+ hour long exam? Why would we need to have a 10 minute break in-between part 1 and part 2? Why would we have to go to a different building to take this test? Why. I correlate AP Exams to the SAT's and ACT's. However, the SAT's and ACT's are standardized tests, testing basic skills (although some may argue that).

The SAT's and ACT's are created to mess you up, to trick you, in other words, these tests are not on your side. AP Exams though, shouldn't they resemble a final? It is a test at the end of the curriculum, isn't it? I am convinced that AP exams are truly a waste of time and money for that matter. These test are scaled from 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Actually, I lied. An "*" is the lowest. You get an "*" if you put nothing down on your test.

Completely blank. Clearly, if that was created it is because someone in the past has decided to not even attempt to take this test. I'm sure this hypothetical person knew how to spell their name (which would

automatically earn them a 1) and I'm sure they could fill in A, B, C, D, or E on the bubble sheet even if they were just guessing. I bet this person was trying to prove a point though. He or she was probably trying to prove that the AP exam was worthless. It didn't determine whether they got into college, it probably didn't even effect if they got the credit for the class or not.

If you passed the class, and paid for the class, you got the credit. In addition, you don't even have to send in your scores to a college; even if you did, from what I've heard, it doesn't help nor hurt you. Going back to the scale of AP Exams. 1 to 5. For the AP Statistics exam; if you got 50% of the exam right, you got a 4.

If you got 65% of the test right, you got a 5…what? Shouldn't you get a 5 if you got, lets say, 80-100% of the test right? I mean that would make sense. If you could get a 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, on the exam and it is out of 100 points–100 divided by 5 is 20. 1= 0-20%, 2= 20-40%, 3= 40-60%, 4= 60-80%, and 5= 80-100%. But the scale is significantly lower, why? Because the AP Exam expects you to fail. Why take a test that expects you to fail? That is the golden question.

From the beginning of the year, the teachers have reminded us of this test, not only that, they make it seem as though the whole point of taking this course is for this exam. The first day, " Welcome class, I hope your summer was a spectacular one! Now we have 7 months to prepare for the AP Exam! Let's begin." As ridiculous as that seems, it is the truth. This year I took AP Chemistry, Statistics, English Language and Composition. I was interested in the different chemical reactions and bonds, I was interested in chi-squared

goodness of fit tests, I was interested in reading closely, thinking critically, communicating effectively.

I learned so much, yet not as much as I could've. I went on through the year with the persistent stress of the AP Exams. The exams were an obstructive throne in my side. As much as I wish they weren't there they always were. It would have been prefered to learn without always having the test at the back of my mind; to just learn and not worry, but that would be asking for too much wouldn't it. Some may argue that the AP Exam is a motivator to do well, but I see no reason why you would need an extrinsic motivator.

The beauty of an AP class is the ability of choice. You wouldn't choose to take a class that you would need extra motivation to do well in, would you? I can't help but blame these tests for a good 65% of the stress we students are under everyday in school. Students who sign up for AP classes are normally " good", hard working, engaged students. We have high standards– we want to do the best. Therefore, as futile as these exams are, we will work as hard as we can to get the best grade– as if there is some type of consolation for doing well. It would be too good to be true to believe that these exams could ever be extinguished.

The only suggestion would be to realize how absolutely ineffectual these exams really are and to not let them take a toll on your learning or your mental health. These exams are just that– exams. They will not determine your future. They do however, make entertaining stories to tell your grandchildren one day.