

School District of Shell Lake



AP Course Guidelines

What Is the Advanced Placement Program?

AP enables students to pursue college-level studies while still in high school. Through 34 college-level courses, each culminating in a rigorous exam, AP provides willing and academically prepared students with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement or both. Taking AP courses also demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought out the most rigorous curriculum available to them.

Talented and dedicated AP teachers help students in AP courses develop and apply the skills, abilities and content knowledge they will need later in college. Each AP course is modeled upon a comparable college course, and college and university faculty play a vital role in ensuring that AP courses align with college-level standards. Each AP course concludes with an optional college-level exam developed and scored by college and university faculty members as well as experienced AP teachers. AP Exams are an essential part of the AP experience, enabling students to demonstrate their mastery of college-level course work. AP exam scores are accepted by most two and four-year colleges and universities worldwide for college credit, advanced placement or both on the basis of successful exam scores. In addition, universities in more than 60 countries recognize AP Exam scores in the admission process and/or award credit and placement for qualifying scores.

Performing well on an AP Exam means more to higher education schools than just the successful completion of a course. Research consistently shows that students who score a 3 or higher typically earn higher GPAs in college and have higher graduation rates than their non-AP student peers.

What are the Benefits of the Advanced Placement (AP) Program?

For Colleges and Universities:

- It identifies and attracts highly motivated students who have succeeded in rigorous, college-level courses and demonstrated their ability through demanding national examinations.
- It provides admissions officers with an excellent predictor of student success in college.
- It enables students to diversify and deepen their college curriculum by placing them out of introductory level college courses to which they have demonstrated competence.
- It improves the articulation of college and high school curricula.

For High Schools:

- It enhances the quality of the curriculum.
- It encourages focused efforts in curriculum alignment.
- It challenges the academically capable students.
- It provides opportunities for the best faculty to teach capable, motivated students in demanding courses.
- It provides rewarding in-service opportunities for motivated faculty members.
- It gives the college-preparatory program a reputation for high quality and standards.

For Students:

- It provides the potential for college credit for courses taken in high school.
- It develops the analytical and study skills required to succeed in college courses.
- It motivates students to undertake more challenging work in both high school and college.
- It provides direction in selecting college majors.
- It sets students on a more likely path to college graduation, double majors, and graduate school.

Entry into AP Program Guidelines:

In order to be considered for an AP course at Shell Lake School District students must meet the following criteria:

- Have a GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4 point scale.
- Have the approval of the teacher in the AP subject being applied for.
- If applying for AP Statistics, have a grade of at least a B in Algebra II, or a grade of at least a C in Pre Calculus.
- If applying for AP English Literature students agree to participate in any summer reading assignments prior to the class starting.
- Maintain a grade of at least a C- throughout the duration of the course (Students not holding this grade expectation will be considered on probation and will work with staff, school counselor, administration, and parents to determine whether to stay in the course or drop).
- At the discretion of the student, parents, and teacher, students will be allowed to drop up to two weeks into the year, and at the end of each semester.
- Students that receive a C or better for their semester 2 grade will have the AP exam costs paid by the district.

AP Grading Scale

To recognize the level of effort and work required to be successful in AP courses the following grading scale will be applied to all AP courses:

Grade Mark	High	Low
A	100	89.50
A-	89.49	84.50
B+	84.49	81.50
B	81.49	77.50
B-	77.49	74.50
C+	74.49	71.50
C	71.49	67.50
C-	67.49	64.50
D+	64.49	61.50
D	61.49	57.50
D-	57.49	54.50
F	54.49	0.00

Dear AP Student and Parents:

I am very pleased to have you as a potential member of the Shell Lake High School AP Program. The purpose of this letter is to explain what exactly you are getting into and what you might expect to get out of your AP course experience.

As you are probably aware, the Advanced Placement Program of the College Board is designed to let students in high school obtain college credit and/or advanced placement above the introductory course level at the college they attend. This is a program of credit by examination. The College Board hires the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to write and grade the AP Exams. Grades are assigned on a basis of 1-5 with 3-5 considered "passing." On average, about 60% of the students that take the AP exam pass with a 3 or better. Passing the exam brings the benefit of potential college credit (you should check with the Universities you are working with to see their AP policy). However, the experience of an AP course, even if they don't pass the test, will help the students be more and better prepared for the college experience.

Students, it is important for you to consider why you are taking an AP course. Is your primary reason for taking it a desire to accept and tackle a difficult intellectual challenge, to take and "pass" the AP exam, or for advanced standing/credit for college. All of these are legitimate reasons for taking the course, however, you should know the answer to this question before you start.

Neither students nor their parents should be surprised by course requirements that are in excess of what one would expect from a typical high school course. It is not unusual for a student to be responsible for several assignments at the same time. Also, some students, accustomed to making A's, will make B's or C's on tests and start to doubt themselves, their teacher, and their decision to enter the course, because they forget they are taking a college level course with standards that are higher than usual. Students do not have to make A's on every test to do well on the AP exam, but it does help. Student preparation for AP classes can be very time-consuming and can result in heavy pressure on even the most organized students. At no time will it be acceptable for a student to miss other teachers' classes to complete an AP assignment.

Although extracurricular activities should be chosen wisely, AP students should be able to participate fully in athletics, student clubs, and other activities. In preparation for college life in general, they will need to use their time carefully and wisely.

Success will depend on your motivation and maturity, your ability to read for comprehension, ability to communicate well orally, and in writing, your ability to focus in class and take thorough notes, and your ability to organize your life.

If you or your parents have any questions or concerns about the AP course process, content, rigor, or the contents of the AP handbook, please contact the teacher, counselor, or me directly.

Warmest regards,

Mark Rykal
7-12 Shell Lake Principal

