

Advanced Placement: Myths vs. Facts

MYTH	FACT
Myth: Taking AP courses creates too much of a risk and not enough benefits.	Fact: A great benefit to taking AP courses is that it lets colleges and universities know that students have what it takes to succeed in an undergraduate environment. Taking AP courses is a sign that students are up for the most rigorous classes and are prepared for a postsecondary education. Students who achieve a high enough exam score also have the chance to earn college credit and save money on tuition or skip introductory courses.
Myth: AP courses cause too much stress and extra work for students, negatively impacting their overall performance.	Fact: AP courses are designed to be rigorous college-level courses, and there is strong evidence that participation in AP courses provide students with an understanding of what is expected in college courses, thereby positively impacting a student's college readiness, academic achievement, as well as college completion. Students who take rigorous college-level courses also build confidence, time management skills, study skills, and are better equipped to handle challenging issues and problems.
Myth: AP exams are too expensive.	Fact: The federal Advanced Placement Test Fee (APTF) program provides grant funding to state education agencies for the purpose of providing exam fee assistance for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge AS and A Level exams taken by economically disadvantaged students.
Myth: Only the most academically gifted students should take AP courses.	Fact: AP courses are for any student who is academically prepared and motivated to take college-level courses. Students do not have to be at the top of their class to take AP courses; however, there are several steps students should take in order to be prepared. Students who have a high interest in a particular subject and are also willing to put in the extra commitment can be successful in AP courses. Additionally, strong teacher and parental support have a positive impact on student success in AP courses.

MYTH

FACT

Myth: According to the AP Potential tool, most students who want to take AP courses are not likely to succeed in such rigorous courses.

Fact: The AP Potential results only account for some of the factors that contribute to the student’s exam results and do not take into account the power of an individual student’s motivation, parental support, and teacher efficacy. Thus, the AP Potential should never be used to discourage a motivated student from registering for an AP course.

Myth: Students shouldn’t take the AP exam if there is a chance that they may not score a five on the exam.

Fact: Students do not need to score a five in order to be awarded credit. In fact, many colleges award credit—or advanced placement—for a score of **three or higher** on AP exams. For information regarding the recommended standards for acceptance of AP credit across all Tennessee Board of Regents Community Colleges, click [here](#).

Myth: It is too difficult to get credit awarded for AP scores at the postsecondary level.

Fact: Most colleges and universities in the United States and institutions in more than 60 other countries grant credit and placement for AP scores or acknowledge AP scores in the admission process. Most postsecondary institutions have policies in place that spell out the minimum score required and the amount of credit awarded based on a certain AP exam score.

Myth: There is nothing school officials can do if students are not willing to take the AP exam.

Fact: There are several things that can be done at the local level to motivate students not only to enroll in courses, but also to sit for the exams. Some examples include holding an AP night to explain the benefits of AP to parents and students and offering incentives for taking AP courses and exams. Though enrolling prepared and motivated students in an AP program requires a concerted effort on the part of administrators, counselors, and teachers, the key to the process is communicating the unique benefits of AP and inspiring students to take AP courses and exams.