



AP[®] World Language and Culture Courses Framework and Exam Overview

PREVIEW REVISED COURSEWORK

AP[®] Chinese Language and Culture

AP[®] Japanese Language and Culture

**Note: Earliest possible
implementation
2026–2027 School Year**

What AP® Stands For

Thousands of Advanced Placement teachers have contributed to the principles articulated here. These principles are not new; they are, rather, a reminder of how AP already works in classrooms nationwide. The following principles are designed to ensure that teachers' expertise is respected, required course content is understood, and that students are academically challenged and free to make up their own minds.

1. AP stands for clarity and transparency. Teachers and students deserve clear expectations. The Advanced Placement Program makes public its course frameworks and sample assessments. Confusion about what is permitted in the classroom disrupts teachers and students as they navigate demanding work.
2. AP is an unflinching encounter with evidence. AP courses enable students to develop as independent thinkers and to draw their own conclusions. Evidence and the scientific method are the starting place for conversations in AP courses.
3. AP opposes censorship. AP is animated by a deep respect for the intellectual freedom of teachers and students alike. If a school bans required topics from their AP courses, the AP Program removes the AP designation from that course and its inclusion in the AP Course Ledger provided to colleges and universities. For example, the concepts of evolution are at the heart of college biology, and a course that neglects such concepts does not pass muster as AP Biology.
4. AP opposes indoctrination. AP students are expected to analyze different perspectives from their own, and no points on an AP Exam are awarded for agreement with any specific viewpoint. AP students are not required to feel certain ways about themselves or the course content. AP courses instead develop students' abilities to assess the credibility of sources, draw conclusions, and make up their own minds.

As the AP English Literature course description states: "AP students are not expected or asked to subscribe to any one specific set of cultural or political values, but are expected to have the maturity to analyze perspectives different from their own and to question the meaning, purpose, or effect of such content within the literary work as a whole."

5. AP courses foster an open-minded approach to the histories and cultures of different peoples. The study of different nationalities, cultures, religions, races, and ethnicities is essential within a variety of academic disciplines. AP courses ground such studies in primary sources so that students can evaluate experiences and evidence for themselves.
6. Every AP student who engages with evidence is listened to and respected. Students are encouraged to evaluate arguments but not one another. AP classrooms respect diversity in backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. The perspectives and contributions of the full range of AP students are sought and considered. Respectful debate of ideas is cultivated and protected; personal attacks have no place in AP.
7. AP is a choice for parents and students. Parents and students freely choose to enroll in AP courses. Course descriptions are available online for parents and students to inform their choice. Parents do not define which college-level topics are suitable within AP courses; AP course and exam materials are crafted by committees of professors and other expert educators in each field. AP courses and exams are then further validated by the American Council on Education and studies that confirm the use of AP scores for college credits by thousands of colleges and universities nationwide.

The AP Program encourages educators to review these principles with parents and students so they know what to expect in an AP course. Advanced Placement is always a choice, and it should be an informed one. AP teachers should be given the confidence and clarity that once parents have enrolled their child in an AP course, they have agreed to a classroom experience that embodies these principles.

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About AP

The Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) enables willing and academically prepared students to pursue college-level studies—with the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both—while still in high school. Through AP courses in 39 subjects, each culminating in a challenging exam, students learn to think critically, construct solid arguments, and see many sides of an issue—skills that prepare them for college and beyond. Taking AP courses demonstrates to college admission officers that students have sought the most challenging curriculum available to them, and research indicates that students who score a 3 or higher on an AP Exam typically experience greater academic success in college and are more likely to earn a college degree than non-AP students. Each AP teacher’s syllabus is evaluated and approved by faculty from some of the nation’s leading colleges and universities, and AP Exams are developed and scored by college faculty and experienced AP teachers. Most four-year colleges and universities in the United States grant credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of successful AP Exam scores—more than 3,300 institutions worldwide annually receive AP scores.

AP Course Development

In an ongoing effort to maintain alignment with best practices in college-level learning, AP courses and exams emphasize challenging, research-based curricula aligned with higher education expectations.

Individual teachers are responsible for designing their own curriculum for AP courses, selecting appropriate college-level readings, assignments, and resources. This course and exam description presents the content and skills that are the focus of the corresponding college course and that appear on the AP Exam. It also organizes the content and skills into a series of units that represent a sequence found in widely adopted college textbooks and that many AP teachers have told us they follow in order to focus their instruction. The intention of this publication is to respect teachers’ time and expertise by providing a roadmap that they can modify and adapt to their local priorities and preferences. Moreover, by organizing the AP course content and skills into units, the AP Program is able to provide teachers and students with free formative

assessments—Progress Checks—that teachers can assign throughout the year to measure student progress as they acquire content knowledge and develop skills.

Enrolling Students: Access, Opportunity, and Readiness

The AP Program welcomes all students willing to challenge themselves with college-level coursework and career preparation. We strongly encourage educators to invite students into AP classes, including students from ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, geographic, or other groups not broadly participating in a school’s AP program. We believe that readiness for AP is attainable, and that educators can expand readiness by opening access to Pre-AP course work. We commit to support educators and communities in their efforts to make AP courses widely available, advancing students in their plans for college and careers.

Offering AP Courses: The AP Course Audit

The AP Program unequivocally supports the principle that each school implements its own curriculum that will enable students to develop the content understandings and skills described in the course framework.

While the unit sequence represented in this publication is optional, the AP Program does have a short list of curricular and resource requirements that must be fulfilled before a school can label a course “Advanced Placement” or “AP.” Schools wishing to offer AP courses must participate in the AP Course Audit, a process through which AP teachers’ course materials are reviewed by college faculty. The AP Course Audit was created to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements for AP courses and to help colleges and universities validate courses marked “AP” on students’ transcripts. This process ensures that AP teachers’ courses meet or exceed the curricular and resource expectations that college and secondary school faculty have established for college-level courses.

The AP Course Audit form is submitted by the AP teacher and the school principal (or designated administrator) to confirm awareness and understanding of the curricular and resource requirements. A syllabus or course outline, detailing how course requirements are met, is submitted by the AP teacher for review by college faculty.

Please visit the [AP Course Audit](#) website for more information to support the preparation and submission of materials for the AP Course Audit.

How the AP Program Is Developed

The scope of content for an AP course and exam is derived from an analysis of hundreds of syllabi and course offerings of colleges and universities. Using this research and data, a committee of college faculty and expert AP teachers work within the scope of the corresponding college course to articulate what students should know and be able to do upon the completion of the AP course. The resulting course framework is the heart of this course and exam description and serves as a blueprint of the content and skills that can appear on an AP Exam.

The AP Test Development Committees are responsible for developing each AP Exam, ensuring the exam questions are aligned to the course framework. The AP Exam development process is a multiyear endeavor; all AP Exams undergo extensive review, revision, piloting, and analysis to ensure that questions are accurate, fair, and valid, and that there is an appropriate spread of difficulty across the questions.

Committee members are selected to represent a variety of perspectives and institutions (public and private, small and large schools and colleges), and a range of gender, racial/ethnic, and regional groups. A list of contributing institutions for each subject is available on [AP Central](#)®.

Throughout AP course and exam development, College Board gathers feedback from various stakeholders in both secondary schools and higher education institutions. This feedback is carefully considered to ensure that AP courses and exams are able to provide students with a college-level learning experience and the opportunity to demonstrate their qualifications for advanced placement or college credit.

How AP Exams Are Scored

The exam scoring process, like the course and exam development process, relies on the expertise of both AP teachers and college faculty. While multiple-choice questions are scored by machine, the free-response questions and through-course

performance assessments, as applicable, are scored by thousands of college faculty and expert AP teachers. Most are scored at the annual AP Reading, while a small portion is scored online. All AP Readers are thoroughly trained, and their work is monitored throughout the Reading for fairness and consistency. In each subject, a highly respected college faculty member serves as Chief Faculty Consultant and, with the help of AP Readers in leadership positions, maintains the accuracy of the scoring standards. Scores on the free-response questions and performance assessments are weighted and combined with the results of the computer-scored multiple-choice questions, and this raw score is converted into a composite AP score on a 1–5 scale.

AP Exams are **not** norm-referenced or graded on a curve. Instead, they are criterion-referenced, which means that every student who meets the criteria for an AP score of 2, 3, 4, or 5 will receive that score, no matter how many students that is. The criteria for the number of points students must earn on the AP Exam to receive scores of 3, 4, or 5—the scores that research consistently validates for credit and placement purposes—include:

- The number of points successful college students earn when their professors administer AP Exam questions to them.
- Performance that researchers have found to be predictive of an AP student succeeding when placed into a subsequent higher-level college course.
- The number of points college faculty indicate, after reviewing each AP question, that they expect is necessary to achieve each AP grade level.

Using and Interpreting AP Scores

The extensive work done by college faculty and AP teachers in the development of the course and exam and throughout the scoring process ensures that AP Exam scores accurately represent students' achievement in the equivalent college course. Frequent and regular research studies establish the validity of AP scores as follows:

AP Score	Credit Recommendation	College Grade Equivalent
5	Extremely well qualified	A
4	Well qualified	A–, B+, B
3	Qualified	B–, C+, C
2	Possibly qualified	n/a
1	No recommendation	n/a

While colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own credit and placement policies, most private colleges and universities award credit and/or advanced placement for AP scores of 3 or higher. Additionally, most states in the U.S. have adopted statewide credit policies that ensure college credit for scores of 3 or higher at public colleges and universities. To confirm a specific college's AP credit/placement policy, use the search engine available on the [AP Credit Policy Search](#) page.

BECOMING AN AP READER

Each June, thousands of AP teachers and college faculty members from around the world gather for seven days in multiple locations to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams. Ninety-eight percent of surveyed educators who took part in the AP Reading say it was a positive experience.

There are many reasons to consider becoming an AP Reader, including opportunities to:

- **Bring positive changes to the classroom:** Surveys show that the vast majority of returning AP Readers—both high school and college educators—make improvements to the way they

teach or score because of their experience at the AP Reading.

- **Gain in-depth understanding of AP Exam and AP scoring standards:** AP Readers gain exposure to the quality and depth of the responses from the entire pool of AP Exam takers, and thus are better able to assess their students' work in the classroom.
- **Receive compensation:** AP Readers are compensated for their work during the Reading. Expenses, lodging, and meals are covered for Readers who travel.
- **Score from home:** AP Readers have online distributed scoring opportunities for certain subjects. Check the [AP Reader](#) site for details.
- **Earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs):** AP Readers earn professional development hours and CEUs that can be applied to PD requirements by states, districts, and schools.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit the [Become an AP Reader](#) site for eligibility requirements and to start the application process.

About the AP World Language and Culture Courses

The AP World Language and Culture courses emphasize communication (understanding and being understood by others) by applying interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational skills in real-life situations. This includes interpretation of meaning, communicative abilities, research strategies, and cultural understanding. The AP World Language and Culture courses strive to not overemphasize grammatical accuracy at the expense of communication. To best engage with culturally relevant, real-world tasks, the courses are taught almost entirely in the target languages.

The AP World Language and Culture courses engage students in an exploration of culture in both contemporary and historical contexts. The courses develop students' awareness and appreciation of cultural products (e.g., art, literature, music, technology, conventions, institutions), practices (e.g., patterns of social interactions within a culture), and perspectives (e.g., values, attitudes, and assumptions).

To deepen student understanding of those contents and skills, students will embark on an individual course project. Students will be provided a cultural situation and a series of sources to use as part of their investigation into cultural products, practices, and perspectives. This will culminate in an exam day Project Presentation and simulated Project Q&A.

College Course Equivalent

The AP World Language and Culture courses for Chinese and Japanese are approximately equivalent to an intermediate college-level language and culture course.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites; however, students are typically in their fourth year of high school-level language study. In the case of native or heritage speakers, there may be a different pathway of study leading to this course.

AP WORLD LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Course Framework

Course Framework Components

Course Units

The course is comprised of six thematic units that help teachers integrate language, content, and culture into a series of lessons and activities. Within each unit are recommended instructional contexts and overarching essential questions that engage students, guide their classroom investigations, and promote the use of language in a variety of contexts.

Units	Recommended Instructional Contexts
Unit 1 Families and Communities	Community Activities
	Family Relationships
	Social Interactions and Relationships
	Urban and Rural Communities
Unit 2 Language and Culture	Customs and Celebrations
	Linguistics
	[Chinese or Japanese] in the World
Unit 3 Art and Creativity	Architecture
	Artistic Heritage
	Beauty and Aesthetics
	Fashion and Design
	Literature
	Visual and Performing Arts

Units	Recommended Instructional Contexts
Unit 4 Science and Technology	Innovations and Emerging Technologies
	Personal Technology and Communication
	Science in Everyday Life
	Societal Impacts of Science and Technology
Unit 5 Contemporary Life	Education and Career
	Entertainment and Media
	Food and Health
	Pop Culture
	Sports and Leisure
	Travel and Tourism
Unit 6 Global Contexts	Global Communication
	Natural World
	History
	Policy and Planning
	Transportation

Course Framework Overview

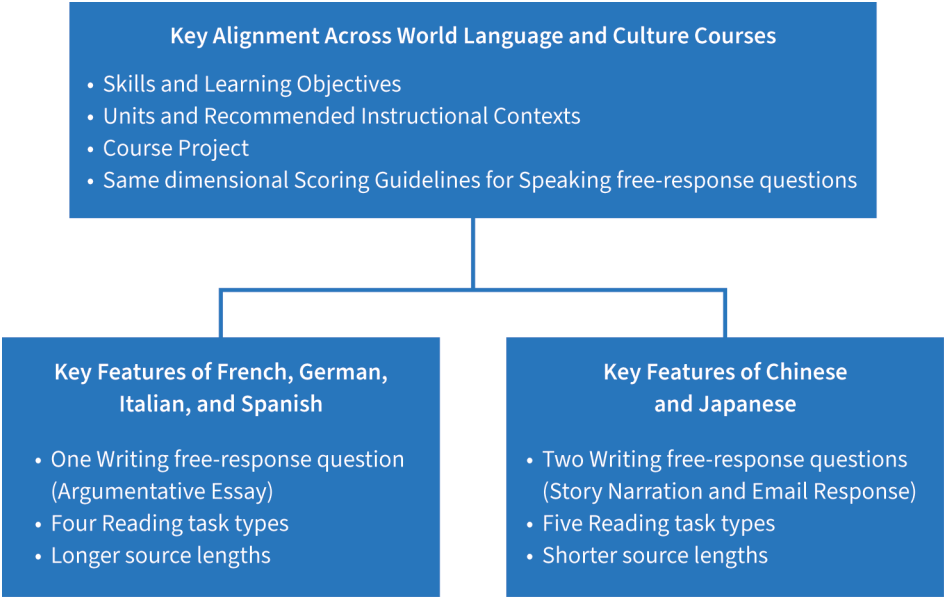
This course framework provides a clear and detailed description of the course requirements necessary for student success. The framework specifies what students must know, be able to do, and understand to qualify for college credit and/or placement.

The course framework includes the following essential components:

- Skills**
At the core of the course are skills identifying what students should know and be able to do to succeed in the course. Students should develop and apply the described skills on a regular basis over the span of the course. Additionally, each skill has learning objectives associated with it; these are more specific capabilities that comprise the broader skill.
- Modes of Communication**
Foundational to the course are the three modes of communication: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational, as defined in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Throughout the course, students demonstrate their abilities in the interpretive mode by engaging with audio, text, and images, including visualizations of data; in the interpersonal mode by speaking with and writing to others; and in the presentational mode by speaking to and writing for an audience.
- Task Types**
Each unit in the course features several of the multiple-choice and free-response task types that students will encounter on the exam, which build in difficulty and complexity over time to the level that matches the exam’s expectations. These task types include different formats of cultural and interdisciplinary sources: audio, text, and images, including visualizations of data, that engage students.

Task Type	Mode of Communication	Source Format
Audio and Chart	Interpretive	Audio and image
Audio Report	Interpretive	Audio
Instructional Guidance	Interpretive	Audio
Conversation	Interpretive	Audio
Presentation	Interpretive	Audio
Article	Interpretive	Text
Article and Chart	Interpretive	Text and image
Correspondence	Interpretive	Text
Literary Text	Interpretive	Text
Promotional Material	Interpretive	Text and image
Story Narration	Presentational – written	Image
Email Response	Interpersonal – written	Text
Project Presentation	Presentational – spoken	Audio, text, and image
Project Q&A	Interpersonal – spoken	Audio, text, and image

Course Alignment



Course Skills and Learning Objectives

NOTE: Skill Category 1 is assessed through the MCQ section of the exam, while Skill Categories 2 and 3 are assessed through the FRQ section.

Skill Category 1	Skill Category 2	Skill Category 3
<i>Interpretive Communication</i> 1	<i>Interpersonal and Presentational Communication</i> 2	<i>Cultural Understanding</i> 3
Comprehend written texts, audio, and visualizations of data	Speak and write in interpersonal and presentational contexts.	Demonstrate cultural understanding.

SKILLS

#.A.1: Learning Objectives

1.A Recognize explicit meaning.	2.A Use language that aligns with the communicative purpose and context.	3.A Make connections within and across cultures.
1.A.1: Identify supporting or relevant details.	2.A.1: Use a variety of grammatical structures.	3.A.1: Describe cultural products, practices, and perspectives.
1.A.2: Identify data points, patterns, and trends.	2.A.2: Use a variety of vocabulary.	3.A.2: Compare cultural products, practices, and perspectives among distinct communities.
	2.A.3: Use idiomatic and culturally relevant expressions.	3.A.3: Reflect on the significance of cultural products, practices, and perspectives.
	2.A.4: Adopt an appropriate register for the intended audience and situation.	
1.B Interpret meaning.	2.B Make communication comprehensible for the intended audience.	
1.B.1: Determine the main idea, theme, or purpose.	2.B.1: Use communication strategies such as circumlocution and paraphrasing.	
1.B.2: Determine the intended audience.	2.B.2: Monitor language production; recognize errors and attempt self-correction in spoken exchanges.	
1.B.3: Determine the point(s) of view, perspective(s), tone, or attitude.	2.B.3: Use pronunciation that is comprehensible to a variety of speakers of the target language.	
1.B.4: Identify organizing and/or rhetorical structures and/or strategies.	2.B.4: Use an appropriate rate of speech and effective intonation patterns.	
1.B.5: Determine the meaning of words and phrases using textual cues.	2.B.5: Use standard conventions of written language (e.g., capitalization, orthography, accents, punctuation).	

Course Skills and Learning Objectives *(cont'd)*

Skill Category 1	Skill Category 2	Skill Category 3
<i>Interpretive Communication</i> 1 Comprehend written texts, audio, and visualizations of data	<i>Interpersonal and Presentational Communication</i> 2 Speak and write in interpersonal and presentational contexts.	<i>Cultural Understanding</i> 3 Demonstrate cultural understanding.

SKILLS

1.C Synthesize and infer meaning.

1.C.1: Connect information within or across sources.

1.C.2: Synthesize meaning to draw logical conclusions.

1.C.3: Infer implied meaning through context.

2.C Share ideas, information, and opinions about familiar and researched topics.

2.C.1: Express ideas, preferences, and opinions.

2.C.2: Use research strategies to gather information and evidence.

2.C.3: Use examples to provide advice or information and to explain your opinions or emotions.

2.C.4: Integrate information from multiple sources to develop and support a position or perspective.

2.C.5: Reference and cite sources appropriately.

2.D Apply organizational and rhetorical strategies.

2.D.1: Apply an appropriate organizational structure.

2.D.2: Use a variety of cohesive devices (e.g., relative pronouns, pronoun referents, conjunctions, transitions) to effectively convey and connect ideas.

Course Units Aligned by Modes and Task Types

Units	Modes	Task Types
Unit 1 Families and Communities	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Audio and Chart
		Audio Report
		Instructional Guidance
		Correspondence
		Literary Text
Unit 2 Language and Culture	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Project Presentation
		Project Q&A
		Audio Report
		Conversation
		Article
Unit 3 Art and Creativity	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Promotional Material
		Story Narration
		Email Response
		Interpersonal Writing
		Presentational Writing
Unit 4 Science and Technology	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Project Presentation
		Project Q&A
		Audio Report
		Conversation
		Article
		Article and Chart
		Promotional Material
		Story Narration
		Email Response
		Interpersonal Writing

Units	Modes	Task Types
Unit 5 Contemporary Life	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Audio and Chart
		Instructional Guidance
		Presentation
		Correspondence
		Literary Text
Unit 6 Global Contexts	Presentational Speaking	Project Presentation
	Interpersonal Speaking	Project Q&A
	Interpretive Listening and Reading	Audio and Chart
		Audio Report
		Conversation
		Article
Unit 6 Global Contexts	Presentational Writing	Article and Chart
	Interpersonal Writing	Story Narration
		Email Response

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AP WORLD LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Exam Information

Exam Overview

The AP World Language and Culture exams for Chinese and Japanese are around 1 hour and 50 minutes long and include 55 multiple-choice questions and 4 free-response questions. Information about each section is provided below; however, the exam order, specifically the sequence of the multiple-choice section and the free-response questions, has not yet been finalized. With the introduction of digital exam delivery via Bluebook for the AP World Language and Culture Exams in 2027, forthcoming pilot administrations will help the Advanced Placement Program determine the sequence that provides the most seamless digital testing experience. The *World Language and Culture Course and Exam Descriptions* (to be published March 2026) will include a complete Exam Overview section with finalized exam details, including the confirmed sequence.

Multiple-Choice Section

The multiple-choice section of these AP World Language and Culture exams includes 55 multiple-choice questions presented in 11 multiple-choice question sets. Each multiple-choice set includes five questions about one or two audio and/or written texts. Part A (Listening) contains five different multiple-choice question sets. Part B (Reading) contains six multiple-choice question sets across five different task types that can vary each year. The Listening section (Part A) will precede the Reading section (Part B). The following chart lays out the different task types and the number of question sets included on the exams. Question sets within each part may appear in any order on an exam.

Question Type	Task Types	Number of Sets	Total Number of Sets	Total Number of Questions	Timing	Exam Weighting
Part A: Listening	Audio and Chart	1	5	25	25 minutes	25%
	Audio Report	1				
	Conversation	1				
	Instructional Guidance	1				
	Presentation	1				
Part B: Reading*	Article	0–2	6	30	40 minutes	25%
	Article and Chart	1–2				
	Correspondence	1–2				
	Literary Text	0–2				
	Promotional Material	1–2				

*There will be six total multiple-choice question sets across five different task types for Part B: Reading. While the number of multiple-choice question sets for each task type are represented as a range and will vary each year, there will always be a total of 30 questions.

Free-Response Section

The free-response section of these AP World Language and Culture exams includes four free-response questions with the following timing and exam weighting.

Question Type	Timing	Exam Weighting
Project Presentation	6–8 minutes	20%
Project Q&A (4 questions)	5–7 minutes	15%
Story Narration	15 minutes	7.5%
Email Response	15 minutes	7.5%

PROJECT PRESENTATION

Students will receive the course project topic, prompt, and source materials a few months before exam day. They will use these materials and their own research to prepare a 3-minute Project Presentation that addresses the prompt. On exam day, students will digitally record their 3-minute Project Presentation and may use an outline, called a Personalized Project Reference, to scaffold their presentation.

PROJECT Q&A

Students will respond to a series of four questions about their Project Presentation and research. The questions are pre-recorded but are not known to students ahead of exam day. Student responses will be recorded digitally.

STORY NARRATION

Students will write a complete and coherent story based on a sequence of four provided pictures.

EMAIL RESPONSE

Students will read an email from a friend, family member, or community member and respond, addressing the questions and/or requests.