



Returning Exam Materials: Packing Cartons

NOTE: This is a full-color version of the “Packing Cartons” section in the 2025-26 AP Coordinator’s Manual, Part 2.

By carefully following all instructions for packing and labeling return cartons, you help ensure that your school’s exam materials can be quickly unpacked, sorted, and scanned for delivery to exam scoring.

Preparing Cartons

You must use the same carton(s) you received your exams in for your return shipment. These cartons are double-walled and are therefore sturdy enough to support the exam materials. Remove any old labels or shipment markings. Leaving old labels on your cartons could result in shipping delays.

If your cartons have been inadvertently discarded or damaged, you may use other heavy-duty, double-walled cartons.

Caution: Using lighter weight boxes (e.g., copy paper boxes or boxes from online orders) greatly increases the risk of your students’ exams being damaged or lost.

Remove any old labels or special markings on all cartons.

Packing Sequence

The following sequence reflects returning exams in **multiple large (18") cartons**. See the information at the bottom of the page about returning exams in a single small carton.

- Items 1–4 should be in **separate cartons** from items 5–8, unless you’re returning materials in a single carton, or you don’t have enough cartons to pack the items separately.
- Refer to the **packing diagram** for multiple cartons on the next page, if needed.

Multiple Large Carton Packing Sequence

1. Unused exam packets and/or unused hybrid digital exam free-response booklets	Stack on one side of the carton, spines toward the center of the carton. You may pack the unused exam packets or booklets after each subject is administered, as long as you’re keeping an accurate count of used and unused materials.
2. Used multiple-choice booklets	Place on top of the unused exam packets, spines toward the center of the carton.
3. Used orange booklets	Place on the opposite side of the stacked unused exam packets/booklets and used multiple-choice booklets, spines facing toward the center of the carton.
4. Used and unused audio CDs	Place the CDs on both sides to fill the carton evenly.
Put packing materials or bubble wrap on top to keep contents from shifting.	
Important: Begin with a new carton for items 5–8.	
5. Used free-response booklets (including used free-response booklets for hybrid digital exams)	Stack evenly on both sides to fill the carton evenly, spines toward the center of the carton.
6. Answer sheet return envelope(s)	Place on both sides to fill the carton evenly.
7. SSD return envelope(s)	Place on both sides to fill the carton evenly.
8. Incident Report (IR) return envelope(s)	Place on both sides to fill the carton evenly.
Put packing material or bubble wrap on top to keep contents from shifting.	

Small carton returns: If you’re returning all exam materials in a single small (less than 18") carton, place item 1 on the bottom and layer items 2–8 directly on top. Alternately layer the types of booklets so they stack evenly. Alternate multiple-choice booklets by subject. Place packing material or bubble wrap on the top of the last item packed. Refer to the packing diagram for a single carton, if needed.

Packing Diagram: Multiple Cartons

Pack items in the sequence shown in the carton illustrations. Booklet spines must face the center of the carton. Cartons should be packed by item type, not exam subject. For instance, keep all multiple-choice booklets together for all subjects.

When using multiple cartons, **begin with a new carton for items 5–8.**

NOTE: This illustration may show items that don't apply to your school. If you're returning a large number of exams, you might fill some cartons with only one or two types of exam materials—this is ok.

Items:



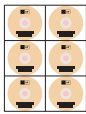
- 1 Unused Exam Packets and/or Unused Hybrid Digital Exam Free-Response Booklets



- 2 Used Multiple-Choice Booklets



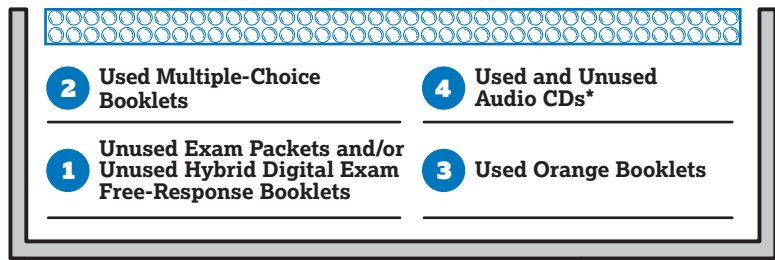
- 3 Used Orange Booklets



- 4 Used and Unused Audio CDs

First, pack all items 1–4

These should be in separate cartons from items 5–8. **Important:** Begin packing with item 1 (unused exam packets and unused hybrid digital free-response booklets) at the bottom of the carton, then item 2, etc.

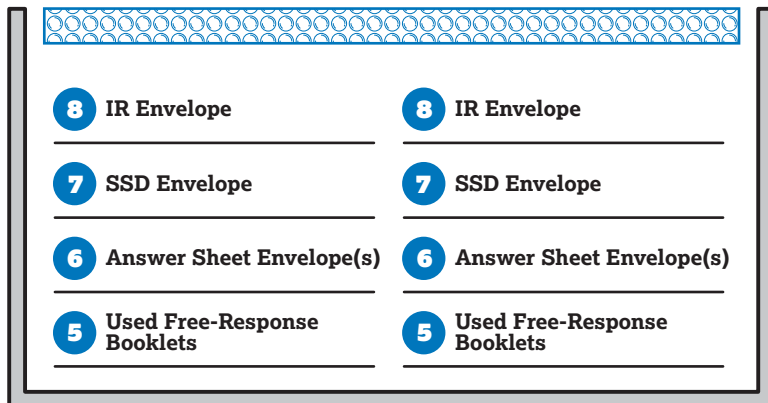


Bottom of carton

*CDs can be placed on both sides to fill the carton.

Then, pack all items 5–8

Begin with a new carton. Place items on both sides to fill the carton evenly. **Important:** Begin packing with item 5 (used free-response booklets, including used free-response booklets for hybrid digital exams) at the bottom of the carton, then item 6, and so on.



Bottom of carton

Items:



- 5 Used Free-Response Booklets (including used free-response booklets for hybrid digital exams)



- 6 Answer Sheet Return Envelope(s) Enclose only USED answer sheets.



- 7 SSD Return Envelope Use only for materials listed on p. 100 of the 2024-25 AP Coordinator's Manual, Part 2.



- 8 Incident Report (IR) Return Envelope (if applicable)

Packing Diagram: Single Carton

Pack materials in the sequence shown, starting with item 1 (unused exam packets) at the bottom of the carton.

NOTE: This illustration may show material that does not apply to your school.

