



Build a Strong Foundation with English 10: AP Seminar

Help your students build foundational writing, collaboration, research, and presentation skills for future success in high school, college, and career.

In 2014, the Advanced Placement® Program (AP®) introduced AP Seminar. An AP course with no prerequisites, AP Seminar helps a wide range of students choose topics with their teachers. Seminar-style courses are focused, discussion-based courses. They allow students to complete readings and concentrate on specific topics for their discussions. The work students do develops critical thinking, analytic writing, collaboration, and academic research skills.

AP Seminar is one of two yearlong courses that make up the AP Capstone Diploma™ program. When students take both AP Seminar and AP Research, they can earn one of two different AP Capstone™ awards, which are valued by colleges across the United States and around the world.

The Evolution of AP Seminar

Over the last eight years, AP Seminar has organically evolved. Districts and schools are taking exciting approaches to implementing the course.

Today, AP Seminar is offered in more than 2,000 schools, and the most rapid adoption is taking place in grade 10. This is a shift from the intended course placement in grade 11. Besides this, more than half of schools have placed AP Seminar within their English departments.

To better understand what prompted schools to make these shifts, the AP Program took a closer look to see what we could learn and subsequently share with the AP community.

“AP Seminar was a great course for sophomore year since it taught me how to properly research early on, which has helped me write good research reports in senior year of high school and later in college.”

—Mia, student, Glen Allen, VA

“AP Seminar is one of those courses where you can really just do things that matter to you and it’s not something that you can get in other courses.”

—Zaria, student, Chicago, IL

“Seminar and Research taught me how important my ideas are and how important my voice is. I think that a lot of kids, especially like me, would really benefit from taking a class like that. If you’re scared or nervous, it’ll be OK. Put yourself out there, stick up for yourself. The most important thing to know is that you do belong.”

—Teanna, student, Brooklyn, NY

“Many English classes are driven by content and spend the year with readings dominated by imaginative literature. AP Seminar has created a broader context for reading informational texts, but more importantly, the performance tasks have pushed students to explore the world around them for a deeper understanding of how it all works. Doing real-world investigations and offering research-based solutions has produced some critical thinkers who are motivated to do something in their community.”

— James Wszolek, English Teacher (AP Seminar) and Department Co-Chair, La Porte High School, IN

The AP Seminar Impact

AP Seminar has broad benefits. The course:



Engages a Wide Range of Students: AP Seminar includes a series of projects on topics of a student's and teacher's choice, making the course more relevant for a diverse group of students. AP Seminar participation is more representative than other AP courses. AP Seminar scores are more uniform across White, Black, and Hispanic students than any other AP course.



Builds Relevant Skills: Students build skills foundational to success in college and career such as investigating topics, working in teams, conducting research, and presenting. Students work in teams to investigate a real-world or academic problem and present an argument for their proposed solution.



Improves Outcomes: Taking AP Seminar in grade 10 sets students up for success. **When compared with their peers, 10th-grade AP Seminar students on average:**

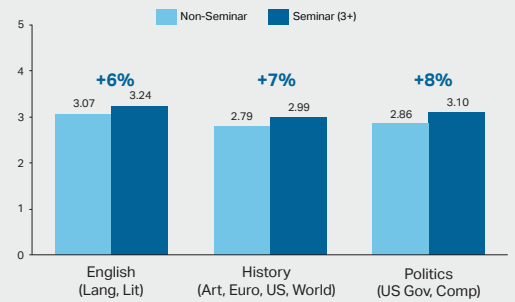
- ◆ **Have higher AP Seminar Exam scores than students who take the AP Seminar Exam in grade 11.**
 - 86% of 10th-grade students earned a 3 or higher on AP Seminar.
 - 72% of 10th-grade students who scored at the 50th percentile on their PSAT/NMSQT® scored a 3 or higher on AP Seminar.
- ◆ **Earn higher scores on AP English, history, and government exams taken in grades 11 and 12.**

Regardless of when they take the course, AP Seminar students are more likely to:

- Achieve higher first-year college GPAs compared to students who didn't take an AP course.
- Persist to the second year of higher education than their peers who didn't take an AP course.

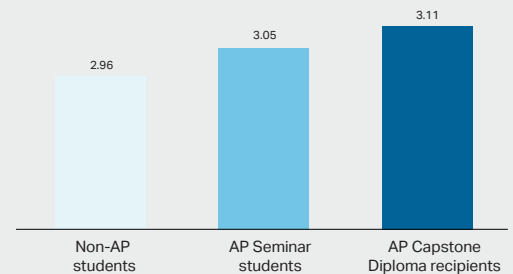
Schools have also found that offering AP Seminar as their English 10 offering makes the course more accessible because it fulfills a core course requirement.

Average 2017 AP Exam Scores
NEXT-YEAR PERFORMANCE



P value < 0.01 (all differences)
Notes: Results presented take into account student first-generation and minority status, gender, high school grades, PSAT/NMSQT scores, number of AP Exams taken in the same subject area prior to AP Seminar, and number of other AP Exams taken prior to and concurrent with AP Seminar.

Average First-Year College GPA



About English 10: AP Seminar

English 10: AP Seminar is an English course taught in the AP Seminar-style. Teachers will use the AP Seminar Course and Exam description, and students will take the AP Seminar Exams. The course fits with current curriculum and allows for more flexibility to layer in cross-curricular content. It also emphasizes evidence-based reading, writing, and speaking.

Students who take the course fulfill a core course requirement, and they benefit from a seminar-style approach that builds skills necessary for success in future high school courses, college, and a variety of careers.

Taking the course in grade 10 puts students on track to take 5 AP courses over the course of their high school career, a number that research shows is optimal to college outcomes. Even more important is the fact that **putting students who might otherwise not take an AP course into English 10: AP Seminar can change their trajectory**. Taking even one AP course improves students' first-year college GPA and on-time college graduation rates.

By transitioning multiple sections of their current English offering to English 10: AP Seminar, schools can ensure that as many students as possible can benefit from the course.

Schools that choose to offer both English 10: AP Seminar and AP Research can participate in the Capstone Diploma program. Taking this step is completely optional; schools may offer English 10: AP Seminar as a stand-alone course. Schools that currently offer AP Seminar as an elective, don't need to make any changes to their current offerings.

Promising Practices for Implementation

1. Set a 5-year target: Moving more students into English 10: AP Seminar will take time. Setting incremental targets will help make goals more achievable. For example, La Porte High School (IN) began with 3 sections for just over 80 students. Today, the school offers 5 sections for approximately 115 students.
2. Establish a Peer Mentoring Program: In their second year of offering Seminar, Channel View High School for Research (NY) set up a peer tutoring program to prepare other teachers to lead Seminar courses.
3. Develop a Teacher Application Process: If teaching the course is open to anyone in the English Department, consider an internal application or interview. Thompson Valley High School (CO) established such a process to help clarify who wanted to teach the course and why the person selected was chosen.

Next Steps for Offering the Course

The summer before their first-year teaching English 10: AP Seminar, teachers need to complete a one-time, five-day workshop. Virtual and in-person options are available. Schools that plan to offer English 10: AP Seminar must complete a form acknowledging this requirement.

During the school year, instructors must complete additional online assessment scoring training—this is an annual requirement.

Visit collegeboard.org/APseminarELA



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS: NORTHVIEW H.S. MICHIGAN

Course Structure:

Northview High School requires all sophomores to take English 10: AP Seminar. Intentional scheduling builds the course into the English pathway and makes it one of the first AP courses students take.

Student Recruitment:

Northview leverages College Board programs and resources—including Pre-AP and AP—to support their students' experience. They also support students through counselor interventions beginning in their first year of high school year.

Goal for 2023-24:

Focus the course's first team project on careers.

"Our belief and experience is that the sooner we can introduce College Board resources, the more familiar and skilled our students and teachers become at using them to their benefit."

*Mark Thomas, Principal
Northview High School*

For more examples, visit
collegeboard.org/apseminarELA