

AP Computer Science A: Updates for 2019-20

- To bring you and your students new classroom resources and supports, we're making updates to AP[®] Computer Science A for the 2019-20 school year.
- These updates will give you a clearer sense of the content and skills that will be tested on the AP Exam. They'll also ensure that the exam format remains consistent from year to year.
- You won't need to update your syllabus in the AP Course Audit.
- Starting in August, you'll need to complete a simple digital activation process to access the new resources and help your students register for their exams.

Course Updates

AP Computer Science A has been updated for the 2019-20 school year to make things clearer for you and your students and to reduce scope.

Course and exam information is now clearly presented in a course and exam description (CED).

- Currently, a course description booklet—a very general overview of course content, with a topic outline—is available to help you plan your instruction.
- Starting in late May 2019, you'll have access to a **course and exam description (CED)** that clearly outlines all required course content and defines how that content will be assessed on the exam.

The CED organizes the course into ten commonly taught units.

- This series of units represents a sequence that is found in widely adopted college textbooks and that many AP Computer Science A teachers have told us they follow:
 - ♦ **Unit 1:** Primitive Types
 - ♦ **Unit 2:** Using Objects
 - ♦ **Unit 3:** Boolean Expressions and `if` Statements
 - ♦ **Unit 4:** Iteration
 - ♦ **Unit 5:** Writing Classes
 - ♦ **Unit 6:** Array
 - ♦ **Unit 7:** `ArrayList`
 - ♦ **Unit 8:** 2-D Array
 - ♦ **Unit 9:** Inheritance
 - ♦ **Unit 10:** Recursion
- By organizing the course content and skills into units, we're able to give you and your students free formative assessments—personal progress checks—that you can assign throughout the year to measure student progress.
- We want to respect your time and expertise by providing a road map you can modify and adapt to your local priorities and preferences. You can choose to follow this suggestion for how content can be sequenced and paced. As always, you'll have the flexibility to organize the course content as you like.

The CED defines specific learning objectives and skills for students.

- In the course framework, each learning objective is clearly connected to specific course content in the form of essential knowledge statements. With this kind of specificity, you and your students will know **how** that content will be assessed on the AP Exam.
- The framework outlines distinct Computational Thinking Practices—skills that AP Computer Science A students should practice throughout the year. These are skills that will help them learn to think and act like computer scientists, such as designing and developing algorithms, writing programs, and analyzing code.
- Throughout the CED, you'll find thoughtful suggestions for pairing course content with these skills.

Some content has been removed to make the course more manageable for you and your students.

- AP Computer Science A teachers have told us that there is too much content to teach thoroughly and thoughtfully in a single school year.
- In collaboration with AP teachers, college professors, and members of the AP Computer Science A Development Committee, we're removing some content to reduce scope and to stay aligned with college-level expectations.
- Specifically, abstract classes and interfaces have been removed.

Exam Updates

Starting in the 2019-20 school year, there will be updates to the AP Computer Science A Exam to ensure consistency in the distribution of skills assessed on every version of the exam:

- The weighting, timing, point values, and number of questions on the exam aren't changing.
- The exam will have question types that stay consistent every year so that you and your students know what to expect on exam day.
- The four free-response question types will remain the same from year to year:
 - ♦ Question 1: Methods and Control Structures, where students call methods and work with control structures without the added complexity of data structures.
 - ♦ Question 2: Class, where students design and implement a described class.
 - ♦ Question 3: Array/`ArrayList`, where students complete program code that uses array or `ArrayList` objects.
 - ♦ Question 4: 2-D Array, where students complete program code that uses 2-D arrays.
- Free-response questions will measure student performance at a range of performance levels. (Currently, each free-response question is written to assess students at the highest ability levels.)
- There will be defined skills assessed in the same proportions on all versions of the exam. (Currently, because there aren't any defined course skills, the assessed skills vary.)

You'll find complete details about the updated AP Computer Science A course and exam in the CED, available on AP Central® in late May 2019.

Print copies of the CED will be available in easy-to-use, customizable binders in June 2019. Preorder your free copy at collegeboard.org/CED.

Visit collegeboard.org/APCSA2019 for the most up-to-date information, including:

- A video overview of the AP Computer Science A updates;
- More information about the new resources;
- A detailed timeline of what you can expect and when; and
- A video preview of the CED and unit guides.