
Validated Achievement Level Descriptions for **AP** Language and Culture Exams

- AP French Language and Culture
- AP German Language and Culture
- AP Italian Language and Culture
- AP Spanish Language and Culture

EFFECTIVE 2015

About the College Board

The College Board is a mission-driven not-for-profit organization that connects students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the College Board was created to expand access to higher education. Today, the membership association is made up of more than 6,000 of the world's leading educational institutions and is dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in education. Each year, the College Board helps more than seven million students prepare for a successful transition to college through programs and services in college readiness and college success—including the SAT® and the Advanced Placement Program®. The organization also serves the education community through research and advocacy on behalf of students, educators, and schools.

For further information, visit www.collegeboard.org.

Equity and Access Policy

The College Board strongly encourages educators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP® programs by giving all willing and academically prepared students the opportunity to participate in AP. We encourage the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented. Schools should make every effort to ensure their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population. The College Board also believes that all students should have access to academically challenging course work before they enroll in AP classes, which can prepare them for AP success. It is only through a commitment to equitable preparation and access that true equity and excellence can be achieved.

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Learning Objectives and Achievement Level Descriptions in the Curriculum Frameworks

At the core of the AP[®] French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture courses are the learning objectives identifying what students should know and be able to do across the three modes of communication: Interpretive, Interpersonal, and Presentational.

In the curriculum frameworks for each of these courses, the degree to which student performance meets the learning objectives is articulated in achievement level descriptions, which clearly define how well students at each level are expected to perform. These achievement level descriptions are meant to provide detailed information to teachers as they teach their courses about the expectations for student performance at each AP score level. While references to levels 1–5 in the curriculum framework achievement level descriptions cannot precisely predict a student’s ultimate AP Exam score, AP teachers can use this information to develop better insight into individual student performance in the classroom and adjust the curriculum and instruction throughout the course.

Validated Achievement Level Descriptions for AP[®] Language and Culture Exams

The achievement level descriptions include descriptions of elements of student performance that may be assessed during the course, but that are not necessarily assessed on the exam. The intent of this document is to share the validated achievement level descriptions of student performance that pertain directly to the AP Exam in each of these languages.

After the first administration of the exams, College Board psychometricians led a study in which panels of college and university subject area experts reviewed the achievement level descriptions. These faculty panels were charged with comparing the achievement level descriptions against exam items and sample student answers to determine how well the expectations described in the curriculum framework align with how students actually performed. The validation study panels provided feedback to the AP program and recommended minor adjustments to the achievement level descriptions for the exams based on their observations.

The validated achievement level descriptions provided in this document accurately describe student performance in the three modes of communication at each score level on the AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture exams and are intended to be a helpful resource tool for educators and students.

	Student receiving a score of 1:	Student receiving a score of 2:	Student receiving a score of 3:	Student receiving a score of 4:	Student receiving a score of 5:
Comprehension of Content	identifies main ideas and details when the correct answer is stated directly (nearly verbatim) in the text, seldom responds accurately to basic information questions (who, what, when, where-type questions), and rarely responds to questions that require inferring implied meanings.	identifies a few main ideas and details on familiar topics, sometimes responds accurately to basic information questions (e.g. who, what, when, where-type questions), and rarely responds to questions that require inferring implied meanings.	identifies several main ideas and details on familiar topics, responds accurately to basic information questions (e.g. who, what, when, where-type questions), and responds to a limited number of questions that require inferring implied meanings.	identifies most main ideas and some significant details on a range of topics, responds accurately to basic information questions (e.g. who, what, why, when, where-type questions), and responds to some questions that require inferring implied meanings.	identifies main ideas and significant details on a range of topics, responds accurately to basic information questions (e.g. who, what, why, when, where-type questions), and differentiates facts from opinions by accurately answering questions that require inferring implied meanings.
Text Analysis	identifies distinguishing features of the text (e.g., the type of resource, the purpose or intended audience of the text, and tone) only when the correct answer is stated directly (nearly verbatim) in the text.	identifies a few of distinguishing features of the text (e.g. the type of resource, intended audience, purpose of the resource, and tone).	identifies several of the distinguishing features of the text (e.g. the type of resource, intended audience and purpose of the resource, and tone).	identifies most of the distinguishing features of the text (e.g. the type of resource, intended audience, purpose of the resource, and tone).	identifies the significant distinguishing features of the text (e.g. the type of resource, intended audience, purpose, and tone).
Vocabulary	comprehends basic vocabulary limited to familiar thematic word groups, made up mostly of memorized phrases.	comprehends a limited range of vocabulary from familiar thematic word groups, including memorized phrases and a few idiomatic expressions.	comprehends a variety of vocabulary from familiar thematic word groups, including some idiomatic expressions.	comprehends most vocabulary, including some culturally appropriate and idiomatic expressions related to familiar or studied topics.	comprehends a wide range of vocabulary, including culturally appropriate and some idiomatic expressions related to familiar or studied topics and some unfamiliar topics.
Context	is seldom able to use context to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	is occasionally able to use context to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	is sometimes able to use context to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	is often able to use context to deduce the meaning of some unfamiliar vocabulary.	is usually able to use context to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words.
Cultural Awareness & Comparison	shows little or no awareness of cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and minimal understanding of basic content of familiar interdisciplinary topics present in the resource. Is generally unable to identify geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies a few common cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and demonstrates limited understanding of basic content of familiar interdisciplinary topics present in the resource. Identifies minimal geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies the cultural products and practices of the target culture(s), and demonstrates an understanding of basic content of familiar interdisciplinary topics in the resource. Identifies a few geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies the products and practices and some perspectives of the target culture(s) and demonstrates understanding of some content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the resource. Compares and contrasts some geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies the relationship among products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture(s) and demonstrates an understanding of most of the content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the resource. Compares and contrasts a variety of geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.

	Student receiving a score of 1	Student receiving a score of 2	Student receiving a score of 3	Student receiving a score of 4	Student receiving a score of 5
Comprehensibility	is barely understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with frequent or significant errors that impede comprehensibility.	is partially understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with errors that force interpretation and impede comprehensibility.	is generally understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with errors that may impede comprehensibility.	is fully understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with several errors that do not impede comprehensibility.	is fully understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with ease and clarity of expression; occasional errors do not impede comprehensibility.
Vocabulary	uses very basic, limited vocabulary.	uses limited vocabulary.	uses sufficient vocabulary including a few idiomatic expressions.	usually uses appropriate vocabulary, including some idiomatic expressions.	uses varied and appropriate vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions.
Language Control	demonstrates little or no control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple, often memorized sentences and phrases; demonstrates little or no control of time frames.	demonstrates limited control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple sentences and phrases; demonstrates some accuracy in present time and little or no accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates some control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple and a few compound sentences; is mostly accurate in present time and demonstrates limited accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates general control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple, compound, and a few complex sentences; is mostly accurate in present time with some accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses a variety of simple and compound sentences and some complex sentences; narrates and describes in the present, past, and future time frames with general accuracy.
Register	demonstrates little or no control of register.	demonstrates minimal awareness of register, using mainly the familiar register.	demonstrates an inconsistent use of appropriate register; shifts between formal and informal register occur.	usually demonstrates use of appropriate register, except for some occasional shifts between formal and informal register.	usually demonstrates use of appropriate register, with consistent use, despite a few occasional shifts between formal and informal register.
Cultural Awareness & Comparison	shows little or no awareness of cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities as appropriate to the task.	identifies a few common cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and a few geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities as appropriate to the task.	identifies some products and practices of the target culture(s) and may identify a few common perspectives of the target culture(s) with inaccuracies. Identifies some geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities as appropriate to the task.	identifies and describes with some details the products and practices of the target culture(s) and may identify some perspectives of the target culture(s) with some inaccuracies. Compares and contrasts some geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities as appropriate to the task.	identifies the relationship among products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture(s) and compares them with his/her own culture. Compares and contrasts a variety of geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities as appropriate to the task.

	Student receiving a score of 1	Student receiving a score of 2	Student receiving a score of 3	Student receiving a score of 4	Student receiving a score of 5
Presentation Quality	offers little or no treatment of the topic in oral and written presentations, consisting mostly of repetition of the prompt or information from the source materials; may not refer to any of the source materials provided.	offers an inadequate treatment of the topic in oral and written presentations, consisting mostly of statements with no development; may use inaccurate examples or make inaccurate references to source materials provided, or may not refer to all source materials provided.	offers an adequate treatment of the topic in oral and written presentations, including a few supporting details and references to all source materials provided.	offers an effective treatment of the topic in oral and written presentations, including some supporting details and mostly relevant examples, and references to all source materials provided.	offers a thorough and effective treatment of the topic in oral and written presentations, including supporting details and relevant examples, and references to all source materials provided.
Organization & Level Of Discourse	demonstrates little or no organization in spoken and written responses, lack of transitional and cohesive devices.	demonstrates inadequate organization in spoken and written responses, and ineffective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices.	demonstrates some organization in spoken and written responses, including a few basic transitional elements or cohesive devices.	demonstrates organization in spoken and written responses, including some effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices.	demonstrates effective organization in spoken and written responses, including effective use of transitional elements or cohesive devices.
Comprehensibility	is barely understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with frequent or significant errors that impede comprehensibility.	is partially understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with errors that force interpretation and impede comprehensibility.	is generally understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with errors that may impede comprehensibility.	is fully understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with several errors that do not impede comprehensibility.	is fully understandable in speech (e.g., pronunciation, intonation, pace) and in writing (e.g., spelling, accent marks, punctuation, paragraphing), with ease and clarity of expression; occasional errors do not impede comprehensibility.
Vocabulary	uses very basic, limited vocabulary.	uses limited vocabulary.	uses sufficient vocabulary including a few idiomatic expressions.	usually uses appropriate vocabulary, including some idiomatic expressions.	uses varied and appropriate vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions.
Language Control	demonstrates little or no control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple, often memorized sentences and phrases; demonstrates little or no control of time frames.	demonstrates limited control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple sentences and phrases; demonstrates some accuracy in present time and little or no accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates some control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple and a few compound sentences; is mostly accurate in present time and demonstrates limited accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates general control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses simple, compound, and a few complex sentences; is most accurate in present time with some accuracy in other time frames.	demonstrates control of grammar, syntax, and usage; uses a variety of simple and compound sentences and some complex sentences; narrates and describes in the present, past, and future time frames with general accuracy.

	Student receiving a score of 1	Student receiving a score of 2	Student receiving a score of 3	Student receiving a score of 4	Student receiving a score of 5
Register	demonstrates little or no control of register.	demonstrates minimal awareness of register, uses mainly the familiar register.	demonstrates an inconsistent use of appropriate register; shifts between formal and informal register occur.	usually demonstrates appropriate use of register, except for some occasional shifts between formal and informal register.	usually demonstrates appropriate use of register, with consistent use despite a few occasional shifts between the formal and informal register.
Cultural Awareness & Comparison	shows little or no awareness of cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and minimal understanding of basic content of familiar interdisciplinary topics present in the source materials. Is unable to identify geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies a few common cultural products or practices of the target culture(s); demonstrates limited understanding of some content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the source materials; and a few geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies some cultural products and practices of the target culture(s) and may identify a few common perspectives, but with inaccuracies; demonstrates some understanding of some content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the source materials. Identifies a few geographic, historical, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies and describes, with some details, the products and practices of the target culture(s); may identify some perspectives of the target culture(s) with some inaccuracies; demonstrates an understanding of much of the content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the source materials. Compares and contrasts some geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.	identifies with some elaboration, the relationship among products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture(s) and demonstrates an understanding of most of the content of familiar interdisciplinary topics presented in the source materials. Compares and contrasts a variety of geographic, artistic, social, or political features of target culture communities.