



AP Planning for Next Year: How AP Can Support Your Teen's Path

3/12/2026



What we'll cover today

- What is AP and what courses are offered
- How to build your AP plan
- Benefits of AP
- How to talk to your teen about their AP plan
- Key resources



AP offers college-level learning in high school across a wide range of interests and pathways.

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program offers:

- College-level courses taught in high school
- Opportunities across arts, sciences, humanities, math, computer science, and more
- End-of-course exams—some of which include projects—that may earn students college credit or placement

AP is not one single track—it offers many different options that students can explore.



Arts



English



History & Social Sciences



Math



Science



World Language & Culture



Computer Science



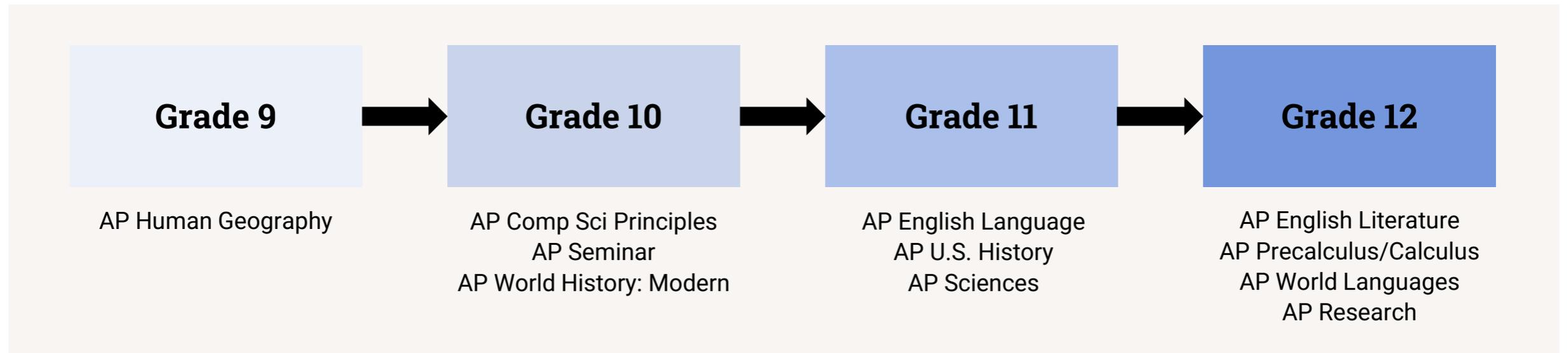
AP Career Kickstart



AP Capstone

AP is broader than many families may realize, with entry points from 9th through 12th grade.

Students don't all begin AP at the same time.



These are just a few examples. There is no single “right” starting point for AP.

There is an AP course for nearly every kind of student interest.



Find course and exam info for 42 AP subjects.



People & Society



AP Psychology
AP Human Geography
AP African American Studies

STEM & Innovation



AP Precalculus
AP Comp Sci Principles
AP Cybersecurity
AP Biology

Creativity & Communication



AP English
AP Art & Design
AP Seminar
AP Music Theory

AP courses can connect to future fields like healthcare, engineering, public policy, technology, business, and the arts. These are just some examples.

The strongest AP plans focus on interest, readiness, and fit.

Strong AP plans are built on:



Interest

Does your teen genuinely find the course engaging?



Readiness

Is your teen ready to take on the challenge?



Fit

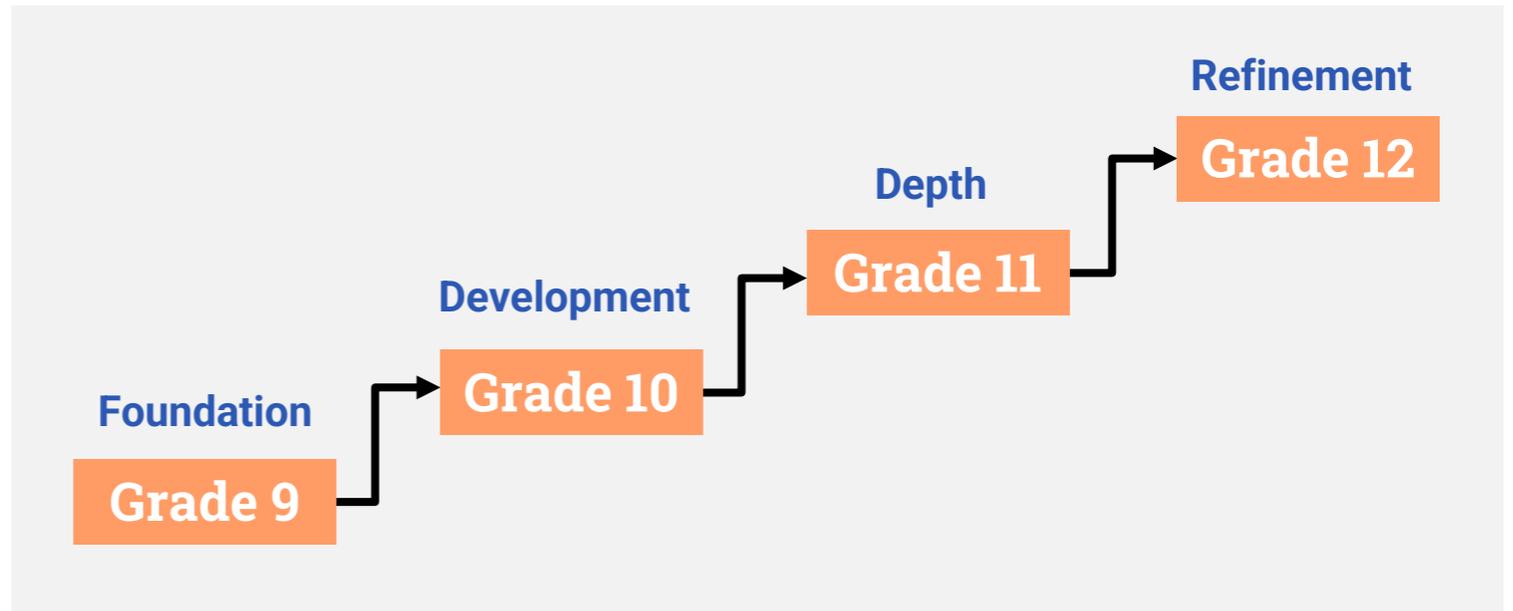
Does this plan or schedule of courses allow your teen to thrive?

The best AP plan is one that challenges your teen in ways that support their growth.

Colleges look for meaningful challenge and academic growth over time.

What Colleges Consider

- Rigor available at your school
- Appropriate academic challenge
- Growth from 9th to 12th grade
- Thoughtful course selection



Colleges evaluate context and progress.

Taking AP courses and exams can provide flexibility in college.



Explore colleges that offer credit for AP exams.



In High School

- College-level coursework
- Exploration of academic interests
- Development of advanced skills



In College

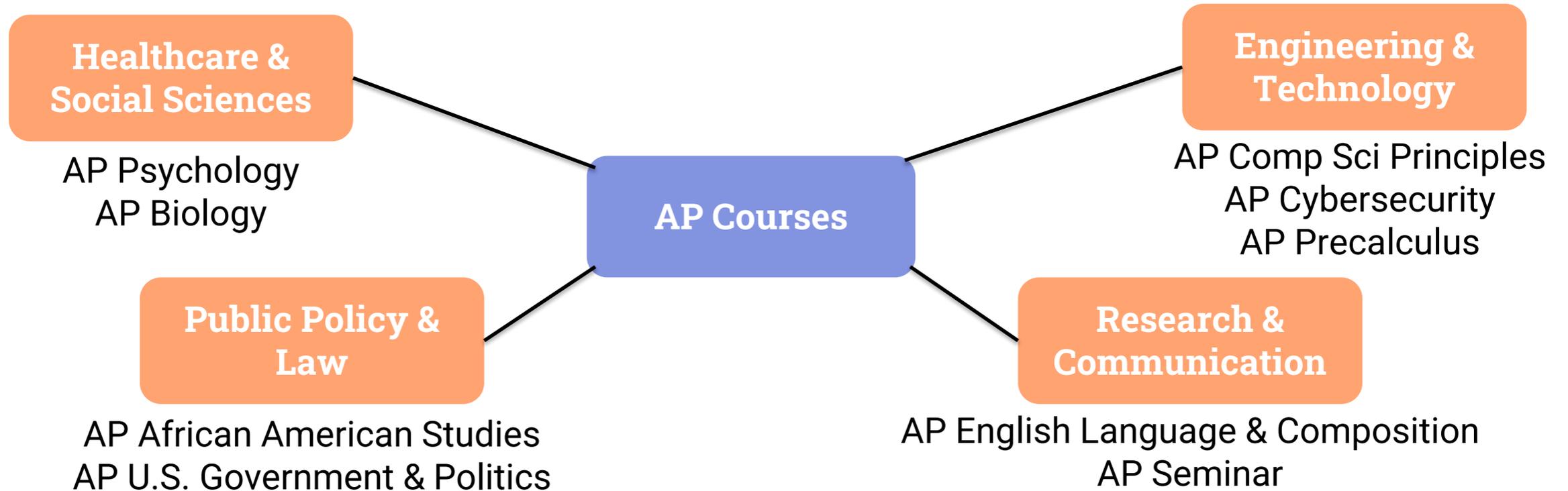
- Potential credit or placement
- Greater flexibility in scheduling
- Opportunity to pursue double majors, minors, or electives
- Room for internships, research, or study abroad

College credit and placement policies vary by institution.

AP courses help students explore possible college majors and career paths.



Discover careers that match the skills teens are building in AP classes on bigfuture.org.



AP can help students test interests before choosing a college major.

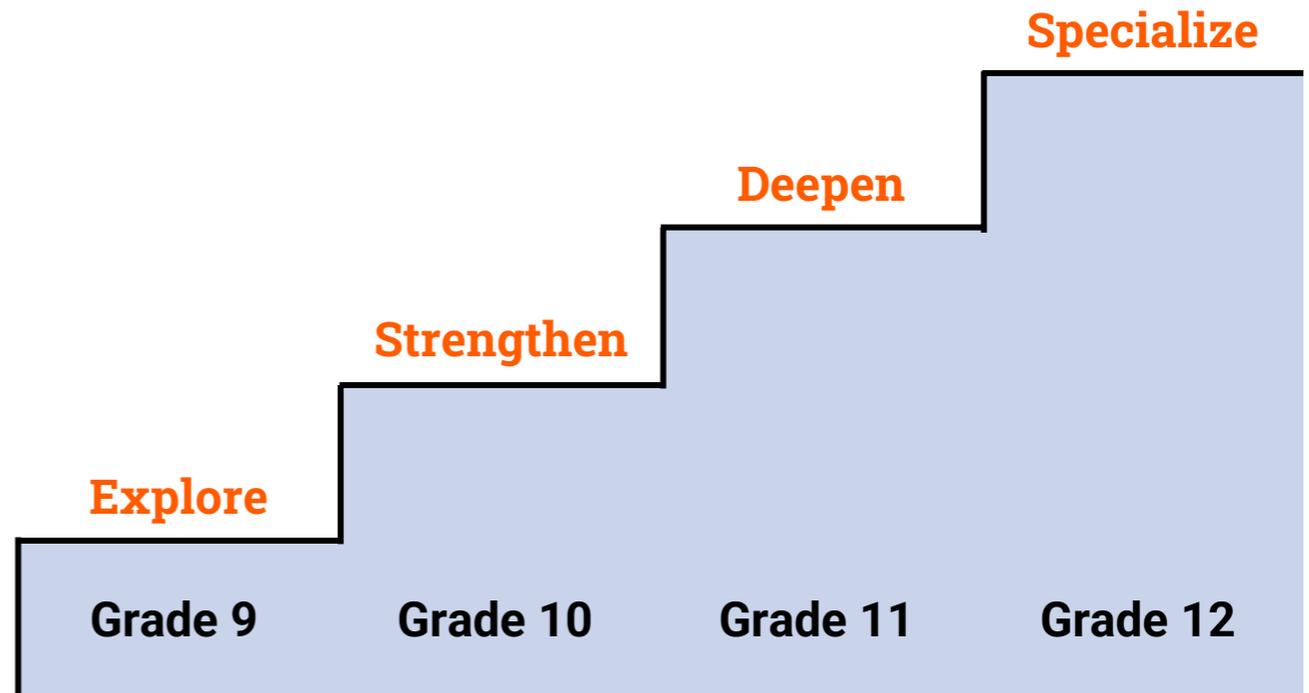
AP planning works best when families think in multi-year steps.

Instead of asking:

“How many AP classes should be teen take next year?”

Try asking:

- “How does this year fit into a 4-year plan?”
- “Where does it make sense to increase challenge?”
- “Where does it make sense to consolidate and strengthen skills?”



AP planning is about pacing – not pressure.

Families can use a few key questions to guide course decisions.



Questions to Ask Together

- What subjects energize my teen?
- Where have they shown growth or strength?
- What kind of workload helps them thrive?
- What commitments matter this year?
- What guidance does our school provide?

The goal is alignment – not comparison.

Every student's AP path can look different – and still be successful.

There is no single model of success in AP.

➔ Some students begin in 9th grade.

Some students begin in 11th grade. ➔

● ● ● Some take many courses across multiple areas.

Some take a few AP courses in specific focus areas. ● ● ●



What matters most is that the path reflects the student.

Resources to help you and your teen plan



Map Out Your Journey with AP

Resources to help you choose your first or next AP course.



AP Courses and Exams

Find course and exam information for 42 AP subjects.



Search Colleges on BigFuture.org

Explore colleges that offer credit for AP exams.