



**ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND HONORS
HANDBOOK**

Section I—Honors

Overview

POLAHS is proud to offer Honors courses for students who desire higher academic challenges. Honors classes are more difficult than general subject classes as there is more independent reading (reading as homework or outside of class), tests are longer and more challenging, and projects are more complex. Students should expect a more demanding workload and are expected to produce a higher caliber of work. Students in Honors courses should expect up to an hour of homework for every hour spent in class, for a maximum of five (5) hours per week. An Honors-level course is both qualitatively and quantitatively different than a non-honors course. It is understood that those who meet the criteria for Honors courses and choose to take these courses desire and accept the academic challenge.

How do you qualify for an Honors class?

In order to qualify for Honors courses at POLAHS, students must meet departmental requirements. For departmental requirements, please contact the appropriate lead teacher.

English	Nicole Gant	ngant@polahs.net
Foreign Language	Maria Marin	mmarin@polahs.net
Mathematics	Don Ormsby	dormsby@polahs.net
Science	Tim Dikdan	tdikdan@polahs.net
Social Science	Mary Jane Liverpool	mliverpool@polahs.net

How are Honors courses weighted?

Students receive an extra half-point (.50) of credit toward their Grade Point Average for each Honors course they complete. The additional points increase their overall G.P.A. and acts as an indicator of the more difficult level of courses taken by a student; which will be taken into consideration by colleges and universities.

Example

Class	Level	Letter Grade	Unweighted	Weighted
English	Honors	B +	3.3	3.8
English	Regular	B +	3.3	3.3

What is expected from an Honors student?

Students in Honors classes must possess organizational skills, academic skills, personal motivation and maturity, in addition to intellectual capacity. Honors classes are more challenging than regular general education courses.

In addition to the general standards and academic codes of POLAHS, honors students are expected to:

- Complete summer assignments assigned by the teacher. Non-completion of summer assignments may be grounds for removal from the course. Students transferring into the class, after the start of the semester, must complete summer assignments at teacher's discretion.
- Manage an increased workload (i.e. homework, projects, and other out of class assignments) while meeting deadlines and academic goals.
- Maintain focus and motivation for achievement and completing assignments in all Honors classes.
- Work cooperatively and act maturely at all times.
- Attend the POLAHS orientation workshop for Honors and AP courses.

Can a student be removed from an Honors class?

Honors courses are a privilege, not a right. The removal of a student is not only possible, it is likely if a student fails to meet certain expectations. If a student is removed from an Honors course, he/she will be placed in the corresponding regular level class.

What criteria must be met in order to stay in an Honors class?

Honor students must maintain a minimum grade of C (70 percent) in Honors classes. If a student earns a grade below 70 percent after the first five weeks of the semester, the student may be removed from the Honors class at the teacher's discretion. It is expected that students will complete the majority of assignments in Honors classes. If a student fails to complete assignments it is the teacher's discretion to remove the student from the class. In addition to academic expectations, student behavior is also seen as integral part of student success in an Honors course. Students who receive a Cooperation mark of Needs Improvement (NI) or Unsatisfactory (U), may be dropped at the teacher's discretion after the first five weeks.

If the above criteria are not met, is there any way that the student can still stay in the class?

If the above criteria are not met, teachers and counselors may choose to keep a student in Honors courses at their discretion. Teacher and counselors are familiar with the student's academic work habits and abilities and possess sole authority to override student removal from the class.

Will the parents be notified if a student is removed from a class?

Parents are notified by the teacher and/or the counselor before a student is removed from an Honors class. Parents can be notified via email, phone call home or may be invited to participate in a conference when a student will be reassigned to an appropriate grade level class.

What can you expect from an Honors teacher?

Teachers assigned to honors level courses must possess appropriate credentials and have previously demonstrated the ability to provide exceptional instruction. Teachers of Honors courses spend a significant amount of time planning lessons that are both challenging and engaging to provide students with a variety of well-organized and meaningful classroom activities and out-of-class assignments. Teachers of honors courses are firm but fair graders. Honors level work is expected from all their students on every assignment and/or project. Honors teachers

assign more homework and projects and tests are more comprehensive and complex than those in general education classes.

How can parents support their Honors student?

Honors level courses are designed to be challenging. If students are to be successful in class they will need to be well organized and disciplined outside of class—specifically, at home when they are doing homework and studying. Parents must be willing to support students by providing a home environment that is conducive to academic study. It is recommended that parents provide the following:

- A dedicated quiet place at home with good lighting and a table or desk
- Support for the teachers and their judgment about grading and behavior.
- Familiarity with the student's classes and schedule so that time can be used wisely and productively.

Section II—Advanced Placement

Overview

The Advanced Placement Program (AP) is a cooperative educational venture between high schools and colleges/universities. It allows students to enroll in college-level courses while in high school and gives students the opportunity to show mastery of course content through examination. [College Board®](#) runs and regulates the AP program. All of the guidelines and policies that govern the administering of AP courses and the corresponding exams are established by College Board®. As a willing participant in the program, POLAHS is subject to such rules and regulations and cannot deviate from them. Additionally, College Board® establishes the course content standards that AP teachers are responsible for covering.

Advanced Placement courses are important for two reasons: (1) Every AP class is weighted and will appear so on a student's transcript; and (2) if College Board exam is passed with a score of 3 or higher, the score may be used as either elective credit towards college / university graduation requirements, or to fulfill specific course or general education requirements. Students and parents are encouraged to examine individual college and universities policies on which scores constitute passing, and what type of credit will be provided by passing the exam.

We encourage students to participate in multiple AP courses; however, students are not permitted to take more than three AP courses at a time due to the rigorous nature of AP courses, as well as the school's mission to ensure a balance of academic and extracurricular activities for all students.

How do students qualify for AP classes?

In order to qualify for Advanced Placement courses at POLAHS, students must meet departmental requirements. For departmental requirements, please contact the appropriate lead teacher.

English	Nicole Gant	ngant@polahs.net
Foreign Language	Maria Marin	mmarin@polahs.net
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Science	Tim Dikdan	tdikdan@polahs.net
Social Science	Mary Jane Liverpool	mliverpool@polahs.net

How are AP courses weighted?

Students receive an extra point (1.0) of credit toward their Grade Point Average for each AP course they complete. The additional point increase their overall G.P.A. and acts as an indicator of the more difficult level of courses taken by a student; which will be taken into consideration by colleges and universities. Grade point is only awarded to letter grades C or higher.

Example

Class	Level	Letter Grade	Unweighted	Weighted
English	AP	B +	3.3	4.3
English	Regular	B +	3.3	3.3

What is expected from an AP student?

Students enrolled in AP courses are expected to demonstrate strong organizational skills, academic skills, maturity, in addition to intellectual curiosity and aptitude. All AP classes are

aimed at college-bound students who have proven to be academically exceptional, with high GPA's and solid teacher recommendations.

In addition to the general standards and academic codes of POLAHS students, AP students are expected to:

- Complete summer assignments assigned by the AP teacher. Non-completion of summer assignments may be grounds for removal from the course. Students transferring into the class, after the start of the semester, must complete summer assignments at teacher's discretion.
- Manage an increased and intensive academic workload while meeting deadlines and academic goals.
- Maintain focus and motivation, completing every assignment to the best of their abilities
- Work cooperatively and act maturely at all times.
- Attend the POLAHS orientation workshop for Honors and AP courses.
- Take the AP exams that correspond to the AP classes taken at POLAHS.

AP classes are far more demanding than Honors or General subject classes, therefore AP students must be prepared for the following challenges:

- There is much more reading (reading as homework, on weekends, or outside class) and textbooks and supplementary material may be college level.
- Tests are longer and address greater depth and complexity than Honors or general courses.
- Papers and projects are expected to be at a college level.
- Pacing of material is rapid
- No more than one hour of homework for hour of instruction will be assigned for every class period and no more than five (5) hours per week per A. P. class.

Students in AP classes represent the highest level of academic achievement possible at POLAHS and as such are expected to act with the integrity and maturity of this distinction both in and out of the classroom.

Can a student be removed from an AP class?

AP courses are a privilege, not a right. The removal of a student is not only possible, it is likely if a student fails to meet certain expectations. If a student is removed from an AP course, he/she will be placed in the corresponding regular level class (as applicable).

What criteria must be met in order to stay in an AP class?

Students must maintain a grade of C (70 percent) or above in an AP class. If a student has below 70 percent after the first five weeks of the semester the student will be dropped from the class at the teacher's discretion. Every student is expected to complete the majority of the course assignments. If a student fails to complete course assignments it is at the teacher's discretion to remove the student from the class. In addition to academic expectations, student behavior is also seen as integral part of student success in an AP course. Students who receive a Cooperation mark of Needs Improvement (NI) or Unsatisfactory (U), may be dropped at the teacher's discretion after the first five weeks.

If the above criteria are not met, is there any way that the student can still stay in the class?

It is at the teacher's and counselor's discretion to keep a student in an AP class if the above criteria are not met. Since the teacher and counselors are in a position to evaluate the student's academic work habits and abilities they possess sole authority to override a student's removal from the class.

Will the parents be notified if a student is removed from a class?

Parents are notified by the teacher and/or the counselor before a student is removed from an AP class. Parents can be notified via email, phone call home or may be invited to participate in a conference when a student will be reassigned to an appropriate grade level class.

What can you expect from an AP teacher?

Teachers assigned to AP courses must possess appropriate credentials and demonstrate the ability to provide exceptional instruction. In addition, teachers must meet the standards for AP teachers as established by The College Board®. AP teachers are required to adopt instructional and curricular materials from College Board® list of approved materials. Teachers must submit a course syllabus to College Board in advance of the class for approval. AP teachers are firm but

fair graders. College level work is expected from all their students on every assignment and/or project.

AP Exams

AP exams are administered annually during the month of May. Exams in every subject consist of two sections. The first section is comprised of multiple-choice questions. The second section consists of free-response questions in various formats. Teachers will provide information regarding the type of free-response question and the weighting and scoring of the two parts of the exam in their particular AP course.

The College Board® has established the following exam scoring guide:

- 5 - Extremely well-qualified
- 4 - Well-qualified
- 3 - Qualified
- 2 - Possibly qualified
- 1 - No recommendation

Students will receive their score report in July. Reports are mailed to students from College Board® and are also available on the College Board® website. Most colleges and universities accept AP scores of 3 or above. Whether or not a student ultimately receives college credit for his/her score depends on the guidelines of the college or university he/she attends.

AP students are obligated to take the AP exam for all AP courses they take. Students not planning to take the exam must drop the class by the end of the Fall Semester. Students may not take an AP exam when they have not taken the corresponding AP course.

Grading Policy

Advanced Placement courses are graded more rigorously than traditional or honors courses and receive a weighted percentage based upon Advanced Placement expectations. Grades in A. P. courses should be representative of expected student performance on A. P. exams and teachers may raise a student's final grade based upon student performance on the A. P. exam. Students who receive a score of 3 or higher and less than an "A" in a course, may have their grade increased at the teacher's discretion. In order to receive a grade change, students must request that their grade be changed within the first two weeks of school. Advanced Placement teachers who chose to adhere to the retroactive grade change policy must outline the policy in course syllabi.

How can parents support their AP student?

AP courses represent the highest level of challenge and achievement in high school academics. If AP students are to be successful they will need to be highly organized and well-disciplined outside of class—specifically, at home when they are doing homework and studying. Parents must be willing to support students by providing a home environment that is conducive to ongoing and intensive academic study. It is recommended that parents provide the following:

- A dedicated quiet place at home with good lighting and a table or desk
- A home environment that acknowledges and supports the tough choices that may be faced between academics, sports, and social activities as the student will be required to spend more time and effort to achieve academic success.
- A home environment that acknowledges and can respond to the higher amount of stress faced by AP students
- Support for the teachers and their judgment about grading and behavior.

Advanced Placement and Honors (Comparison)

Advanced Placement	Honors
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. College Level Curriculum (textbooks, reading, writing, testing)2. Daily/weekly homework assignments3. Advanced Placement Exam testing in May4. College or University Credit eligible with passing score on AP Exam5. Rigorous, fast paced, skill based and challenging6. Courses recognized by Cal State and UC systems and earns extra grade points (Only in grades 10-12)7. 1 point credit toward grade point average (for each AP class)8. High expectation of student performance9. Prerequisite grades and teacher recommendation required for entrance	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. College Preparation curriculum (high school level reading and writing)2. Routine homework assignments3. Benchmark Exams - classroom specific testing4. Skill based and challenging. Heavier focus on reading and writing assignments5. Courses recognized by Cal State and UC Systems and earns extra grade points (Only in grades 10-12)6. .5 point credit toward grade point average (for each honors course)7. High expectation of student performance8. Prerequisite grades and teacher recommendation required for entrance

Advanced Placement Prerequisites

Department	Course	Grade Level	Prerequisites
English	AP English Language and Composition	11th	A minimum grade of "B" in the both semesters of the last English class taken and prior English teacher recommendation.
English	AP English Literature and Composition	12th	A minimum grade of "B" in the both semesters of the last English class taken and prior English teacher recommendation.
History/Social Science	AP Human Geography	9th	Qualifying scores on 9th grade entrance assessments; successful completion of AP/H Summer Program; and teacher recommendation.
History/Social Science	AP World History	10th	Passing scores on previous year's social science AP exam; or a minimum grade of "B-" in previous year's AP Human Geography class; or a minimum grade of "A" in previous year's regular level social science class; and a teacher recommendation in both English and social science.
History/Social Science	AP U.S. History	11th	Passing scores on previous year's social science AP exam; or a minimum grade of "C" in previous year's AP World History class; a minimum grade of "B+" in Honors World History; or a minimum grade of "A" in previous year's regular level World History class; and a teacher recommendation in social science.
History/Social Science	AP Government	12th	Passing scores on previous year's social science AP exam; a minimum grade of "B-" in previous year's AP U.S. History class; a minimum grade of "B+" in previous years Honors U.S. History; or a minimum grade of "A" in previous year's regular U.S. History class; and a teacher recommendation in social science.
Mathematics	Calculus AB		A minimum grade of "C+/B-" in both semesters of Pre-calculus.

Science	AP Chemistry	11th	A minimum grade of "B-" in honors chemistry; or a minimum grade of "A-" in regular level chemistry; and teacher recommendation in science.
Science	AP Environmental Science	12th	"B-" average in science classes, and teacher recommendation.
Spanish	Spanish Language and Culture	11th /12th	Requires a minimum of 2 years of study in Spanish (i.e. Span. 2 & 3 and or Span. 3 & 4); a recommendation by previous Spanish Teacher verifying mastery of target language skills and work ethic; a 3.0 or better in Spanish; a 2.0 or better in English; and overall GPA of 2.0 or better in all classes (many "F's" indicate they are not ready for the rigor of an AP class)

Honors Prerequisites

English	Honors English	9th	Qualifying scores on the 9th grade Honors entrance exam.
English	Honors English	10th	A minimum grade of "B" in the both semesters of the last English class taken and prior English teacher recommendation
English	Honors American Literature	11th	A minimum grade of "B" in the both semesters of the last English class taken and prior English teacher recommendation
History/Social Science	Honors World History	10th	A minimum grade of "C" in previous years AP Human Geography class; or a minimum grade of "B+" in previous year's regular level social science class; and a teacher recommendation in social science.
History/Social Science	Honors U.S History	11th	A minimum grade of "C" in previous year's AP World History class; or a minimum grade of "B+" in previous year's regular level World History class; and a teacher recommendation in social science.
History/Social Science	Honors Government/Econ	12th	A minimum grade of "C" in previous year's AP U.S. History class; or a minimum grade of "B+" in previous year's regular level U.S. History class; and a teacher recommendation in social science.
Mathematics	Math 9 Accelerated	9th	Qualifying scores on 9th grade entrance exam; prerequisite courses in middle school; department approval
Mathematics	Math 10 Accelerated	10th	A minimum grade of "C-" in Mathematics 9; and teacher recommendation
Mathematics	Honors Pre-Calculus	11th	A minimum grade of "C+/B-" in Math 10; and teacher recommendation
Science	Honors Chemistry	10th	"B" or better in Biology and teacher approval
Science	Honors Physics	11th	"B" or better in regular Chemistry; or "C" or better in Honors Chemistry; "B" or better in regular mathematics (integrated 2 or 3), or "C" or better in Honors mathematics (Math 10 or higher)

Student and Parent Resources

The California State University (AP Course Information):

<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/transfer/pages/advanced-placement-ap.aspx>

The University of California (AP Course Information):

<http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/exam-credit/ap-credits/index.html>

California Community Colleges (AP Course Information):

<http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/AA/Credit/2017/AA17-20 AP Credit Policy Final.pdf>

Port of Los Angeles High School (Course Descriptions):

<http://www.polahs.net/images/academics/POLAHS-Course-Descriptions-2016-17.pdf>