

# *AP or Slavery?*

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## Preface:

The question explored in this project surrounds the perceptions and attitudes on the Advanced Placement program from teachers, parents, students, and others familiar with the system. Are AP courses and exams an accurate and effective way of preparing and measuring preparedness for college of our students? My genres include a journal entry from an AP student, an advertisement from College Board, advertising their courses and exams, a pros and cons list of taking AP courses, and a schedule for a day in the life of an AP student. These all relate to my selected genre because they are very valid, and personal exemplifications of the various attitudes felt regarding the truth behind College Board and how the AP system is limiting students ambition, into a more fear-centric system. Each genre has its own method of exploring the relationship between the student and the things that oblige him or her to subject his or herself to the rigor of AP life. The reason I chose this topic was because I am personally affected by it, especially as I wind out junior year. Every day it becomes more and more clear to me that AP only teaches that almost everything we do in high school is to "get into college", and there is a very clear and methodical way to doing this. However, the individual is limited in creative growth because of the structure of this system. This project encapsulates these feeling in a more personal way that I hope is applicable and relatable to my peers, as they seemed to be the most valuable source of information through their experiences. From the physical to the physiological, the project also explores the consequences of taking AP courses such as stress and the limited amount of free time and sleep that plagues AP students. This is then paralleled to the notion that the true intentions of College Board are more construed and money-centered than they let on, and the student falls victim to this, time and time again.

# COLLEGE BOARD

Are AP classes the right fit for you? This is the typical question every rising high school student is faced with, the answer to which will define the rest of your life. AP is meant for those who wish to *truly* challenge themselves with useful information for the future. Colleges won't even want you stepping foot on their campus if you don't take a couple of our courses, but of course we have to make sure you are capable! We wouldn't want you wasting any time or money on things you don't need or aren't capable of, now would we? Here at College Board, we put students first, ensuring the most competitively safe environment possible. Do you value sleep and sanity? Neither do we! Do you like hanging out with your friends and having a social life? We didn't this so. Not good at standardized tests? Worried about the fact that they will dictate how the rest of your life unfolds? Not to worry, dear student, us at College Board would *hate* to see you crash and burn time and time again if test taking is not your thing. The only thing we gain from your failure is money, but since we're not in it for the money, we offer a variety of preparatory materials and courses to help you prepare for our general knowledge exams. You can get our books at any local book store, to recapitulate the very necessary knowledge you need to be a competent human being worth putting through the educational system. Can't afford these books or prep courses? Can't afford to take an AP exam? Can't afford to pay for a mandatory requirement of our exams to get into the college of your dreams? Not to worry, as this isn't about the numbers, it's about the *learning*. The whole point of the American education system is to create bright, future

candidates by judging them based on the quality of a 4 hour exam they may or may not have the opportunity to master or even take. One of our brightest students, Jane Smith simply *gushes* upon speaking about the opportunities College Board gave her. "I'm so so so so so glad I spent all those nights at home learning about the world instead of seeing it and learning from experience. I was able to force my way to being the most *college-ready* candidate. College is strictly about how good you are at test taking, which is why I'm glad I invested so much time and money into College Board!" College Board is here for *you*, the students. However, don't be discouraged if you don't meet our criteria. Society needs all kinds of people, but we're just interested in a select few. Besides, just because you're not great at the ACT, it doesn't imply the end for you! There's always the SAT, which we have *just* changed to be more like the ACT! There's plenty of opportunities you can take advantage of in getting prepared and eligible, and it's your own fault if you don't succeed or that at the very least, you die trying. Interested in a bright future? Visit the College Board website today to see how we can help you become the person you *want* to be.

Notes:

This article I have created was meant to embody the hidden spirit of the College Board institution in a sarcastic manner. By making it from from the point of view of the College Board, as a self-advertisement, I was able to facilitate the sardonic tone to its full extent by using ironically subjective diction on behalf of the College Board in ways that reflect the way students perceive the College Board's intentions. My attempt was to portray the insecurities of students brought upon by the College Board's system of testing to judge a student's "college-readiness", by directly stating these facts in their truth as if acknowledged by the College Board itself. The mocking tone of the passage was meant to provide an accusation of the methods used by College Board to expose the truth behind the stress of AP students. I was able to compile this is a result of the research I did on the "non-profit" organization that, in actuality, is making millions from this imposition of pressure on students by hanging the idea over their heads that their futures depend on these tests. A former College Board committee member was even bold enough as to come out and accuse the College Board of not focusing on the "equity and opportunity of learning", but more on making profit. Through this research, I was able to embody, exaggeratedly maybe, the College Board's true way of viewing students.

Dear Diary,

I haven't slept in 36 hours. The last meal I had was 10 hours ago and it consisted of 4 gummy bears and some Cheez-it crumbs. The white-hot light from the computer screen in front of me burns my retinas with the intensity of the sun in the pitch black of my room, as I lay typing words incomprehensibly. The only thing keeping me awake is the Frank Sinatra song that plays quietly to which I rhythmically type away to, in an inhumanly unconscious way. I drift in and out of consciousness in my zombie state, and I can barely lift my head, but I must finish. I must succeed because the rest of my life depends on it. What am I? I am a slave to my future self, a slave to my hopes and dreams that I hope to one day accomplish. All for what? To someday die knowing I grew up a zombie? That I barely left my house on the weekends? What am I? I am merely a washed out image of who I'm supposed to be, trapped in my obligations. They shroud me in darkness and the promised light at the end of the tunnel seems so distant, I'm starting to lose sight of it all together. Why do I do this to myself? Why do I willingly make this choice for myself? Is it willing at all? What am I? I am a ghost, a ghost of my former self, haunting and lingering over myself with guilt. I'm guiltting myself into doing things that would have prevented this late night situation. Guiltting myself into giving up the things I love for this. Will it all be worth it in the end? Is my work really going to "pay off" as I'm told? Every concept I learn, every method I struggle to understand is a means to build my character for "the real world". Based on my understanding of those imposing these things upon me, "the real world" consists of taking advantage of others all for the sake of money and power. Unfortunately for me, they have plenty of power over me, and I surrender my family's money year in and year out to fuel my own distress. What am I? I am stress. I could be the poster girl for stress. Even if I don't have anything to do, it looms over. The promise that I would have something to do eventually. The

eventuality of things kills me slowing, knowing it has come from my own accord. What a world we live in, in which my happiness is always second to the eventualities of my own future. A future so uncertain, yet so very methodical. I'll grow up, I'll work. I'll grow older, work, grow even older, and die. And that's that. I can't stand the idea of living with this tunnel vision in which everything is sorted out for me, yet I seem to have little to no choice. It's the new form of evolution, an evolved form of nature of the fittest. At this point, the most fit are those with the strongest will in completing these such arduous tasks of conformity. Am I really "talented"? Am I really "gifted"? This track of life was picked for me at a very young age. If you were brilliant then, you're automatically brilliant now, and with that comes expectations. Luckily for me, I have a program endorsing these ideals with which I am compared to and have grown to compare myself to. This organization is lurking, waiting for any sign of weakness to jump at. To sell me another prep book I'll never have time to use. Another prep course I'll dread. And for what? What am I? I'm an AP student.

Yours Truly



Notes:

Upon writing this journal entry, I had a number of things I wished to encapsulate about the attitudes held by an AP student regarding their fears and outlook on life. I was able to formulate this through a combination of my personal experiences as an AP student, along with the interviews I was able to obtain with other AP students. This journal entry was meant to be a very personal testament to the insecurities of those who seek high achievement, as a majority of those I interviewed reached a similar consensus regarding the work they put in. A number of students described having been in similar situations on a consistent basis, in terms of the late nights of work and the feeling of a borderline existential crisis from the situationism of coursework in the scheme of their lives. Most students acknowledged having *too* much work every night and feeling remorseful emotions towards school, which I tried to exhibit in the journal entry through the metaphors of being a slave to your own ambition.

**AP student schedule: A day in the life of a high-achieving AP student (Junior)**

6:00 am:

-Wake up and get ready for school.

-Finish last night's homework if necessary.

-Come in early for a National Honor Society meeting/Beta Meeting

7:45 am: pick which meeting you have to prioritize to attend (NHS vs Beta)

8:20 am:

-Start school:

1st period- AP Calculus BC

2nd period-AP French

3rd period- AP Physics

4th period- Audio/Visual Technology and Film

5th period- Lunch

6th period- AP United States History

7th period- AP Language Arts

3:30 pm: Leave school

4:00 pm: Get as much homework done as possible

6:00 pm: Dinner

6:45 pm: Leave for practice

7:30 pm: Begin practice

9:30pm: End practice

10:15 pm: Arrive home; shower

11:00 pm: Homework

1:00 am: Complete homework

\*sleep for approximately five hours; repeat.

**Typical homework load for a high-achieving AP student (Junior) for one night**

AP Calculus BC- Read pages 124-132 in the text book. Complete questions 1-19 (odd) and questions 30-42 (all).

AP French- Complete one quizlet test with a minimum of an 85% for the vocabulary list of important AP vocabulary terms.

AP Physics- Complete the lab from in class today.

Audio/Visual Technology and Film- Film and edit an entire segment for the Bridge morning show.

AP United States History- Complete at least half of a guided reading assignment (quiz grade), (define 10 vocabulary terms, 7 questions)

AP Language Arts- Film students after school for the documentary project.

-Work on multi-genre paper.

Notes:

This schedule of an AP class-taking junior I formulated using the schedules of a conglomerate of my junior peers. Most appeared similar to this one, if not more busy, as many of my peers also have jobs right after school, in addition to sports. The choice of classes is one I know many people are currently enduring, despite the immense rigor associated with taking all these classes together. This schedule was made out to demonstrate an accurate representation of what an AP student must go through on a daily basis, to show how AP centered a student's schedule ends up looking, even outside of school. This particular case was a very ambitious student, however that does not imply that those taking 2 or 3 courses do not experience the same amount of struggle or stress. This is one thing the AP systems makes very difficult for some students who are torn between doing well in every class, or doing more poorly, but taking an overwhelming amount of APs. As this schedule exhibits, there is little to no free time for a student of this nature, and they are getting far less than the recommended 7-10 hours of sleep for a healthy, developing teen. This schedule should shed light on the the level of difficulty and stress that AP courses, if not school alone, puts on students' lives, where time is the unfortunately lacking variable.

**Pros of taking an AP course:**

- The students appear more attractive candidate to colleges.
- Students gain the knowledge to deal with stress and pressure, as well as managing several rigorous courses at once.
- Students are motivated to be ambitious with their learning in order to meet the requirements for college.
- AP courses allow for a measurable way to judge candidates for college.
- AP courses at most schools provide an additional amount of grade points for taking a more rigorous course, in an attempt to balance out people's grades.
- AP courses allow faster paced students the opportunity to learn more in depth material.
- AP students are also able to explore material they might actually be interested in, and it could provide a means for developing future interest in occupational opportunities.
- An AP course could provide students with genuine talents over time like learning a second language.

**Cons of taking an AP course:**

- Many students take AP courses by a feeling of obligation and are truly not prepared for the rigor of the courses.
- AP students are faced with an immense amount of pressure, and according with to the American Psychological Association, on average, high school students have more stress than adults.


-These levels of stress are not healthy for a growing child, who is still developing their persona. Teenagers are of the most vulnerable socially to begin with, so adding this level of unhealthy competition with the threat that the rest of their lives could depend on it is not a way to raise and educate kids.


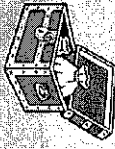
-Many kids overcharge themselves to stay competitive and run the risk of facing physical and emotional burnouts, leading to even less productivity.

-AP courses preach a curriculum strictly aligned with passing one single exam, sanctioned by the College Board, which does not encourage creative learning, but encourages learning for the sake of passing.

Notes:




This pros and cons list was made with the intention of introducing a positive light on AP classes, which is a refreshing change from the very negative implications that my other genres might have possessed. Many of these perceptions could be argued, but I compiled them from the observations and experiences of those who I interviewed. Many viewed AP classes as a motivation stating they would, "not be working as hard if it weren't for the threat of failure". This could be viewed as both positive and negative, as it is a multidimensional aspect that could affect different individuals in different ways. I also researched the psychological impacts of this evolutionized form of student stress, and even I, an AP student, was shocked to hear that the APA had found students to be typically more stressed than working adults. To me, this is the most powerful con of taking AP classes as it puts our students at risk of developing severe psychological issues like depression and anxiety, as well as physical issues such as fatigue. Overall, the pros and cons list was meant to expose both sides of the argument to show that it is not only convincing because of its one-sidedness, but it is intrinsically convincing.

 <b>TEST FEE</b> WAIVER	OFFICAL SAT ONLINE COURSE \$70	OFFICAL SAT STUDY GUIDE \$32	 TO RETAKE OR NOT TO RETAKE	AP CALCULUS \$89	 WAIT LISTED
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RETAKE SAT \$50	 CLEP TESTS \$80	COLLEGE HAND BOOK \$30	HAVE SCORES RUSHED \$31	SCORE VERIFICATION \$55	SEND SCORES TO FIVE SCHOOLS \$11	TAKE TWO SUBJECT TESTS \$35	AP US HISTORY TEST \$89	FIRST SAT TEST \$50	OFFICAL APUSH SAMPLE TEST \$25	NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP 	PSAT \$14
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# COLLEGEOPOLY

## THE COLLEGE BOARD GAME

	ORDER AP SPANISH TEST LATE \$50 EXTRA (\$139 TOTAL)	CSS FINANCIAL AID PROFILE \$25 + \$16 PER SCHOOL	REACH, SOLID OR SAFETY 	SENIOR YEAR AP TESTS \$89	NO EARLY ADMISSIONSS GO STRAIGHT TO WAIT LIST 
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**KAPLAN**

# AP BIOLOGY 2014–2015

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO SCORE HIGHER:

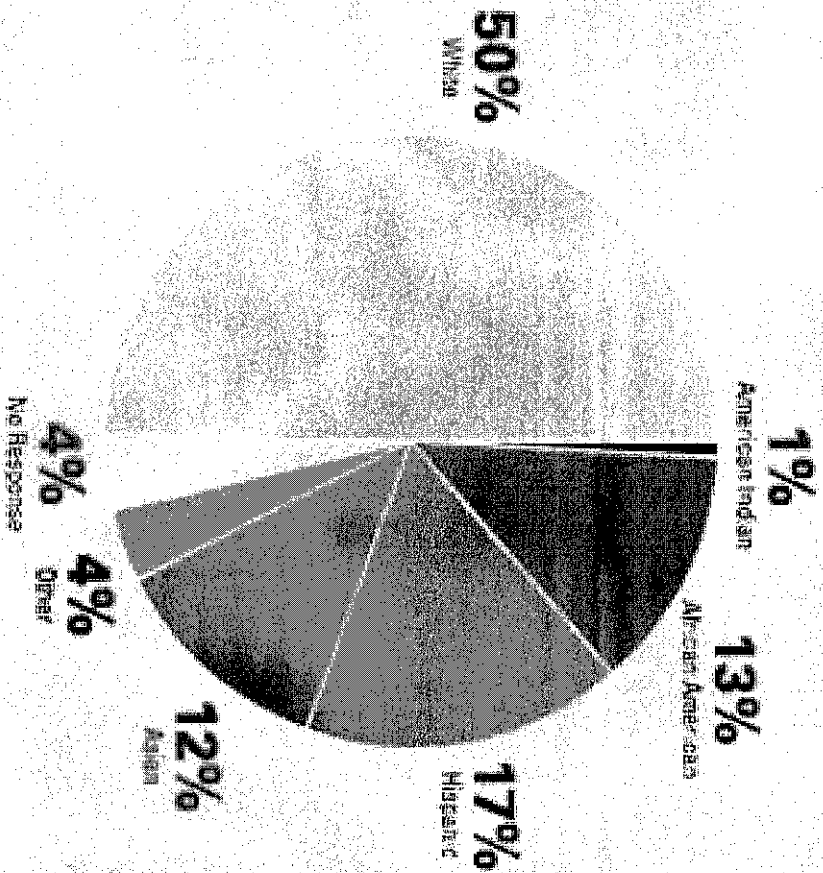
- 3 realistic practice tests:  
2 over the tests + 1 full-length diagnostic test
- Hundreds of practice questions with  
detailed answer explanations
- End-of-chapter quizzes
- Updated content organized by Big Idea  
covers everything from natural selection  
to how biological systems interact

NEW FOR THE  
**REVISED  
EXAM**

**HIGHER SCORE GUARANTEED\***

\*Based on Kaplan's 2013 AP Biology course review results.  
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## SAT Participation Among Underrepresented Minority Students



**46%**

The largest percentage of SAT takers from minority backgrounds ever, up from 40% in 2009.

**30%**

The largest percentage of SAT takers typically underrepresented in higher education, up from 27% in 2009.

**15.6%**

Up from 14.8% of African American SAT takers in the class of 2012 who met the benchmark.

**23.5%**

Up from 22.8% of Hispanic SAT takers in the class of 2012 who met the benchmark.