

AP students and parents,

I hope this letter finds you healthy and at home with your family. Many of you (especially our seniors) are experiencing a devastating upheaval of what you expected the spring of 2020 would look like. For those who have lost opportunities or jobs or loved ones, I want to extend my sympathy. Previous generations of Americans have had to face adversity as well, and just like them, we will overcome this tragedy.

This year is the biggest yet for Advanced Placement classes at West High. Over 600 students are registered to take more than 1,100 exams in 20 different courses. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic all the normal routines and procedures we were planning on using to administer the exams have to change. Thankfully, the exams will proceed and students will still have the chance to earn college credit for all their hard work throughout the school year. However, the testing itself will look very different this May, so I would like to give you an idea about what to expect.

1. Online Testing at Home: All students will be taking their exams at home and will need a working internet connection, plus either a phone, tablet or computer. They can actually take the exam on a phone! In this case, they will see the prompts on their screen, write out answers by hand, take a picture of their work, and upload the photo. Or, they can use a computer to access their test and simply type their answers on the screen. So, if any students lack suitable technology at home, please let me know so that I can help get them what they need.

2. Revised test dates, content and format: Please visit this website-- <https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/students/taking-ap-exams/ap-exam-schedule> and find your new test dates and times. They range from Monday, May 11 to Friday, May 22. Nearly all of our tests are at either 11am or 1pm Pacific. They each last 45 minutes, with a few minutes to upload responses added on to the end. So, please make sure your batteries are charged and you have a quiet place set aside for the proper time.

All students need to plan on testing on the primary exam dates (from May 11 to 22). However, if something goes wrong (e.g., they are hospitalized with the virus, their phone battery dies or internet connections goes out in the middle of the exam, etc.), then I can make a request to the College Board for individual students to test on the make-up date. However, some make-up exams overlap with others, and if there are any problems on those dates, there is no further back up.

To accommodate the shorter time allotted for each exam, the test format will be different. There will be no multiple choice questions. Instead, most exams will have just two Free Response Questions. Also, because the pandemic forced many schools to shut down in March, the College Board has decided that the test for each course will focus on content that most AP classes nationwide were able to cover by early March. You can find more course-specific details on the website listed above.

3. Online Lessons for Students: The College Board has recruited some superstar teachers to make daily, one-hour lessons, streamed live and then archived on YouTube. These can be useful if students feel that West High's shortened block schedule over the next four weeks until testing starts is not giving them enough content review.

The schedule can be found here:

<https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/educators/course-schedule>

At the bottom of the page are links to which topics will be covered on each day in the run up to the exam.

4. Test Security: Because the test will be done at home, the College Board is changing the format to discourage cheating. There will be no multiple choice questions. The test will be open book and open notes. Students can use any resources that teachers provide them. If they are electronic materials, students will be able to access them on the same screen or device they are testing on. The test questions will focus on applying knowledge, not just recalling it. However, students may not consult with any other other individuals (fellow students, tutors, siblings, etc.) during the testing period. To enforce this, the College Board is using plagiarism detection software and other undisclosed tools. To support the legitimacy of the assessment, by the end of May, all teachers will get a copy of the tests and answers that each student submitted. Teachers will be reporting any suspicious student performances to the College Board.

If cheating is found, the consequences will be more severe than in the past. Scores will be cancelled. The College Board will also contact and inform every university that the student has ever sent AP, SAT, or PSAT, etc. scores to, and tell the college that the student cheated. So, while the test is open book and notes, students cannot get help from other people (or chat rooms, texts, etc.) during the test. Simply put: don't cheat.

5. Test Cancellation: Because many students and families may be experiencing unexpected trauma due to the coronavirus outbreak, the College Board is allowing all students to cancel one or more of their exams and get a full refund. No cancellation fee and no questions asked. I don't expect most West High students to need to take advantage of this option, but it is available. However, in order to get a refund, students need to reach out to the school GATE Coordinator a week before the specific test to learn the specific steps they should take.

6. More Details: If you have more questions, these websites from the College Board should help. <https://blog.collegeboard.org/2019-20-ap-exams-online-what-you-need-know>
<https://apcoronavirusupdates.collegeboard.org/students>

If you don't find your answers there, please reach out to me.

Deserve Victory, Warriors!

--Mr. Drew Hettinger

GATE Coordinator