

# AP Seminar Course Guide

## General answers to questions about AP Seminar:

- What is AP Seminar?
  - AP Seminar is a course where students learn how to synthesize varying ideas by analyzing sources that are reliable and have different perspectives and lenses, writing research papers (first in a team and then alone), and presenting the sources and main problem with a solution at the end.
- What kind of media would you have to interpret in AP Seminar?
  - Articles, research studies, professionally published writings, speeches, music, art, broadcasts, and personal accounts
  - Make sure that all types of media are reliable.
    - This means that the creator is either credible in terms of their education or experience.

## Acronyms of AP Seminar:

### Performance Task 1 (20% of final AP Score)

- IRR = Individual Research Report (50% of the 20%)
  - For the IRR (1,200 words, +/- 10% (+/- 120 words)), you will need to work with your team to assign each team member an individual approach or lense to the investigation of the team's research question.
    - The lenses range from Psychological, Historical, Social, Cultural, Political, Scientific, Artistic, and Ethical.
  - Present your sources, research, analysis, and conclusions in a well-researched and well-written report.
    - This includes identifying the area of investigation, along with the relationship to the overall problem your group is attempting to solve
    - Evaluate the main ideas in the chosen sources
    - Interpret a range of perspectives about the problem or issue
    - Cite all sources (sources are not included in the word count)

- For the IRR, it is very important that you state all perspectives, information, and opinions in a well written essay; towards the end, you will use the information that you stated in your research paper to come to a conclusion on what should be done.
  - It is NOT an argumentative essay.
- The College Board - not your teacher - will score your research report.
  - Your teacher will not be allowed to give you specific feedback either.
- TMP: Team multimedia presentation (50% of the 20%)
  - An 8-10 minute presentation where you and your team will combine your different lenses into an overall cumulative approach of the investigation into the team's research question. The purpose is to find one or a couple of proposed solutions or resolutions. This includes exploring differing perspectives, limitations, and implications. This is followed by defense questions.
    - For DQs, you'll be asked how your teammate's research plays a role in your final project
    - Example Oral DQs:  
<https://bayonetenglish.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/ap-seminar-tmp-oral-defense-questions.pdf>
  - A breakdown of the lenses:
    - Cultural/Social: how the topic relates to people, groups of people, and their cultural backgrounds and identities
    - Artistic/Philosophical: how the topic relates to abstract ideas, any artistic meaning behind the composition
    - Ethical: how the topic can be explored at a moral level consider human rights, laws, and ethical frameworks relevant to the society studied
    - Political/Historical: how the topic explores an issue's effect on, or how it was affected by, government decisions
    - Futuristic: how the topic relates to the implications of this issue in the future and possible outcomes (whether positive or negative) due to it
    - Environmental: how the topic relates to environmental issues and effects on plants, animals, humans, and the different dynamics of an ecosystem

- Economic: how the topic relates to the product market, price levels, inflation, or other economic topics. General economic impact and/or views of economists on the issue
- Scientific: how the topic relates to scientific investigations, research, and discoveries

### Performance Task 2 (35% of final AP score)

- IWA: Individual Written Argument (70% of the 35%)
  - Based on stimulus sources given by the College Board, students need to identify thematic connections (between at least two of the stimulus materials).
  - A research question based on analysis of the stimulus materials
  - At least ONE stimulus material has to be used, otherwise, make sure to cite all of your other sources
- IMP: Individual Multimedia Presentation (20% of the 35%)
  - A 6-8 minute presentation to convey your perspective and present conclusions based on your research along with evidence and placing your perspective in a larger context, rather than just summarizing
    - Audience HAS to be considered and it needs to be appropriate for an educated, but not expert audience
- Oral Defense (10% of the 35%)
  - Reflection on the Research Process (sample questions)
    - How did some preliminary information you gathered inform your research?
    - What evidence did you gather that you didn't include? Why did you choose not to include it?
    - How did your research question evolve as you moved through the research process?
    - Did your research go in a different direction than you originally expected?
    - What information did you need that you weren't able to find or locate?
    - How did you approach and synthesize the differing perspectives in order to reach a conclusion?
  - Extending your argumentation

- What additional questions emerged from your research?
- Why are these questions important?
- What are the implications of your findings to your community?
- How is your conclusion in conversation with the body of literature or other research sources you examined?
- How did you use the conclusions or questions of others to advance your own research?

### **End of Course Exam (45% of final AP score)**

- Part A (30 minutes, 30% of 45%): Analyzing an argument using evidence
  - Identify the author's argument, main idea, or thesis
  - Explain the author's line of reasoning by identifying the multiple claims
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses supporting claims
- Part B (90 minutes, 70% of 45%): Building their own arguments using at least two of the four provided sources
  - Each of the four sources will connect on a theme or issue with each having differing perspectives
  - You are required to well a logical, well-reasoned argument presenting your perspective on the theme identified
    - Must incorporate at least two of the sources
      - Refer to the sources like (Source \_) or the authors' names
    - You may also incorporate your own knowledge

### **General Tips for AP Seminar:**

*Disclaimer: your experience will vary from teacher to teacher*

1. Plan ahead for a schedule to complete the IRR, TMP, IWA, and IMP.
2. Break down the big projects into small tasks.
3. Set flexible deadlines for each task to keep yourself on track.
4. Aim for research topics that interest you.
5. Discuss and brainstorm ideas with your peers who are in the same class or with those that are also taking AP Seminar.

6. Read all of the stimulus materials thoroughly, and multiple times. To help you understand, you can also:
  - a. Annotate the sources
  - b. Identify all the key concepts
  - c. Look into the background information about how and when the sources were written
  - d. Compare themes of two of the sources
7. To prepare for the end of course (EOC) exam, cycle through practice problems and compare your answers to past students' answers.  
<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-seminar/exam/past-exam-questions>
8. Practice part A of the EOC exam with the different sources that past exams required.
9. Be aware of the timing of the end of course exam, and practice at least once or twice to make sure you won't go over time.
  - a. First three questions of EOC exam - roughly 30 minutes altogether
  - b. Last question of EOC exam - roughly 90 minutes
10. Present in front of peers, teachers, and mentors to become comfortable presenting your individual and team presentation.
  - a. Seeing yourself presenting (a mirror or recording) can really help you to become comfortable as well
11. Have a good mix of photos and text on your slides. Using photos alone, hinders the audience from following along with the topic at hand, and too much text cannot be read by the audience.
12. Stick to a theme for the slides in terms of formatting.
  - a. Website with slide formats: <https://slidesgo.com/>
13. Prepare answers beforehand to the oral defense questions, or at least have a good idea of how you will answer them.
14. Always keep the due date for the performance tasks in mind!