

Honors/Advanced Placement FAQs

What makes an honors/AP course different from an academic course?

→ **Answer:** *Honors or AP courses typically move at a faster pace and require students to do more work outside of the classroom.*

What is an AP course and what are the benefits of taking one? Why would a student pick AP over an honors course in the same general subject area?

→ **Answer:** *AP courses are created by the College Board. Our school follows their curriculum guidelines. For each AP course, there is an AP exam. If students score a 3 out of 5 on this exam, they are eligible to receive college credits at most Colleges and Universities. Additional benefits include:*

- ◆ *Taking a rigorous course to prepare students for college*
- ◆ *AP courses grades carry weighted GPA scores. If students earn a C or higher, they will earn the weighted grade.*
- ◆ *Opens the door to take advanced courses in each department as Juniors and Seniors*

What do students say are the biggest adjustments to taking honors/AP courses in high school?

→ **Answer:** *Time management tends to be the biggest adjustment we hear students talk about. Taking an AP course means that students will be spending additional time outside of the classroom on this course. In combination with clubs, activities, and/or sports, students' end up taking some time to adjust. Almost always, our students are successful in this adjustment.*

Is it difficult to balance several honors classes with a heavy extracurricular load (e.g. sports, music, etc.)?

→ **Answer:** *It can be difficult for students coming into high school to find the balance of several honors classes and extracurriculars. However, we have a lot of support in place for students and our teachers are understanding as long as the student is willing and able to communicate that they are struggling with the teacher.*

What are the most important traits or behaviors my child needs to have to be successful in honors/AP courses at Stagg?

→ **Answer:** *Academically, being a strong reader/writer will be beneficial for students in these level courses when considering English, Social Studies, and Science. Having previous success in Mathematics will be beneficial when taking honors Math or Science courses. Other traits include time management and self-advocacy. If students can manage the workload and advocate for support when struggling, they will be successful in honors or AP classes.*

If there is one piece of advice you could give an incoming freshman taking an honors course, what would it be?

→ **Answer:** *Typically our students tell incoming 8th graders to give honors or AP a shot and that it is okay to struggle in the course as long as students continue to seek support.*

I've heard that grades in honors/AP classes are weighted higher than other courses. What does this mean and how does it work?

→ *Answer: A course that has a weighted grade means the student will receive a grade based off of a 5 point scale in a 4 point GPA system as long as they receive a C- or higher. This means an A equates to a 5 for that class instead of a 4 when calculating cumulative GPA.*

If my child does not take an honors/AP course as a freshman, can she take one later in her high school career?

→ *Answer: Students have the flexibility to take honors/AP throughout their high school career as long as they meet the prerequisites.*

If my child takes an honors/AP course as a freshman, does he have to continue in an honors/AP sequence as a sophomore?

→ *Answer: A student has the flexibility to move in and out of honors/AP sequence throughout their high school career as long as they meet the guidelines.*

My child has plans to go to a four-year college. How important is it for her to take honors/AP courses in high school? How many should she take?

→ *Answer: All students should take courses that challenge them to their fullest. That could mean honors/AP level in certain departments and academic level in other departments. D230 academic level courses are considered College Bound tracked, so they are approved at all universities.*

Any other questions? Email the Division Chair

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