How can I know if I am capable of an AP or Honors class?

- Know what is expected. Read through this information, talk to teachers and your friends to find out what the courses are really like.
- Know what other people think. Talk to teachers, your counselor, your parents to get their opinion.
- Know yourself. Ask yourself how hard you want to work, how interested you are in the subject, how good your grades are in the subject, how much time you have to devote to the class, etc.

What are the benefits of taking an AP or Honors course?

**AP Benefits:**

- You'll study a subject in greater depth
- You'll find out what you can really do---if you don't challenge yourself, you'll never know what you are capable of doing.
- You can earn college credit and get a head start in college and save money too.
- You'll improve your chances of getting into college because colleges recognize that students with AP experience are much better prepared.
- AP prepares you for college work--even if you don't pass the test and get credit, you will have a real idea of what to expect when you do get to college.
Honors Benefits:

- You'll be surrounded by students who want to achieve and want to learn.
- You'll study a subject in greater depth.
- You will be prepared to do better when and if you decide to take AP courses.
- You'll make your high school transcript more competitive and help with the college admissions process.

What's the difference between AP/Honors and regular classes in: English, Social Studies, Math, Science?

English:

- The pace of the class is faster
- Writing is more analytical
- The literature is different and usually more challenging
- Vocabulary is more difficult
- There is more of a focus on critical thinking skills

Math:

- Requires students to use higher level thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation more often
- Provides more depth and breadth of curriculum
- Courses are taught much faster
- Students need a solid background of skills and concepts learned in their previous math classes

Social Studies:

- There will be more emphasis on reading and writing
- Classes will involve more in-depth analysis of material
- Students will be assigned more challenging projects

Science:

- Students must participate in an independent research project
- There is more enrichment reading.

How much homework is there?
View the chart on the AP section of the website for additional information.

How many should I take?
That depends on many factors-your ability, your extra-curricular activities schedule, and your level of success in their classes to date. However, if you haven't taken an AP or Honors course before, most students say that taking no more than two a year is realistic. Students who take three or more classes usually have a history of being very organized, focused, and academically successful.
What skills do I need to be successful in an AP or Honors course?

- Good time management and organizational skills
- Solid work ethic
- Willingness to ask questions and seek help when needed
- Strong reading, writing and analytical skill
- Ability to manage long-term projects rather than just short, daily assignments
- A strong interest in the subject matter

What if I want to drop an AP or Honors course?
Students are not allowed to drop AP or Honors courses during the 1st quarter. Why? Because sometimes students panic a little in the first few weeks of school, and wonder if they're in over their head. But in most cases, some conversation with the teacher and some time spent after school resolves the issue and the student goes on to succeed the rest of the year.

After 1st quarter: Decisions to allow a student to drop an AP or Honors course are made on a case-by-case basis by the administrator for that subject area. Generally, students have been allowed to drop a course only after demonstrating that they have made significant efforts to get help (staying after school, conferences with the teacher, etc.) and are still not capable of succeeding in the class. Bottom line: try your best and the school will help you! If the course is a non-elective AP course, students will not be permitted to drop the AP class if there is no space available in another lower level course.

Do I have to take the AP exam?
In order to get the extra 1 factored into your GPA, yes. It doesn't matter what you score on the AP exam, we just want you to try taking it. Colleges do not use AP scores for admission purposes, so you really have nothing to lose by taking the exam.

How much college credit do I get for taking an AP exam?
It is up to the college or university that you will be attending as to how much credit is granted. Most schools usually publish a list of AP courses which are recognized and the score required to earn college credit at their institution. In general, you need a score of 3 to 5 to earn college credit.

How is the 1 point calculated into my GPA?
At the end of the school year when final grades are in, an extra 1 point is added to your grade for that particular course. For instance, if you get an "A" in AP English Language, at the end of the year a 5 will be averaged into your GPA, instead of a 4.0.

Where can parents and students get more information?
Attend AP and Honors Information Night for Parents at the Oakton Auditorium. Find out what to expect from the different courses and what would be a good fit for your student.