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The up and downside of AP courses

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Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate and graduate school study. Over the past two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. The number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; Visit www.doingcollege.com; or Call: 925.385.0562.

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Admissions often view AP classes as one indicator of your intellectual vitality and willingness to take the initiative to challenge yourself in high school. Since AP coursework is taught at the college level, good grades in these classes and strong scores on the exams can prove you are ready for college success.

As you ponder the question of taking one or more AP classes, it is important to weigh the pros and cons and make a decision that provides reasonable balance. One way to do this is to limit the AP classes you take to those subjects that resonate with your interests and possible majors or career paths.

It is important to weigh carefully the potential bump in GPA and the beneficial effect on college admission outcomes with the fact that AP classes do take more time. It is not uncommon for one AP class to involve two or more hours of homework each weeknight. That's time you might spend studying for your other classes, preparing for standardized tests and pursuing your extracurricular activities - not to mention getting some much needed sleep. And that, too, would be time well spent!

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