

AP Seminar and Career and Technical Education

Connecting AP Seminar and CTE Programs of Study

AP[®] Seminar is a foundational, project based learning (PBL) course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics. AP Seminar fits within multiple career and technical education (CTE) programs given the focus on critical thinking, collaboration, and presentation skills within a PBL experience.

Project Based Learning

The Buck Institute for Education defines PBL as “a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.”ⁱ

In a 2017 report, *Getting Smart* explains how the changing economy requires us to live in an increasingly project-based world. About four in ten high school students will freelance – working short-term gigs, or if highly skilled, in a series of value-add projects. To prepare students for a complex, fast-paced world, the report explains how a growing number of schools are using PBL to provide real-world challenges and promote deeper learning outcomes.ⁱⁱ

AP Seminar Course Content

Through individual research and a team project, students engage in conversations about complex academic and real-world issues through a variety of lenses, considering multiple points of view. Students then choose topics to explore for project based assessments, which can include:

- Concepts from other AP or CTE courses
- Issues of personal interest
- Local and/or civic issues
- Global or international topics

AP Seminar students are assessed on academic and career skills, including:

- Evaluating sources for credibility and bias
- Synthesizing information from multiple sources
- Advocating for recommendations in written essays and multimedia presentations
- Managing long-term project schedules and deadlines
- Collaborating with peers

For more information, visit the AP Seminar hub on [AP Central](#).

States, District, and Student Examples

State Examples:

- Indiana’s new graduation pathway options include project based and work-based learning options, such as completing an AP Capstone™ course or exam (including AP Seminar).ⁱⁱⁱ
- To graduate high school in Idaho, students are required to complete Senior Projects, which include a written report and oral presentation with guidelines set at the district level.^{iv} Districts can allow AP Capstone – including AP Seminar and AP Research – to meet the Senior Project requirement.

High School Examples:

- Brooklyn Technical High School (NY) curriculum for Visual Arts & CTE includes AP Seminar.^v
- Suncoast Polytechnical High School (FL) offers AP Seminar, which allows students to investigate topics connected to their CTE focus.^{vi}
- Lubbock Independent School District's (TX) career cluster & endorsement/programs of study include AP Seminar in the Arts & Humanities endorsement.^{vii}
- McHenry County (IL) recommends AP Seminar as suggested coursework for students interested in Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources careers.^{viii}

AP Seminar Example Topics and Potentially Aligned CTE Programs of Study:

- Food waste solutions – Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Future of the automotive industry – Finance
- Importance of the voting age and civic participation of teens – Government and Public Administration
- Genetically modified organisms – STEM or Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Role of art in education – Education and Training
- Wealth inequality – Finance or Government and Public Administration
- Artificial intelligence in the future – STEM or Information Technology
- Criminal justice reform – Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security

ⁱ Buck Institute: https://www.bie.org/about/what_pbl

ⁱⁱ Ark, Tom Vander and Mary Ryerse. "Preparing to Lead in a Project-Based World." April 2017

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/graduation-pathways/guidance-document.pdf>

^{iv} <https://sde.idaho.gov/topics/hs-grad-req/files/general/High-School-Graduation-Minimum-Requirements.pdf>

^v https://www.bths.edu/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=315773&type=d&termREC_ID=&pREC_ID=593314

^{vi} <https://sarasotacounty.k12.fl.us/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=94468>

^{vii} <https://www.lubbockisd.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=15937&dataid=7971&FileName=Endorsements%20and%20Pathways%20Chart.pdf>

^{viii} <https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/regional-office-of-education/college-and-career-readiness/prairie-ridge-high-school/agriculture-food-natural-resources>