Advanced Placement (AP) Physics 1 is a yearlong high school course designed to be the equivalent of the first semester of general college physics. Advanced Placement (AP) Physics 2 is a yearlong high school course designed to be the equivalent of the second semester of general college physics. Taking AP Physics 1 does not mean that you have to take AP Physics 2. The second year is for students able to and interested in continuing their advanced physics coursework. It should be noted that AP courses are designed to be college level. Excellent math and problem solving skills, along with a larger time commitment than other high school courses, will be needed to successfully complete this course. Students enrolled in the AP Physics courses will be expected to take the associated AP Physics Exam in May. By taking the exam, students may earn college credit or exemption. Many students and parents have questions concerning whether or not to take the exam. The following is information I have learned and collected over the years. This information is by no means exhaustive of all of the considerations you must make, and there may be exceptions to every single one of the points. If you have further questions, please contact me, your counselor, or your intended collegiate registrar/department head.

1. **General Information:** In general, many colleges and universities consider AP Physics 1 and 2 credit to be "elective credit." For example, a student going for a business degree must take some number of elective courses. AP Physics 1 or 2 credit could count towards those elective course requirements. On the other hand, students going into physics or engineering, for example, usually will not be able to transfer AP Physics 1 and 2 credit in. Schools want students to take their own physics coursework. And they usually do not let you take elective coursework in the same field or domain as your declared major. I would also not recommend skipping introductory physics courses if this is your intended path. You can miss out on advanced topics and content or opportunities to meet professors and form peer groups. However, there is another AP Exam for those students interested in going into engineering or physics. It is called AP Physics C (AP Physics with Calculus). Students scoring well on this exam usually receive college credit for science or engineering programs. At any time, students can take any combination of AP Physics 1, AP Physics 2, AP Physics C Mechanics (1st year - covers same material as AP Physics 1 but includes calculus level mathematics), and AP Physics C Electricity and Magnetism (2nd year – covers same material as AP Physics 2 but includes calculus level mathematics). For example, if the student doesn't take calculus until their senior year, they could take both AP Physics C tests in May of that school year. They would have to review materials from the AP Physics 1 course, as it would have been a year since learning that material.

2. **Scores**: The AP Physics Exams are scored on a 1 – 5 scale, one being the lowest score and five being the highest. A score of 3 is considered passing the exam. However, colleges (and even departments within the schools) vary significantly in what they consider *passing* for transfer credit acceptance. College Board, the company that creates the AP Exams, developed a website which has collected many of the score requirements into a searchable list. You c an find it by searching in Google, "Search Credit Policies – AP Students – The College Board." However, I would not bet on the accuracy of this list. This is something you must confirm with your school's registrar.

3. **Cost:** The cost per AP Physics Exam is around $100. It is expensive, but it is much less than a semester course at a university.

4. **Preparation:** The entire courses of AP Physics 1 and AP Physics 2 are devoted to preparing for the exam. However, good scores do not generally result from simply participating in class. First, I would recommend purchasing some practice books. AP Physics Essentials, Barron's, and The Princeton Review all have quality practice books. I have tons and tons of practice problem sets, textbooks, and anything you could ever want to help you to study. Just ask me. I also have numerous resources on my website under the "Useful Resources" tab. You can NEVER tell me that you don't have any physics to do. Finally, we will take and score a full practice exam on a Saturday in mid to late April. You should definitely attend that.

5. **Reasons to take the exam:**

a. Free college credit (minus the hundred bucks)
b. Scholarships and grant money, you show your commitment and motivation to colleges and universities
c. Recognition – AP Scholar awards, college and job resume builder
d. Many schools determine your course registration order (who registers first) based on students' number of completed credits. For example, if there is a class that EVERYONE loves to take (a fun PE, a cool elective, etc), freshmen have a difficult time getting into it. Upper classmen take priority because they have more credits – they get to go first in the registration order. However, by transferring in some AP credit, you are now higher in the course registration order, and you might be able to get into some courses you might not have been able to otherwise. If you don't know what you want to do for your major, having the opportunity to try out different "fun" or interesting classes might be a way to help you decide upon your path.
e. Even if you know that you aren't going to be able to transfer in the credit (engineers, for example), I would still highly recommend taking it. The AP Exam is a high stakes, timed, three-hour long, super challenging exam which you MUST study for. Guess what you are mostly graded on in your college coursework? Physics is one of my undergraduate degrees, and I can tell you that most of my classes had three exams and a final – that was it! Getting experience and practice in studying for and actually taking such exams can be invaluable when it comes to preparing for that first college exam.
f. Students receiving a "5" on the AP Exam may receive A's on both semesters in the AP Physics course, regardless of in class grade. Students receiving a "4" may receive B's on both semesters. "3" = C's. A grade would never be decreased through this method.
g. It is absolutely my opinion that any student completing my AP Physics 1 or AP Physics 2 course should take the exam and can definitely receive a good score.