

The AP French Test: An Overview

Last year, I was the only student at SDA to take the AP French Test. Although I only went up to French 4, I still managed to pass, and generally felt prepared for the test. Here's a general overview of the test, as well as some tips I picked up along the way.

About the Test

The AP French test consists of four main sections: reading multiple choice, listening multiple choice, writing, and speaking. The test is approximately 3 hours long with a break between multiple choice and free response. 85 minutes are allotted for the multiple choice section and 95 minutes are allotted for the free response. Approximately 77% of people who take the test pass, and about 44% go on to earn a 4 or above. Topics and vocabulary are drawn from 6 core units, which are meant to represent the most important aspects of culture and society. You will not be asked to specifically write about or cite the specifics of the units, but are expected to draw conclusions from and be familiar with the vocabulary and broader ideas that they describe.

Resources

As with all AP tests, the College Board offers some online resources for the AP French test. There is a detailed overview of all sections and tasks, as well as unit descriptions and study suggestions. Outside of the official College Board resources, there are hundreds of vocabulary lists and quizlets that have been compiled by various teachers and test takers, as well as lots of practice prompts and questions. I recommend trying out a few of these (especially the speaking) to get a feel for the test.

Study Strategy

A common but effective overall strategy for the AP French test is to study and gain a general understanding of the vocabulary associated with each unit. The more vocabulary is known, the easier the questions will be to understand, and the more you will be able to incorporate unit-specific vocab into your speaking and writing responses. For individual sections, it is helpful to do practice questions and responses with timing, which is often considered the most difficult part of the test. I would recommend emphasis on practicing multiple choice with listening as well as speaking, as those are often the aspects of the language least covered in class. If possible, practice with time restrictions as much as possible, as this is also not often done in class. As important as specific studying can be for the test, broad knowledge is also a huge advantage. If you have strong study habits inside French class, you will have a fairly solid understanding of grammar and structure as well as a good foundational vocabulary. Although the AP test is difficult, it's not meant to be such a far leap from what you already learned in class,

and even in French 4, you should have a solid enough understanding of the language to pass. Below I've listed some links to resources to help you get started. Good luck!

Resources

These are mostly official college board resources that I found helpful, but there are many others from other sources. Any practice is good practice, so find the ones that work best for you!

<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/ap/2019-05/ap-french-language-and-culture-course-and-exam-description.pdf>

<https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-french-language-and-culture/free-response-questions-by-year>

<https://quizlet.com/subject/ap-french/>

<https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-french-language-and-culture/exam/speaking-prompts-2018?TST=8ec9b8c6t39s1ts6adta862t87895s15a65a&userName=OESTERHELDE0220>