

*Amador Valley High School – English Department  
Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: What is the difference between Honors English 9 and College Prep English 9?**

A: Freshman Honors covers the same curriculum as college preparatory Freshman English, but with greater depth, complexity, and expectations. Both courses are year-long classes and are taken by freshman. Both classes fulfill college entrance requirements. The difference is the pacing and the amount of writing. Honors classes read additional books, write additional essays and are given less time in class to complete schoolwork. There is little remediation in this class of skills learned in middle school.

**Q: Are there requirements to get into Honors Freshman 9?**

A: There is not a test to be accepted into Honors English. Students may select it on their schedule form and schedule it on Zangle. Even though it is open enrollment, students need to realize that once they have signed up for the honors class, they cannot change their schedule once school starts if the class is too difficult.

**Q: How will I know if my student will be successful in the Honors program?**

Some indicators of success in this course include an “A” in all 3 years of middle school English, scores of “5” on the English Language Arts portions of the California Standards Test, and one or more years of instruction in a world language.

Here are some qualities that students should possess:

- Understands the organization of an essay: intro with thesis; body paragraphs with topic sentences; logical progression of ideas and evidence; conclusion
- Reads willingly. Enjoys reading at a mature level, both in response to school assignments and independently
- Demonstrates intellectual curiosity and asks questions
- Draws inferences and enjoys complexity

**Q: Is there an extra grade point added to their GPA for Honors classes?**

No. There is only an extra grade point added for AP classes. Honors classes are offered for student enrichment only.

**Q: What is Advanced Placement?**

A: It is a national program with a standardized test at the end of the year. Students who receive a passing score may be able to receive class or elective credit for the class at a 4-year university or college. The class utilizes a college text and seeks to replicate the rigor and difficulty of a college class. Frequent in-class timed essays, tests and quizzes account for 95% of the grade. Students also are rewarded with additional GPA points for A's, B's and C's. In our English department, AP classes are offered only in the junior and senior year.

**Q: What is the homework load in an AP class?**

A: In an AP class, a student can expect 7-10 pages of reading per night, including weekends. There is also a considerable summer work assignment as well. In an Honors class, there is about 5-7 pages of homework reading per night, whereas a College Prep class might have only 3-5 pages per night.

**Q: What is the difference between AP, Honors and College Prep?**

A: An Honors class works at a faster pace than a college prep class. Writing and reading assignments account for a larger percentage of the grade than in a college prep class. An Honors class will help prepare students to make the transition to an AP class as a junior. A College Prep class seeks to develop and build the skills that a student will need to succeed in college.

AP courses are weighted grades; Honors and College Prep courses are not.

**Q: If a student does not take Honors English as a sophomore, can he/she still take an AP class as a junior?**

A: Yes. The majority of AP classes are open to all students.

**Q: Is it possible to transfer out of an AP/Honors class?**

A: It is important to remember that the ability to transfer out of an AP/Honors class depends on space availability in other classes. Further, students who drop an AP class will take their grade at that point with them to the new class. The grade does not start over.

Please note: Honors and AP classes cannot be made up in Summer School. Once a grade is earned it cannot be substituted or replaced.