

Advanced Course Readiness

Many factors affect or determine the readiness of a student to be successful in advanced courses. While these are the factors considered by teachers in making recommendations and course placements for advanced and AP courses, even non-advanced and non-AP courses can present appropriate challenges in one or more of these areas. The graphic below attempts to capture the dynamics of a student's readiness for advanced courses.

Aptitudes

Standardized Test Scores provide some objective and comparable measures of achievement and skill level.

Capacity for Abstract Thought

Advanced courses place demands on students to make connections among ideas, apply concepts and methods to unfamiliar situations, and to work with the underlying essence of an idea. Students are expected to assimilate new concepts quickly and often with some independence.

Desire

Students with the desire to learn a particular subject and a natural curiosity about it tend to be successful if the other factors are in place. These students look for and find personal interest in the subject matter beyond concern for grades.

Success in Advanced Courses

Grades

Grades are an indicator of a number of elements: effort, success meeting course expectations regarding content understandings, and skills.

Work Rates and Work Habits

Completing work consistently and on time, seeking extra help, working efficiently without over-working, reading rates, and the ability of a student to adjust efforts to meet evolving demands all impact a student's success in an advanced course.

Personal Strengths

It is important for students in advanced courses to be willing to participate in class, to ask insightful questions and to display an inquiring mind. These students typically seek original, imaginative approaches to problems and are not satisfied with simply repeating information.

Responses to Stress

How a student handles struggle, uncertainty, heavy workloads, and imperfection determines much about the quality of the experience in an advanced course. Students should be self-aware and attend tutorials without being asked.

Habits of Mind

Students who do well in advanced courses show persistence and patience in dealing with new ideas and reflect orderly, coherent habits of mind through computation, writing, and speech.