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Setting a Policy for AP[®] Italian

As part of the AP[®] Program's World Languages Initiative, AP Italian Language and Culture is being introduced in the 2005-06 academic year in high schools across the country culminating in the first AP Italian Language and Culture Exam administration in May 2006. The purpose of this guide is to provide college faculty and administrators with curricular content and sample exam questions for the new AP Italian course and exam to facilitate the establishment of appropriate credit and placement policies for AP Italian.

The Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP) provides motivated students with the opportunity to take college-level courses while still in high school. Students demonstrate their mastery of the curriculum by taking AP Exams—35 exams, including the new exam in Italian, are available in 20 subject areas. In 2005, more than 1.2 million students took AP Exams worldwide. Of the 2.1 million AP Exams taken in 2005, about 140,000 were in the modern foreign languages (French, German, and Spanish). More than 3,000 colleges and universities, including many international institutions, accept qualifying AP Exam scores for credit, placement, or both.

Throughout its 50-year history, the AP Program has maintained high standards of rigor in its courses and exams. Since its inception, AP has been a respected force in American education due to the critical involvement of college and university faculty members.

Italian Faculty Involvement in AP

College and university faculty members play a vital role in every stage of development and scoring of an AP course and exam, helping to ensure their high quality. Each AP discipline has its own Development Committee—composed of college and university professors and experienced AP teachers—that is responsible for creating the course guidelines and exam questions. College and university faculty members also serve as the Chief Readers, responsible for establishing the exam-scoring guidelines and overseeing the annual AP Reading of the free-response section for their academic discipline.

“There is a sense of palpable excitement among Italian instructors with the approach of the first AP Italian Language and Culture course and exam in May 2006. This is the first new foreign language exam to be developed by the College Board in 50 years. It features a balanced curriculum with emphasis on the interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication. What makes this course and exam special is its inclusion of a cultural component for the first time. The overall effect of this new program will be to enhance the Italian high school curriculum nationwide. Moreover, it will strengthen Italian studies programs at the college and university level through an infusion of very well-qualified students into upper-division courses. These are indeed good times for Italian studies!”

—Frank Nuessel
AP Italian Development Committee Chief Reader
University of Louisville

How to Set an AP Policy

The College Board encourages higher education institutions to base their AP policy decisions on data and research, and recognizes that different institutions and departments will set different policies, based upon factors unique to their institution, student body, and academic discipline. The best way for colleges and universities to determine their AP credit and placement policies is to conduct their own research on the performance of AP and non-AP students at their own institution and in their own department.

Research on AP Foreign Language Student Performance

Research studies show that students who do well on an AP Exam are academically prepared to place out of a corresponding college course and move on to the next higher-level course in the discipline. As May 2006 will be the first AP Italian Language and Culture Exam administration, research data is not yet available. See Table 1 for data from a research study comparing AP and non-AP student performance in third-, fourth-, and fifth-level college Spanish courses.

Table 1: Student Performance in Third-, Fourth-, and Fifth-Level Spanish Courses
AP Spanish Language Students Versus Non-AP Students

	AP EXAM GRADE	THIRD LEVEL		FOURTH LEVEL		FIFTH LEVEL	
		GPA	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AN A OR B	GPA	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AN A OR B	GPA	PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING AN A OR B
AP Students Who Place Out of Intro. Course	AP 5	3.46	92	3.64	93	3.64	93
	AP 4	3.67	92	3.68	96	3.68	96
	AP 3	3.65	98	3.53	98	3.53	98
	AP 2	3.59	98	3.43	96	3.43	96
Students Who Complete Intro. Course	Non-AP	3.15	81	3.29	89	3.29	89

Taking the AP course and exam stimulates further interest in the subject area and encourages deeper disciplinary knowledge.

Research studies show that students who take the AP Exams are significantly more likely to take further course work in the same subject area than students who do not take the AP Exam. See Table 2 for data from this research study.

Table 2: Additional College Spanish Course Work
AP Spanish Language Students Versus Non-AP Students

	AP EXAM GRADE	PERCENT TAKING ADDITIONAL SPANISH COURSES	AVERAGE NUMBER OF COLLEGE SPANISH COURSES TAKEN
AP Spanish Language Students	AP 5	51	1.6
	AP 4	55	1.7
	AP 3	49	1.5
	AP 2	49	1.5
	AP 1	59	1.4
Non-AP Students	Non-AP	23	0.6

PDF copies of research studies on AP student performance can be found at apcentral.collegeboard.com/colleges/research.

In addition to research studies on AP student performance, the College Board conducts college comparability studies to measure the degree to which the AP courses and exams are equivalent in content and difficulty to corresponding college courses. The AP Exam scoring rubric is established so that the lowest composite score that earns an AP grade of 5 is equivalent to the average score earned by college students who received grades of A in a comparable course. The lowest score that earns an AP grade of 4 is equivalent to the average B, and the lowest score that earns an AP grade of 3 is equivalent to the average C.

The research that the College Board conducts is intended to help institutions and academic departments as they establish appropriate AP policies. AP Central® (apcentral.collegeboard.com), the College Board's online home for AP professionals, contains other resources that may assist in this process including the Course Description, released exam questions, and sample student responses at different levels of ability.

For more information go to:
apcentral.collegeboard.com/italian/exam

AP Credit Policy Info on the Web

Information about AP credit and placement policies at more than 1,000 colleges and universities is available on the College Board's Web site at www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.

“Why should colleges consider extending credit or placement to qualifying AP Italian Exam scores?”

In the absence of widely recognized or widely used adaptive placement testing systems for Italian, the AP Exams make an excellent foundation for placement. Since its inception it has consistently aimed to reach the fourth-semester or bridge course level common to most postsecondary Italian curricula. It is also more comprehensive than most placement exams in its incorporation of the four skills, the five Cs, the different modes of communication, and the study of culture.”

—Colleen Ryan-Scheutz, AP Italian Development Committee
University of Notre Dame

The AP Italian Course

The AP Italian Language and Culture course is designed to be comparable to college and university Italian courses that serve as a transition between language courses and linguistics or content-based courses. These transition courses are typically taught in the fourth semester, or the equivalent. The AP course was designed by a task force made up of experienced college faculty and master teachers of Italian at the secondary level. The course reflects the most current thinking regarding second language instruction and acquisition. Its aim is to develop students’ reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills within a cultural frame of reference reflective of the richness of Italian language and culture. AP Italian teachers should focus on the structural aspects of the language while interweaving cultural content throughout the course.

Goals

The AP Italian Language and Culture course should help prepare students to demonstrate their level of Italian proficiency across three communicative modes (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational) and the five goal areas outlined in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). The following statements about what AP Italian students should know and be able to do perhaps best illustrate the goals and objectives of the course.

Interpersonal—Interactive Communication: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing

- Students demonstrate comprehension and comprehensibility in spoken and written Italian in a variety of personal contexts, actively negotiating meaning and drawing appropriate inferences.
- Students appropriately use the formal and informal registers of spoken Italian.
- Students communicate clearly and effectively in a variety of personal contexts, with minimal errors, which do not interfere with communication.

Interpretive—Receptive Communication: Listening, Reading

- Students comprehend spoken Italian in a variety of academic and culturally appropriate contexts and draw appropriate inferences.
- Students comprehend and interpret authentic fiction and nonfiction written texts.
- Students have knowledge of vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical structures necessary to comprehend and interpret oral and written texts.

Presentational—Productive Communication: Speaking, Writing

- Students write compositions in Italian on general topics with clarity and accuracy and in a variety of contexts, styles, and registers.
- Students write compositions in Italian on cultural topics with clarity and accuracy, demonstrating an introductory knowledge of aspects of Italian geography, contemporary life in Italy, the arts and sciences, social customs and traditions, and contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world.
- Students speak accurately and fluently in a variety of academic, culturally appropriate contexts, with minimal errors, which do not interfere with communication.
- Students speak accurately using the formal and informal registers.

“One of the many advantages of the creation of the AP Italian Language and Culture course has been the collaboration of high school and higher education faculty who have provided articulation and continuity to teaching Italian across the levels. This is a benefit that any student of Italian can enjoy. Those students who then take the AP course and exam benefit even further as they enter college prepared for a richer experience with Italian that can only occur when a certain level of proficiency has been achieved.

We at the university level look forward to guiding these students to a new awareness of the great world of Italian language, literature, and culture.”

—Elissa Tognozzi, AP Italian Development Committee Chair
University of California, Los Angeles

Beginning in fall 2006, AP Italian teachers and principals of schools where AP Italian Language and Culture is taught must certify that their 2007-08 courses follow all the requirements stipulated by the Development Committee, including using college-level materials, in order to ensure that the AP course reflects college-level standards. By completing this AP Course Audit, high schools will receive individual licenses to label their Italian courses “AP.” In fall 2007, colleges and universities will receive a list of all high schools authorized to use the “AP” designation for their Italian courses.

The AP Italian Exam

The AP Italian Language and Culture Exam is approximately three hours in length. It assesses the student's level of Italian language proficiency and cultural knowledge across the three communicative modes outlined above, all within the context of the five broad goals of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*.

There are two sections in the exam:

Section I consists of multiple-choice questions that assess listening and reading comprehension in the Interpretive mode.

Section II, the free-response section, consists of several parts:

Part A assesses writing in the Presentational mode by means of two fill-in exercises and a composition. The first fill-in exercise tests only verb forms and the second tests other grammar points. The composition prompt requires the student to write in Italian on a general topic (for example, nominate a teacher from your school for the Teacher of the Year award and explain your nomination).

Part B assesses the student's cultural knowledge with a prompt that requires the student to write a composition in Italian on a cultural topic. The cultural topics for AP Italian, which teachers should be interweaving throughout their language instruction, are:

- Italian geography (including major cities and regions)
- contemporary life in Italy
- the arts and sciences
- social customs and traditions
- contributions of Italians and Italian Americans to the world

Part C assesses speaking in the Interpersonal mode by requiring the student to respond to a series of thematically linked questions on a general topic (for example, school), as well as in the Presentational mode by requiring the student to narrate a story suggested by a series of pictures.

Each part of the exam contributes toward the final AP grade as follows: Listening—20 percent, Reading—20 percent, Writing—20 percent, Culture—20 percent, and Speaking—20 percent.

Sample AP Italian Exam questions are listed below.

Sample Listening Question

Students are instructed to first read the multiple-choice questions (30 seconds) and then listen to the following passage. After listening to the passage, the students answer the questions (24 seconds).

(Man) Benvenuti a Venezia. Eccoci in Piazza San Marco, il cuore artistico della città. Davanti a voi, potete ammirare la famosa Basilica di San Marco. Se guardate in alto, si notano i mosaici sulla facciata della chiesa, i quattro cavalli di bronzo e la cupola d'oro. San Marco fu costruita nell'undicesimo secolo ed è uno splendido esempio di architettura bizantina. Prima di visi-

tare la chiesa, però, faremo una pausa per il pranzo. Vi consiglio di non mangiare nei ristoranti intorno alla piazza perchè sono troppo cari. Mangiate invece nei piccoli ristoranti nelle stradine dietro la basilica, oppure vi potete comprare un panino e mangiare in piazza. Ma attenzione ai piccioni!

Dove si trovano i turisti?

- (A) In una piazza importante di Venezia
- (B) Vicino alla stazione di Venezia
- (C) In un ristorante a Venezia
- (D) In chiesa a Venezia

Cosa indica la guida ai turisti?

- (A) Tanti gruppi di turisti
- (B) Le gondole sul canale
- (C) L'interno di una chiesa
- (D) La facciata della basilica

Cosa consiglia la guida per pranzo?

- (A) Di mangiare dopo la visita in chiesa
- (B) Di allontanarsi dalla piazza
- (C) Di prenotare in una trattoria
- (D) Di provare le specialità locali

Sample Reading Question

This selection was originally published in the novel *L'Isola di Arturo* in 1957.

Mio padre viveva, la maggior parte del tempo, lontano. Veniva a Procida per qualche giorno, e poi ripartiva, certe volte rimanendo assente per intere stagioni. A fare la somma dei suoi rari e brevi soggiorni nell'isola, alla fine dell'anno, si sarebbe trovato che, su dodici mesi, egli forse ne aveva passato due a Procida, con me. Così, io trascorrevi quasi tutti i miei giorni in assoluta solitudine; e questa solitudine, cominciata per me nella prima infanzia (con la partenza del mio balio Silvestro), mi pareva la mia condizione naturale. Consideravo ogni soggiorno di mio padre sull'isola come una grazia straordinaria da parte di lui, una concessione particolare, della quale ero superbo.

Credo che avevo da poco imparato a camminare, quand'egli mi comperò una barca. E quando avevo circa sei anni di età, un giorno mi portò al podere, dove la cagna pastora del colono allattava i suoi cuccioli d'un mese, perchè me ne sceglissi uno. Io scelsi quello che mi pareva il più indiatolato, con gli occhi più simpatici. Si rivelò che era una femmina; e siccome era bianca come la luna, fu chiamata Immacolatella.

Quanto al fornirmi di scarpe, o di vestiti, mio padre se ne ricordava assai di rado. Nell'estate, io non portavo altro indumento che un paio di calzonni, coi quali mi tuffavo anche in acqua, lasciando poi che l'aria me li asciugasse addosso. Solo raramente aggiungevo ai calzonni una maglietta di cotone, troppo corta, tutta strappata e slentata. Mio padre, in più di me, possedeva un paio di calzoncini

da bagno di tela coloniale; ma, fuori di questo, anche lui, nell'estate, non portava mai altro vestito che dei vecchi pantaloni stinti, e una camicia senza più un solo bottone, tutta aperta sul petto.

Quale delle seguenti frasi meglio descrive il brano?

- (A) La vita in campagna fa bene alla salute.
- (B) Le vacanze estive sono divertenti.
- (C) Un ragazzo descrive la sua infanzia.
- (D) Una persona si lamenta dei suoi amici.

Il posto in cui abitava il ragazzo era

- (A) vicino al mare
- (B) in montagna
- (C) in un villaggio turistico
- (D) in una metropoli

Il ragazzo si vestiva d'estate come se

- (A) viaggiasse in treno
- (B) sentisse freddo
- (C) andasse in chiesa
- (D) andasse a nuotare

La solitudine sembra al ragazzo una condizione naturale perché

- (A) il padre era spesso assente
- (B) il padre non parlava mai
- (C) il ragazzo stava sempre in casa
- (D) il ragazzo viaggiava da solo

Perché il padre ha regalato la cucciola al figlio?

- (A) Per proteggere il figlio dagli sconosciuti
- (B) Per trasportare gli indumenti
- (C) Per fare compagnia al ragazzo
- (D) Per fargli un regalo di compleanno

Sample Writing Question

Students are instructed to write on the line after each number the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

Cosa s'impara quando l'autobus cambia strada

Dopo una lunga giornata di lavoro, io e i miei colleghi di solito mangiamo in centro al nostro ristorante preferito a Piazza di Spagna. Ma ieri sera noi _____ (1) _____ l'autobus per andare a cena a Monte Mario. Purtroppo, _____ (2) _____ lavori in corso e l'autista _____ (3) _____ fare una strada diversa. Io temevo che l'autista avesse sbagliato strada. Credevo che saremmo arrivati prima se _____ (4) _____ sull'altra.

Ho domandato all'autista: «Senta, Lei, ma dove _____ (5) _____?» E lui ha risposto: «Si sieda e _____ (6) _____ il cartello! È vietato _____ (7) _____ al conducente.»

Io _____ (8) _____ inquieta, ma con mia grande meraviglia, abbiamo fatto tutta la strada in pochi minuti. Adesso, anche quando guido io, _____ (9) _____ sempre questo percorso, benchè _____ (10) _____ più lungo.

1. _____ (prendere)
2. _____ (esserci)
3. _____ (dovere)
4. _____ (rimanere)
5. _____ (andare)
6. _____ (leggere)
7. _____ (parlare)
8. _____ (essere)
9. _____ (preferire)
10. _____ (sembrare)

Sample Writing Question

Students are instructed to write in Italian a well-organized and coherent composition of about 150 words on the topic below.

Descrivi l'insegnante più bravo o brava che tu abbia mai conosciuto. Perché ammiri questa persona? Quale impatto ha o ha avuto nella tua vita? Giustifica la tua opinione con degli esempi specifici.

Sample Culture Question

Students are instructed to write in Italian a well-organized and coherent composition of about 150 words on the topic below.

Scegli una città italiana grande o piccola, famosa oppure no. Descrivi almeno DUE elementi (avvenimenti, persone, monumenti, usi, costumi, ecc.) che la rendono importante e spiega perché. Giustifica la tua opinione facendo riferimento a letture, film, esperienze personali o discussioni in classe.

Sample Speaking Question

Students are instructed to narrate a story in Italian based upon the following pictures. Students are given two minutes to look at and think about the pictures, and then two minutes to narrate a complete story.



How to Get Involved

There are many ways college and university faculty members can help maintain the high standards of the AP Program:

- Participate in a college comparability study
- Be an AP Reader
- Contribute multiple-choice test items for the AP Exam
- Become an AP Faculty Consultant

For more information, please go to: apcentral.collegeboard.com/highered/getinvolved

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The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns. For further information, visit www.collegeboard.com.

