



# Understand the Local Education System

Here are some concepts that you and your student need to be familiar with when considering applying to the American School System; for more in-depth information, we provide a very detailed presentation of the American school system, and answer all the questions you may have.

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**GPA:** Grade Point Average. The GPA is the average score of a student during a given semester; it takes into account all the courses taken and graded during that semester.

The unweighted GPA may range from 0.0 to 4.0.

The weighted GPA takes into account AP classes and honor courses.

The cumulative GPA takes into account all the grades from a given year.

**Transcripts** (report card): it is the permanent and official academic record of all the courses taken and grades achieved during the student's studies at a given school. , When applying to colleges, it generally consists of grades from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The official transcript is issued by the high school, with an original signature of a school official, on the school letterhead, and is sealed when sent to the universities.

**APs:** Advanced Placement is a program in the United States and Canada created by the College Board which offers college-level curricula and examinations to high school students. American colleges and universities may grant placement and course credit to students who obtain high scores on the examinations. APs are usually taken in May of Junior and Senior year. The number limitation depends on high school offerings, but a max of 8 AP classes on two years is considered highly challenging. APs are graded on a scale from 0 to 5.

## **Honors Classes:**

Honors classes often offer the same curriculum as regular classes but are tailored for high-achieving students, covering additional topics or some areas in greater depth. Honors classes help students boost their GPA.

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## **ACT:** American College Testing

The ACT is a standardized test that measures a high school student's skills, and college readiness. This test consists in five core areas: English, Math, Science, Reading and Writing (optional). The 4 main areas are tested separately with multiple-choice questions, on a scale of 1 to 36. And a cumulative score is provided which is the average of the 4 scores. The test may be taken as many as 6 times during the year, but it is recommended to take it no more than 3 times, between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

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Almost all 4-year colleges and universities in the United States accept the ACT, but the value they give to this test is dependent on their recruiting policy.

**SAT:** Scholastic Aptitude Test

The SAT is a standardized test that measures a high school student's readiness for college. This test consists of 3 sections: Critical Reading, Math, and Optional Essay. The 2 main areas are tested separately with multiple-choice questions on a scale ranging from 200 to 800. The optional essay is graded out of 8. A cumulative score is given, which is the sum of the Critical Reading and Math scores. The test may be taken 6 times a year, but it is not recommended to take it more than 3 times between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

This test is recognized by all colleges in America, but the weight they give to this test is dependent on their recruiting policy.

**Subject Tests:**

These college admission exams measure one specific subject. There are 20 different subjects in English, History, Languages, Mathematics and Science. Each test is an hour long; the questions are multiple choice, and scored on a 200/800 scale. The subject tests can be taken 6 times a year, on the same dates as the SAT tests. These tests can be required by some universities, but not all.

The Subject Tests are the only national admission tests that the student can choose in order to showcase his specific strengths and interests.

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**FAB:** Franco-American Baccalaureat (BFA)

The Franco-American Baccalaureat is a combination of the French Baccalaureat and American Advance Placement program. It is a joint initiative of the US College Board and the French Ministry of Education. Students may enroll in the BFA in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Premiere et Terminale); they take 3 AP courses instead of the 3 corresponding French classes for the Baccalaureat.

Passing this program gives the advantage of completing a very rigorous program, recognized both in France and America.

**Capstone:**

This program was created in 2014 by the College Board. It consists of 2 AP courses, AP Seminar and AP Research, and is designed to complement and enhance discipline-specific study in other AP courses. Typically, students take these AP courses in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. They receive the AP Capstone diploma, if they earn a 3 or higher in AP Seminar and AP Research, as well as on 4 additional AP exams that they need to take during 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

More than 650 high schools in the US participate in the Capstone (54 for California). And many colleges and universities have already confirmed their support for the AP Capstone program.

**IB: International Baccalaureate**

It is an international educational foundation headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. IB classes and assessments involve research, writing, and hands-on evaluation. The educational programs can be given in any of the three languages: English, French, Spanish, from elementary to middle school or as an intensive school-wide program in high school. This is a very challenging program regarded as such by American universities.

**OIB: Option Internationale du Baccalauréat**

OIB offers a bilingual and bi-cultural program in French schools abroad or in France for students with a higher level second language. As a result, the second language is taught like a literature class, and a second course (often History and Geography) is taught with an approach on two countries in the second language (English most of the time). It demonstrates the ability of a French student to master a second language at a native level.