

# How to Study For AP French Language

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## Introduction to AP French Language

When you hit a certain point in your academic career, test prep becomes an all too familiar. When you start taking AP Exams, the act of studying becomes almost ritual, and as you get closer to exam day you begin to eat, sleep, and breathe the topic of the test you're taking.

The AP French language exam is a beast of its own because it's not quite what you're used to. It's another AP exam, but with a few twists and turns that are familiar yet completely alien at the same time. You're taking a test in a whole new language for goodness' sake! And it doesn't help that everyone around you is in the same boat of not really knowing what's coming and being bogged down by other classes as well.

But studying doesn't have to be scary. You have months to prepare for the class, and your AP French class is designed to help you get a five. Just by going to class you're already prepping yourself. By making a comprehensive study plan, integrating studying into your daily routine, and getting to know the test, you will be well on your way to getting a five. If you start to feel overwhelmed, just think about the fact that it's basically the same as an English exam, except it's in another language. To get yourself the score you're aiming for, go with the simple strategies you'll find outlined in this AP French Study Plan.

## Be Aware of Your Personal Language Learning Style

Reviewing for any big test may feel like a pain, but instead of looking at it as a burden, think of it as a unique opportunity to find out what style of learning languages works for you. It's likely you have a teacher who is doing their best to make sure the curriculum works for everybody, but chances are you don't get the tailored learning experience that can help you absorb and retain information about a foreign language in a way that's unique to you.

The chance to find your personal learning style is an opportunity that will carry you through not just this test, but your college career and your future profession as well. Learning a new language is a unique experience and finding the best way you retain information will help you learn new languages in the future if becoming a polyglot is your goal!

A lot of schools teach French based on learning conjugations and exceptions to the general rules of the language. This is a very mathematical way of learning that doesn't appeal to everyone. So find out if you learn French better with music playing or in silence. Can you concentrate better on French texts in the library or in your room? Maybe you're the king or queen of verb flashcards; maybe you take organized grammar notes in lines.

There are a million quirks to learning and everybody is different. Be creative with your quirks and turn test prep into an opportunity not just to study for the exam, but to improve your study methods and find a strategy to succeed. Take advantage of the AP French exam!

## Know the Test

The first and most important thing is to know the layout of the test. Here's a recap:

### Section I:

There is a multiple choice section with 65 questions that is 1 hour and 35 minutes long. It's 50% of your exam score and is divided into two parts.

**Part A:** 30 Questions, 40 minutes

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- Interpretive communication and print texts.



**Part B:** 35 Questions, 55 minutes.

- **Interpretive communication** (Using print and audio sources)
- **Interpretive communication** (Audio texts)

**Section II:**

There is a Free Response section with four tasks. It's 1 hour and 28 minutes long and comprises the other 50% of the exam score.

**Part A:** Written tasks, 70 minutes.

- **Interpersonal writing** Email reply (one prompt 15 minutes)
- **Presentational Writing** Persuasive essay (one prompt 55 minutes)

**Part B:** Spoken responses, 18 Minutes

- **Interpersonal speaking:** Conversation (5 topics, 20 seconds per response)
- **Presentational speaking:** Cultural comparison (1 prompt, 4 minutes to prepare and 2 minutes to respond)

Essentially, the test is designed to assess your proficiency on a few different metrics including writing, speech, listening, and cultural understanding. Combine this test layout recap with your syllabus and a few different resources, and you can begin to create a comprehensive self-tailored plan that'll not only help you ace the test but help you seriously improve your French. And that's the goal, isn't it?

## Practice Exams and Questions

It's now time to simulate testing conditions and take a practice AP. If you can have someone proctor you that's great, but why not use your phone as a timer and just make sure you're not disturbed for a few hours?

Just as a quick note, while it's a good idea to take the practice test in silence with no distractions, the actual AP won't occur in a vacuum. People will be coughing, paper will be shuffling, and the person sitting next to you may very well be the one with the runny nose that won't stop sniffing. If you're a nervous test taker, it might be worth it to bring some ear plugs or even just practice a little meditation. While the test itself isn't something to freak out about, it's worth it to make sure you'll be okay under pressure.

## Figure out What You Need to Learn

When you're figuring out a game plan to prepare for the AP French Language test, it may seem like there are a million different things to do. Instead of getting overwhelmed, allow yourself to take a breath and make a coherent plan that begins with assessing what you already know, what you need to review, and what you may still need to learn. Here's a little-known secret: even preparing to study for a test helps you. So take the time to review what the structure of the test is by going through your course materials and assessing where your weaknesses are. Gather all of your materials for the class, including your syllabus, and organize them into the topics you've covered. Once you get yourself organized and take a look at the progress you need to make, you will have also organized all of your knowledge of the test into categories, which helps you get into the mindset for the test.

Dividing study subjects into a few categories will help you out: subjects you need to know inside and out for the test, subjects you should know pretty well, and subjects you should have a general knowledge of. This categorization process also includes taking a look at the skills the test assesses. By comparing your grades and assignments to the milestones you need to achieve before the French language AP, you'll get a good idea of how to prepare.

This preparation can be done a few hours if you have a block of time to set aside. So get out your highlighters and post-its and get ready to color-code your way through your AP French Language Study guide.

## General Study Plan

After giving yourself some time to get used to the idea of the AP French Language test, what skills it assesses, and how you're going to tackle it, it's time to sit down and figure out a concrete study plan.

### Some helpful tips:

1. Create a schedule and stick to it.
2. Review material more than once.
3. If you're aiming for success on the AP French Language test, it helps to integrate the French language into every single day. That way studying won't seem like a chore and it becomes more natural for you to be speaking and reading French.
4. Review by topic.
5. Essentially, know your basics, which brings us into the next section...

## Foundations

When creating your study guide for the AP, it's important to also review the foundations you learned in your earlier French classes. When you sit down for the test and you start to write, you'll inevitably get a little nervous. It's easy to draw a blank. By mixing basic review of verb conjugations, irregular verbs, pronunciation rules, conjugation rules and tenses into your more complex and comprehensive review, you'll avoid those blanks that could cause you to panic and lose time on the test. Then you can review by section to make the work a little easier and less overwhelming.

## Reading Review

The best way to prepare for the reading section of the AP French Language exam is by reading French!

[Finding authentic texts](#) to read and practice with may seem like a challenge, but lucky for you there's already an article on this very site that'll help you in that endeavor. Basically, you should find as many French texts as you can and immerse yourself in the language. Read whatever you can get your hands on.

It's a good idea to start with subjects you're already relatively familiar with. You can search for French blog

articles, online magazine articles, and shorter texts in your areas of interest to ease yourself into reading French and make it fun. There's no wrong type of text to read, and no difficulty level is too much. While it may seem a little overwhelming, reading classic French plays and literature will also help you out a lot. You may not understand exactly everything that's written, but by reading more difficult texts you'll get used to the way the language flows and how the sentences are structured. It'll help you improve your vocabulary as well, which is essential to all parts of the test.

In order to help you study for the AP French language exam, you can also multitask and search for review materials for another class that are written in French. If there's a historical event that you need to review, search for the topic in French on Google! You'll not only get some good reading practice but you'll also gain a new perspective on a familiar topic.

A side note on vocabulary: while it's always helpful to have a dictionary by your side to look up the words that stump you, it's also a good idea to leave the dictionary out of your reading sometimes. When you were learning English, you didn't do it by always running to a dictionary—you made some educated guesses. Figuring out what a word means by using context clues is a skill in English that a lot of us neglect to apply to learning other languages. So instead of reaching for the dictionary when you come across a difficult word, read it and gauge for yourself what it could mean. You can verify it with a dictionary afterward if you're not sure, but you'd be surprised at how much you already know or can figure out with a few context clues.

## Writing Review

If you're not already a naturally gifted writer in English, writing in another language for a grade is probably not a task you're enthusiastic about. To set your mind at ease from the get-go, it's better not to think of the AP French Language test as a scary French test; just think of it as the kind of English evaluation you've been used to for years, except in French!

Practicing writing might seem like the most daunting part, but with a few adjustments to your routine and maybe a little perspective change on what constitutes traditional studying, you can integrate writing practice into your routine and get well on your way to the five you're craving. Practice giving detailed analyses of the free response questions that are available online and get yourself into the mindset of elaborating on specific points beyond restating facts from passages you've read. Why are these passages important? What do the facts mean?

Another way to succeed at test prep is to try taking the notes for one of your other classes in French. If you choose a subject you're comfortable with you can learn concepts in other lessons while also practicing your French writing skills. When you skim over your notes later, do it with your French notes nearby so you can self-correct for the French exam and make sure you're learning for your other subject along the way.

Immersion works, and in general ; writing in French whenever you can is an excellent way to get yourself ahead of the curve in preparing for the AP exam. Make a journal and keep track of your days and your test prep progress in French (written in French, of course).

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## Speaking Review

Reviewing for the speaking portion of the test is as simple as speaking French as often as you possibly can. The stress that comes with this part of the trial usually comes from the fact that you only speak French in your French class. Like preparation for any other part of the test, it's important to immerse yourself in French as much as possible. By speaking as much French as you can, you will become more comfortable with communicating in

another language and that'll help your nerves on exam day!

You can multitask in your studying efforts if you take advantage of all the reading you're doing to prepare for the other parts of the test. Instead of reading silently to yourself, always read out loud. Reading out loud will accustom you to the different rules of pronunciation and the flow of the language, which is a lot of what the speaking section is all about. What can be difficult about speaking French is that many teachers don't correct you on pronunciation. This is understandable as there are a lot of students in one class, and it's also extremely important just to get the grammar and conjugation rules down. But looking up a pronunciation guide can be essential to your proficiency and confidence in the spoken French language.

On the topic of your French class, don't be shy to speak up! Speak to your teacher exclusively in French, even if it takes a little getting used to at first; your teacher is a resource who's there specifically to help you prepare for the test. During exercises when you communicate with your classmates on a different subject or fill out some exercises in the textbook make sure you're speaking in French. If you feel weird being that one kid who's taking the class too seriously, don't worry. Instead of minimizing the amount of effort you're putting in, find friends who are ready to match your effort and make a goal with each other to speak exclusively in French for a certain amount of time per week.

If there's a French club at your school, you should join it. And if there isn't a French club, form an informal one. Find a group of people who are studying for the French AP and grab lunch with them a couple of times a week. Make sure you're only speaking French with each other. If you want to make practice even more effective, read up on a current news topic or cultural issue to talk about. Learning about current French culture is a big part of the AP, and integrating prep for the French Language AP into your other studies and your daily life will make test prep more holistic and natural.

## **Listening Review**

Studying for the listening section of the French Language AP is another activity that gets a bad rep, but that can be fun and extremely helpful to your overall comprehension of the language. Immersion helps you become accustomed to the speed and cadence of the French language as spoken by native speakers.

One strategy is to watch DVDs that are already in your house with French dubs and no subtitles. That way you're using the material you already know; you can infer what the characters are saying and it'll be easier to distinguish individual words and sentences. You can do this with streaming videos and with Netflix as well. There are also sections of the listening exam available online so you can get an idea of exactly what kinds of prompts you'll be dealing with and practice with similar material.

Take the opportunity to learn more about French culture by listening to French radio and watching clips of French news. In fact, there are tons of applications for French radio that you can listen to on your walk, bike, bus, or drive to school. All of these media are windows into French culture that are integral to your study habits.

It might be a little difficult to understand everything at first, but as you spend more time listening to the language, it'll get easier to separate sentences, phrases, and words. Make a French music playlist to listen to while you study if that's your thing. If you tailor test prep to your preferences, you'll be less likely to get overwhelmed. And by preparing early, you'll see how even a few months of immersion in the French language can change your test game and get you ready for a five.

## **How Many Hours Should I Study?**

While there's no magic formula that tells you exactly how much you need to study to get a specific score, this handy chart can be a good basic guide.

<b>Class Grade</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
A	15+	10+	10+
B	25+	20+	15+
C	40+	30+	20+
D	60+	45+	30+
F	80+	60+	40+

## Hours Needed for AP Score Depending on Class Grade

The chart above explains the hours of studying needed to achieve a specific score on the AP depending on your current grade in the class.

Essentially, your score out of five is an indicator of how well prepared you are for college-level course work in that subject area. A five means extremely well qualified and a one means you're not qualified at all.

## Resources

When gathering resources for your study spree, it's a good idea to ask your teacher first. A lot of teachers have review materials on hand and getting some practice questions or recommendations for a review book from your teacher is a great way to start. You can follow up with online study resources like Albert.io of course, and searching the AP website itself for helpful tips and test samples will start you off with a good amount of review material. Check online for a conjugation guide and lists of vocabulary like "681 French Verbs" to expand your vocabulary and your level of French little by little each day.

## Final Thoughts

Now you're well on your way to getting the grade you want for the test. Reviewing for the test can be fun and rewarding with a little bit of creativity and diligence. Make sure you know the test and what it will assess you on. Be familiar with the sections and the time you'll have for each task. Make sure you take at least one practice test under test conditions, but if you're a nervous test taker don't get too comfortable with the idea of complete tranquility during the test because there will inevitably be little noises to distract you.

Create a general plan for your studies. After assessing yourself, highlight the gaps in your knowledge and make sure you reinforce your basic grasp of French language foundations. Throughout this process, it's important to keep in mind your personal learning style. The time you take to study for the test on your own is a good opportunity to see what type of learning works for you personally, and getting creative will make things more fun and help you retain information better.

As you go through and review each section, remember to take a breath and go about it systematically so that you don't get overwhelmed. Reviewing for the writing section can mean taking notes for your other classes in French and keeping a journal in French to track your progress. You can self-correct on the notes you're taking and improve your progress slowly but surely. Immerse yourself in French culture with news videos and radio broadcasts as well. Be sure not to worry too much, you're already most of the way there, and you got this!

[Featured Image Source](#)

**Let's put everything into practice. Try this AP French Language practice question:**

## #EduBenin, quand les Béninois repensent l'éducation

Les tuteurs béninois

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L'inspiration du hashtag

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Le contenu des tweets

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Ce que certains tuteurs mettent en valeur

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5

Une comparaison de deux tweets

APFREN-GRPAZE

5

Moderate

L'avis d'un tuteur

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5

Il s'agit d'une discussion via Twitter au sujet de ce qu'il faut faire pour améliorer la qualité de l'éducation au Bénin.

### L'Éducation au Bénin

► Show Passage

Flicka, Mylène. "#EduBenin, Quand Les Béninois Repensent L'Education." RSS. Voices of Youth, n.d. Web. 31 Aug. 2016. [Voices of Youth](#).

Selon ses tweets, quel changement éducatif est-ce que le tuteur MakeMyBeninABLO soutiendrait ?

- A Une concentration intense sur la géographie africaine.
- B L'enseignement de plusieurs dialectes du pays.
- C Une série d'examens destinée à l'étude du droit.
- D La promesse d'un métier après trois ans à l'université.



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