**Recommendations from Marco Learning**

**1. Pick a spot. Make it sacred.**

“Don’t leave it until the last minute” is an appropriate blanket statement for *every* element of the AP® Exam. It applies*particularly*, however, to the physical space in which you are going to take your exam. You don’t want to be running around trying to find the good WiFi connection 20 minutes before your exam is going to start. For those of you who are able to take your exam at home, hunt for the best spot in the house now, and stick to it; use the same spot for all exam practice you do. If you have siblings, particularly younger ones, make sure they fully understand to respect your space. (You may need a parent’s help for this!) If you do not have WiFi in your home, you should speak to your AP® coordinator about securing WiFi in your home or in a safe public location. Your family should have your [**AP® test date(s)**](https://marcolearning.com/2020-ap-exam-dates/) front of mind so that everyone is prepared to accommodate your needs on the day of your exam.

If possible, make sure your test-taking space covers the following:

* Best possible internet access
* Capacity to charge electronic devices
* Comfortable place for you to sit and write/type/talk
* No distracting noises (this is totally up to personal preference!)
* Space to spread out notes and books for easy access

**2. Choose a device.**

Because the 2020 AP® Exams will be administered digitally, you will have to figure out what kind of device you want to take your exam on. You are allowed to take the exam from a computer (see exceptions below), tablet, or phone, but you may not switch between devices.

What you decide to use is entirely up to personal preference, but obviously make sure you choose a device you know you can rely on during the actual exam. For example, it wouldn’t be wise to take your AP® Exam on an old laptop that is prone to crashing. Try out whatever options you have available to you and go with the one that feels the most intuitive and easiest for you.

**3. Select the right exam materials.**

Your time in this AP® Exam must be guarded at all costs, and it’s time-consuming to look up facts. Just because these exams are open note/open book, does not mean you should bring a year’s worth of textbooks and notes into the exam with you! If you take 10 minutes leafing through a book—and those 10 minutes will fly by—that is almost 25% of your writing and thinking time wasted. In order to answer questions at the level expected of you, you will need to use as much of the allotted 45 minutes as possible writing.

One of the best ways you can maximize your time in an open-book exam is by taking a “quality over quantity” approach to the materials you have at hand once the clock starts. Take the time to look for resources that consolidate helpful strategies and key terms. You can start making your own notes now, but also check out our [**free study guides page**](https://marcolearning.com/free-study-guides/) or our [**AP® Student Support**](https://marcolearning.com/student-courses/) for handouts you might find useful!

**4. Decide between typing and handwriting.**

For written responses, you will have the option to either type or handwrite your answers.

If you’re typing, you can type into a document of your choice (i.e. Word or Google Docs) and then you will have 5 minutes to upload your response once your 45 minutes of exam time is up. If you’re handwriting, you’ll write on sheets of paper, and then you’ll have 5 minutes to take clear pictures with your cell phone and submit responses that way.

Typing might be your best option if:

* You are already a fast typist. Anything above 45 words per minute is good!
* Your handwriting is hard to read.
* You are more comfortable typing on a phone or a laptop than handwriting.

Handwriting might be your best option if:

* You are a slow typist.
* Your handwriting is legible.
* You are confident that you will be able to take a clear picture of your answers and upload them in the allotted 5 minutes.
* You are more comfortable with handwriting than typing.

With only 45 minutes to complete your exam, timing is crucial, so ideally you should choose whichever method allows you to write more!

**5. To print or not to print?**

If you’re taking an AP® Exam  like [**AP® English Language**](https://marcolearning.com/the-2020-ap-english-language-exam-the-rhetorical-analysis/), where passage annotation is helpful, you should decide exactly *how* you want to annotate ahead of time. Most students are used to making annotations by hand on a physical document, but this year, your free-response question  will be provided in digital format. Whether you are using a phone, tablet, or laptop, you’ll be able to screenshot your FRQ and make notes on it that way, but you will also have the option to print it out.

For those of you fortunate enough to have access to a printer, consider the following:

* Your time is precious; printing out your FRQ may waste precious minutes.
* A printer adds one extra technical hoop to jump through on exam day and increases your odds of experiencing technical difficulties.

Of course, if you want to use a printer, do. That’s why the option is there for you. If you *are* printing, take all the steps you can to ensure that it will work as planned on the day of your exam. Make sure you have the right paper and ink, and have a stable connection between the printer and your exam-taking device established ahead of time. You should however, also be prepared to continue without a physical FRQ, JUST IN CASE your printer does not work on exam day.

**6. Familiarize yourself with the software.**

In late April, College Board will provide information on how to access the testing system along with video demonstrations of how to use it. As soon as this information is available, make sure you spend plenty of time familiarizing yourself with the system so that there are no surprises on test day.