

Questions to Ask Your Student About Course Selection

A Family Conversation Guide



Course selection can move fast. Even with a great counselor guiding the way, there's only so much time in one conversation. A few questions at home can pick up where that conversation left off and help your student build a schedule that fits them, not just a requirement sheet.



Start with Interest

- What class did you look forward to this year, even on a hard day?
- Is there a subject you wish your school offered that it doesn't?
- If you could learn about anything for a semester, no grade attached, what would it be?
- What do you find yourself reading, watching, or talking about outside of school?



Think About How They Learn

- Do you learn best through projects, discussion, reading, or a mix?
- Do you like working with a team, or do you focus best on your own?
- How do you feel about a class that includes projects or a portfolio?



Talk About Workload and Balance

- What balance of genuinely challenging classes feels right for you this year—not too light, not overwhelming?
- What does your schedule look like outside of class, sports, a job, and family responsibilities?
- Is there a class on your list mostly because you feel like you should take it rather than because you want to?
- If this year gets stressful, which class would you want to have a little more breathing room in?



Look Toward the Future, Loosely

- Do you have a career or field in mind, even if it is not settled?
- Would it help to take a class that connects to a career path, even one you are only curious about?
- Are you interested in a class that could earn you college credit or a credential before you graduate?
- What would you want to be able to say you tried by the time you graduate?



Watch for Quiet Hesitation

- Is there a class you want to take but are talking yourself out of?
- Do you feel like you are not the type of student for a class you are curious about?
- What would make a harder class feel more doable: a friend enrolled with you, talking to the teacher first, knowing you can ask for help?
- Who at school would you go to if you got stuck deciding: a counselor, a teacher, a coach?



If They Say “I Don’t Know”

That is a normal answer, not a dead end. A few gentler ways back in:

- What is one class you would rule out completely? Let’s start there instead.
- If you had to guess, not decide, what sounds most interesting?
- What did a friend take that you were a little jealous of?
- Let’s just go talk to your counselor together. You don’t have to have an answer first.

One Thing Worth Knowing

Some newer options, like AP® Career Kickstart™ courses (AP Business with Personal Finance, AP Cybersecurity, and AP Networking), connect college-level learning to career fields and are open to students who are new to the subject. This list of questions works the same way no matter what is on your student’s course list.

Next Step

Share what you learn with your student’s counselor. They can help translate a loose interest into a course choice.



Invite students to visit
[cb.org/explore-AP](https://collegeboard.org/explore-AP)
to tell us they’re interested.