

AP Career Kickstart

Counselor Quick Start Guide



What Is AP® Career Kickstart™?

AP Career Kickstart is a growing group of AP courses designed to prepare students for in-demand careers while still offering the opportunity to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, along with an employer-endorsed credential.

Why It Matters for Your Students

Today's students are asking, "How does this connect to my future?" AP Career Kickstart adds another way to make that connection by:

- Connecting learning to career fields
- Building technical and professional skills
- Offering applied, project-based experiences
- Providing pathways to college, careers, or both

Who Should Take These Courses?

These courses are designed for a wide range of students:

- Students new to AP who prefer applied learning
- Students exploring career pathways
- Students already taking AP who want to connect their learning to their goals
- Students interested in business, finance, or technology careers

No prerequisites are required for any of the three courses.

Now in Their First Year (2026-27 School Year):

- AP Business with Personal Finance
- AP Cybersecurity

Coming Next:

- AP Networking is in its final pilot year for 2026-27. The course will launch in the 2027-28 school year.

A quick note on timing: Unless your school is one of the AP Networking pilot sites, this course is not yet available for student enrollment. This is the right year to start building awareness so it's ready to go for next year's course selection conversations.



Course Snapshots

AP Business with Personal Finance

- Builds business, entrepreneurship, and money management skills
- Students create a business model through the Business Canvas Project and apply personal finance skills in the Financial Advisor Project
- Combines real-world business scenarios with personal finance decision making
- A qualifying score on the AP Exam earns the AP Business with Personal Finance Credential, an employer-endorsed credential
- A qualifying AP Exam score can also count toward introductory college business credit; the first institutions with credit policies will be announced in spring 2027

AP Cybersecurity

- Introduces students to protecting systems, networks, and data; no coding or prior computer science course is required
- Uses real-world scenarios such as phishing detection and network defense
- A qualifying score on the AP Exam earns the AP Cybersecurity Credential, an employer-endorsed credential
- A qualifying AP Exam score can also count toward introductory college credit; the first institutions with credit policies will be announced in spring 2027

AP Networking (coming in 2027-28)

- Teaches students to connect, configure, secure, and troubleshoot computer networks, starting with a single device and building up to global internet infrastructure
- Four units cover personal devices, shared networks, larger managed networks, and global connectivity
- A qualifying score on the AP Exam earns the AP Networking Credential, an employer-endorsed credential
- Now in its final pilot year; launch is for the 2027-28 school year, with the first exam in May 2028

What Students Gain

- A qualifying AP Exam score can earn a college credit opportunity and an employer-endorsed credential
- Skills aligned to high-demand careers
- Stronger college and career readiness

Why Counselors Are Key

You play a critical role in helping students:

- Discover new pathways
- Connect their learning to their goals
- Make informed course selections

These courses expand access to AP while opening doors to future opportunities.

Start Here

- Review the Course at a Glance for each course
- Share student and family resources
- Use the course self-checks to help students see whether a course is right for them



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