

Preparing for the AP Statistics Exam

The Multiple Choice Section:

- Worth 50% of your overall grade.
- 40 questions in 90 minutes (there is usually enough time for this section).
- There is no penalty for wrong answers, so if all else fails just guess!
- Generally the questions get harder as you go.
- Skip tough questions and return to them later.

The Free Response Section:

- Worth 50% of your overall grade.
- 6 questions in 90 minutes (students usually feel rushed on this section).
- The first 5 questions are shorter and should take 10-15 minutes each.
- The 6th and final question is called the investigative task. It is worth 25% of the free response portion and usually takes 25-30 minutes. The question usually has a “flow” (meaning the parts are connected) and almost always asks the students to do something new. Don't save it until the end of the exam, you will be too tired and rushed to think creatively. **Maybe do it after #1.**
- A good strategy is to do question 1, then question 6, then the remaining 4 questions. Read each question first so you can get the big picture and prioritize your time.
- Communication is very important. Make sure the grader knows what you are doing and why. Don't use statistical vocabulary unless you use it correctly. Define all symbols, draw pictures, etc. Never just give a numerical answer.
- Don't just rely on calculator commands.
- Explain your reasoning. When asked to choose between several options, give reasons for your choice AND reasons why you did not choose the others.
- When you are asked to compare two distributions, use explicit comparison phrases such as “higher than” or “approximately the same as.” Lists of characteristics do not count as a comparison.
- Don't waste time erasing. Cross out wrong answers and draw arrows to help the reader follow your work. Also, make sure not to leave 2 different solutions to a problem. The worst one will be graded.
- Make sure to answer all questions in the context of the problem.
- If the question asks you to use results from previous parts of the question, make sure you explicitly refer to them in your answer.
- If you cannot get an answer for an early part of a question but need it for a later part, make up a value or carefully explain what you would do if you knew the answer.
- Space on the exam is not suggestive of the desired length of an answer. The best answers are usually quite succinct. There is no need for “extra fluff” on an AP Stats exam.
- Don't automatically enter data into your calculator. In most cases, you will not need to.
- Do not write answers in the green insert. Only the pink/white packet will be scored. You will receive the green one back in 48 hours. Use the green insert to look up formulas and tables.
- Use words like “approximately” often.

Other Stuff:

- Bring a watch to help pace yourself. Bring an extra calculator, or at least extra batteries and an extra pencil.
- You will be provided formulas and tables (Normal, t , χ^2) on both sections. You can also use your calculator on both sections.
- Do NOT bring a cell phone (or any other communication device).
- You may not use rulers, white-out or highlighters.
- Make not discuss the multiple choice questions (ever) and may not discuss the free response questions for 48 hours.
- Be sure to review computer output and the formula sheets.
- The AP Exam is harder than a normal classroom test. Scoring at least 40% will almost guarantee a 3 or higher on the exam. Don't panic if you cannot answer a question or two.
- You may not have any programs on your calculator except those which upgrade its capabilities to match newer calculators. For example, you may have a program to do inverse- t but not one that lists conditions.