



Press Release

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PRESS RELEASE

Japanese Officials and the College Board Announce an Advanced Placement Program® Course in Japanese Language and Culture

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College-Level Course to Prepare High School Students for Success in the Global Economy

WASHINGTON—Ambassador of Japan Ryozo Kato and College Board President Gaston Caperton today announced the creation of an Advanced Placement Program® (AP®) course and examination in Japanese Language and Culture, part of the College Board's commitment to promoting instruction in world languages and cultures in American schools.

"Japan is a dynamic and vital business and cultural partner of the United States," Caperton said. "The College Board's commitment to teaching and learning Japanese is an effort to further multiculturalism and multilingualism in secondary schools and to prepare students for an increasingly interconnected global economy."

Japanese is taught at 645 secondary schools and at more than 500 colleges and universities in the United States, according to the Japan Foundation. In addition, the College Board's Annual Survey of Colleges shows that Japanese language is a major course of study at 96 colleges.

"The United States and Japan share common values and global leadership responsibilities in the world community," said Ambassador Kato. "The creation of an Advanced Placement Program course in Japanese Language and Culture will help to expand the basis for broader cooperation between these two countries."

Japan has the world's second-largest economy, following the United States, and the demand for American speakers of Japanese continues to increase.

"Surveys conducted by Asia Society show a huge gap between the growing importance of Asia to America's economic prosperity and national security and most students' lack of even rudimentary knowledge of Asia," noted Vivien Stewart, vice president for education at Asia Society. "AP Japanese will offer students a high-quality and widely available opportunity to become conversant with the language and culture of an ancient civilization that is also a thriving democracy and global economic power in the twenty-first century."

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Hideya Taida, executive vice president of the Japan Foundation, said, "The introduction of the Japanese AP course and examination will broaden the opportunities for America's youth to enrich their lives through Japanese-language education. Before long, we anticipate that such youth will help to bridge future Japan-America relations by branching out into various fields with their strong Japanese-language skills. We look forward to cooperating with the College Board in order to further promote the Japanese AP course and examination, as well as Japanese language education in general."

AP Japanese Language and Culture will debut in the 2006-07 academic year. The curriculum and exam will be developed by educators identified by the College Board and academic organizations such as the Association of Teachers of Japanese and the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers. A task force of 12 teachers of Japanese (six from the secondary school level and six from colleges and universities) has been tapped to lay the groundwork for the course description from which the curriculum and exam will be created.

"On behalf of the Trustees and members of the College Board, I would like to thank the Ambassador, the government of Japan, and the Japan Foundation in particular for its generous financial support of this new college-level course for American high school students," said Caperton. "I also want to express our gratitude to both the Freeman and Starr Foundations for their significant and generous contributions in support of this effort, and to the Asia Society and the U.S.-Japan Foundation for the instrumental roles they have each played."

Japanese is one of four new AP courses and examinations in world languages and cultures approved for development by the Trustees of the College Board. The AP Italian Language and Culture course will be offered in the fall of 2005, with the first exam in May 2006. AP language and culture courses and exams in Chinese and Russian are also under development. The new offerings expand upon the AP Program's traditional approach to foreign language assessment by ensuring that the study of culture is an integral part of the course. The AP Japanese Exam will encourage teachers at all developmental levels to increasingly employ the U.S. National Foreign Language Standards in their planning and instruction, thereby ensuring explicit curricular connections across all grade levels, including the college years.

"We are introducing new language and culture courses, because we want our students to grow to become citizens of the world—citizens who speak more than one language, who have a better understanding of other cultures, and who have benefited from the growing diversity within our own classrooms," said Caperton.

The College Board's Advanced Placement Program allows students to pursue college-level studies while they are still in high school. Students of different interests and backgrounds can currently choose from among 34 courses and exams in 19 subject areas to demonstrate their knowledge of rigorous academic curricula. Based on their performance on AP Examinations, students can earn college credit, advanced placement, or both.

The College Board: Connecting Students to College Success

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 4,700 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves over three million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT[®], the PSAT/NMSQT[®], and the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®]). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

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