

Welcome parent(s)/guardian(s) of AP learners,

We are fresh off our first week together and the students have already accomplished a lot. I am aware too I have already sent several emails to households, but this is to introduce myself, the course, and Unit 1 overall. Again, this is lengthy, but I feel it necessary to keep all parties informed as we begin our college level readiness course.

First and foremost, I am your teenagers AP teacher, Lauren Gustafson (hello!). I am presently in my 13<sup>th</sup> year of secondary education (all at the AA high school level), fifth here at HHS and with AP related content. I also run our unique on-site free thrift store for students here at Helena High School known as 'The Bengal Closet.' My husband teaches at Capital high school and our children are 9 and 3! My family and I continually reflect on how grateful we are to be a part of the Helena community and feel so lucky to educate your teenagers.

Now, for housekeeping:

1. Included with this is a reminder of the syllabus for this course. Your teens have access to this as it was posted to the individual classroom TEAMS page, prior to school starting (with additional copies of their summer homework). Our classroom page in TEAMS is a great way for anyone to 'see' what we 'do' daily. I highly encourage you to hop on occasionally, as it is nice for all parties involved to know what the 'goings on' of AP are, on a day-to-day basis. Clearly this does not physically put you in the room so please recognize there is so much more we do together that simply cannot be replicated in a single post. I encourage you to ask your teens about our class as it tackles issues that are complex and unique! I will maintain this daily posting practice to ensure not only you are able to stay apprised of course operations, but also, my students. They are encouraged to get in the habit of reviewing and revisiting daily posts to refresh themselves or access materials if absences occur.
2. Students registered for our required online application, 'College Board' or what they refer to as, 'AP Classroom.' You may or may not have received notification of this, but the platform is created by the AP consortium and holds value to the work we are all doing. We as a class will use this application a lot, thus, encouraging your teens nightly to charge up Chromebooks is appreciated.
3. As you know through the registration process and your teens summer tasks, the course revolves around preparing for the national exam this spring. If you are interested in knowing detail, I highly encourage you to click [here](#) to access overviews of all 7 inquiry units and [here](#) to know more about the exam itself. Our AP liaison and guidance counselor, Ellaina Staldine will be sending detailed emails alerting parent(s)/guardian(s) and students how to register and pay for the course. Please check your inbox to keep up with this aspect of the course.
4. As your teen's teacher, I will be posting information at the start of each unit to alert you of our plan, practices, and agenda, to my teacher page. Remember, I post to your teens TEAMS page daily and with additional reminders in the forecast, I do not want to overwhelm you much more than I already have, but feel it is important for you to keep in the 'know' regarding our class.

- a. For instance, we have finished all introductory and housekeeping items to welcome freshman and prepare them for the start of this course. We are beginning Unit I and have really worked through the importance of vocabulary. The foundation is set here for future content and students will find a rhythm where embraced.
  - 1. The task was distributed in class and students have access to a PDF within our TEAMS page
  - 2. First quiz is Friday, 9-6-24
- b. Students will view an informative [TedTalk](#) regarding the power of maps, and complete all tasks necessary to understand the content that lies ahead. We will utilize additional visual supports, quizlet's to retain vocabulary terms, complete progress checks, practice paragraph writing, keep up on current events (*introducing Friday*), complete continent portfolio #1 (*Africa*), and eventually assess. This is a very introductory unit and only contains 8-10% of material on the final test, which is why less time overall is dedicated to this unit.

In closing, something to ponder; *I do utilize guest speakers*. Above I mentioned we connect each of the 7 continents to our course and the 7 units. If you or someone you know would be interested in speaking and can connect their story to both human geography and either Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, Oceania, North or South America, please send me an email. I have several lined-up already but can work in more if the opportunity presents itself. AP Human Geography allows for opportunities such as guest speakers to connect content with live chances at hearing the unique stories of others and how we are connected from around the world.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. I ensure from here on out, an effort to make correspondence concise is the goal. Please encourage your teenagers to always reach out to me when questions arise but I am here to help each of you maneuver through this year as well. I can tell already, we have an eager group of individuals that are ready to learn and take on the task of all things AP!