



Test Prep and Admissions

For AP Calculus Teachers: How to Use This Book in Your Classroom

This Kaplan review book is an invaluable tool for students, but teachers can also use it to understand the format of the exam and to cover the expansive amount of content for the AP Calculus AB and BC course. Inside, in addition to an extensive review and sample questions and tests, you will find the basics of the AP Calculus exam, scoring rubrics, and tips on test-taking strategies and stress management to share with your students.

Whether you cover the material for the AP Calculus exam in the classroom or give students material to review as homework, this book will help you get your students to the level they need to be at in order to score well. Incorporating the material covered in this book into your coursework is not difficult; in fact, one chapter can be covered for each lesson in your course. Let's start from the beginning.

STRUCTURE, STRATEGY, AND ATTITUDE

Part One of this book provides a basic overview of the test, scoring information, and important test-taking strategies. Understanding the structure of the AP Calculus exam can help students develop confidence in their ability to perform well. It is important that they know how the free-response questions are scored, as well as the basic features of a good answer to these types of questions. This section will help students learn proper exam pacing, and will teach them how to use critical thinking skills to effectively eliminate distracters on the multiple-choice section of the exam.

Stress management skills are an essential part of doing well on the exam. The key to staying relaxed is to be fully prepared and to have a plan to tackle any difficult situation. Preparing for the stress and confusion that can be part of the AP process will help students learn how to deal with Test Day anxiety.

THE DIAGNOSTIC TEST

Teachers can use Part Two, the diagnostic test, to gauge student strengths and weaknesses. This short, 20-question sampling of test-like questions should be given to your students as a "starter," to see which areas they need to work on. Have your students take the test, then tally their results. You can divide your students into study groups depending on the areas in which they're having trouble. Or, you can mix students up so that those who scored well on certain sections of the diagnostic test help students who did not score well in those sections, and vice-versa.

If you notice that the entire class needs work on a certain section you can dedicate one day to studying that particular section of the test. Have your students read over the corresponding review chapter, along with related study material. Afterwards, have them take a full-length test or create some of your own study questions concerning the topics they were shaky on. This diagnostic test is a great way to determine general trends of student performance and to create a focus for future lesson plans.

THE REVIEW SECTION

Part Three, the review section, is composed of chapters containing all of the topics covered on the AP Calculus AB and BC exams. Although this Kaplan review book should not function as a replacement for a comprehensive college textbook, each chapter can be integrated into a lesson plan you have already created for the topic, or it can be used as the basic framework of a lesson plan. This review section is an ideal guide for framing some of the “big picture” concepts that are important for the course.

Have students read through the chapter material, either in the classroom or for homework, and discuss the major concepts in each chapter. Students should answer study questions at the end of each chapter, and review the answer explanations so that they understand not only why the correct answer is right, but why the wrong answers are wrong. Students should also think about these questions in terms of test structure and strategy. It is often useful to contrast various question types and discuss which ways of approaching a problem are likely to be successful. Understanding the right way to approach a problem is often central to answering it correctly. It is fundamentally important that students understand why a specific answer is the right choice; they must also learn the cues that help them attack the problem efficiently.

TAKING THE TESTS

The two full-length practice tests in Part Four are some of the most valuable tools that your students have at their disposal in preparing for the AP Calculus exam. The tests are made to be taken in the same time limit as the actual test, with test-like questions and the same number of questions.

If you have the correct amount of class time to devote to a full test, set aside one class period that mimics the actual time limit of the test. If not, try to set up a special session for students to take a mock exam outside of class. Have students come in, take the test during the allotted time limit, and hand in their papers. (This should be done about one month to two weeks before the actual exam—after all of the review material has been covered in class, but not right before they are scheduled to take the test.) Grade the practice tests using the answer key at the end of each test. If students get more than 30 percent of the exam incorrect, they still have a lot of studying to do before they can expect to receive a good score.

Remember, all themes of the AP course are covered within these practice exams. When everyone’s tests have been graded, have students identify which areas they still need to work on, then focus on the appropriate areas for each student. Hold study sessions; have students integrate and incorporate AP exam topics into the daily lessons leading up to exam day. Students should study the answer explanations for questions they got incorrect until they understand why each correct answer is right. If students still need work on specific questions, have them review the chapters in which those questions are covered.

Have your students take the second full-length practice test, and have each individual figure out the best method of study from there. If students are well-prepared, they will be less likely to cram material into their brains at the last minute and more likely to get a good night’s rest before the exam. Taking tests that mirror the actual AP Calculus exam will make students familiar with the timing and format well in advance, giving them a great advantage on Test Day.

It is important to **be** well-prepared and to **feel** well-prepared. Careful study and practice over time, as outlined above, builds confidence and a deeper knowledge of the material. Using this book is one step toward giving your students the best possible preparation for the AP Calculus exam.

Best of luck to you and your students!