

AP Calculus AB vs. AP Calculus BC

What are the differences and similarities between AP Calculus AB and AP Calculus BC?

- AB covers university-level Calculus I – the first semester of college calculus.
- BC covers university-level Calculus I and II – the first two semesters of college calculus.
- Both courses use curriculums approved by College Board.
- Both AB and BC earn the same honors grade points.
- Both have a single AP exam in May. Students cannot take both exams in the same year.

Reasons to take **AP Calculus AB** instead of AP Calculus BC

- **You do not need Calculus II for your major in college.**
- You can get credit for college Calculus I through the AP exam. (This is a possible 4-5 college credits, depending on your university.)
- AB moves slower than BC.
- AB covers less material than BC.
- You get the same possible grade points as BC, but with less difficulty. Some students who are very concerned about their GPA might choose AB because of this fact.

Reasons to take **AP Calculus BC** instead of AP Calculus AB

- **You need Calculus II for your major in college.** Even if you do not take the AP exam, having exposure to the material now will make it easier to understand the second time you see it.
- You can get credit for college Calculus I AND Calculus II through the AP exam. (This is a possible 8-10 college credits, depending on your university, potentially saving you thousands of dollars.)
- BC covers twice the material as AB.
- The assignments require about the same amount of time as those in AB – They just cover a wider range of problems.
- BC is the toughest, most rigorous math course offered at KHS. This is a source of pride in the students who choose BC. BC students wear the “Varsity Calculus” t-shirts.

Why the names AB and BC?

Originally, the AP Calculus AB course covered Pre-Calculus (the A part of the name) and Calculus I (the B part of the name). AP Calculus BC covered Calculus I (the B part) and Calculus II (the C part). Over time, the Pre-Calculus concepts were dropped from AP Calculus AB, but the name remained the same.