Is Online Learning for You?

Online learning is different in many ways from the traditional face-to-face learning many students are used to. Before signing up for an online AP4ME course, students should consider the following:

**Are you self-directed and motivated?**

Due to the flexibility of scheduling, online learning is often considered more convenient than having to attend class in person at the same time in the same place every day. Online learning is not, however, easier than learning in a face-to-face setting. Most of online learning happens on an individual schedule. Students will need to be self-directed and motivated to complete activities and assignments on time and initiate the communication to be successful. Students will be challenged to work independently and will be expected to manager their time effectively and assume responsibility for completing their work.

**Are your technical skills adequate?**

Along with having consistent access to a computer and a reliable internet connection, students should feel comfortable with internet browsing and searching, email, sending and reading attachments, word processing, and sometimes downloading and installing software plug-ins. Students should also be comfortable using online technologies to read, write, watch, and listen as they learn.

**Do you have strong reading skills?**

Reading plays a large part in any class, but especially in an online class. Students must be prepared to read and comprehend college-level texts.
**Does written communication come easily for you?**

In most cases, writing is the primary method of communication in online classes. Students should feel comfortable writing to express their thoughts, share ideas, and ask questions.

**Will you ask questions when you need to?**

It is important for students enrolled in an online course to let their instructor(s) and classmates know when they need help. Without being able to see your facial expressions and body language, instructors rely on the student’s ability to reach out when they have questions about the subject matter or online environment. Students should not be easily discouraged when running into difficulties.

**Will you miss social interaction?**

Interaction with instructors and classmates in an online setting is an integral part of the learning experience. Students are expected to express themselves and fully engage with their peers and instructors.

**Do you have the discipline to study regularly?**

Every Advanced Placement (AP) course is a college-level course, and there is a considerable amount of work, time, and energy that is required to be successful. Like a traditional school, students will need to set aside adequate time for study. Students may find they need to be online frequently to complete assignments or communicate with their peers and/or instructor(s). Students will be expected to manager their time outside of the online environment as well. Procrastinating will make AP courses more challenging and frustrating for students.