

Guided Discussion Groups — AP Subject Support

Information & Policies Document

Last Updated: Jul 13, 2026

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the **Guided Discussion Groups — AP Subject Support**.

These discussion groups are intended to supplement, not replace, a student's classroom instruction. Through small-group, discussion-based meetings, students have the opportunity to explore challenging concepts more deeply, ask questions freely, and develop a stronger conceptual understanding of the material they are learning in class. Think of these sessions as something closer to office hours than a traditional lecture.

Please review the information contained within this document carefully. It explains how the discussion groups operate, their intended purpose, what students should expect throughout the semester, and the policies that govern enrollment and participation.

Program at a Glance

These are semester-based, small-group learning experiences designed to strengthen understanding through deep discussion, thoughtful questions, and collaborative problem solving. And, with any luck, to have a great deal of fun while doing so!

Key Features

- Semester-based enrollment [Fall & Spring].
 - Weekly 90-minute discussion group.
 - Maximum of six students per group.
 - Discussion-based learning focused on understanding, not memorization.
 - Bring homework questions, topic-specific questions, or simply your curiosity.
 - Sessions are held at the Technical Tutors Edina office.
 - Lower hourly cost than one-on-one tutoring.
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Who Are These Groups Designed For?

These groups are designed for students who want to strengthen their understanding of challenging subjects through thoughtful discussion, collaborative problem solving, and genuine curiosity.

These groups might be a great fit for students who:

- Struggle with memorization (like myself!) and...
- Want to understand the deeper “whys?” and “hows?” of the topic, not just the steps.
- Enjoy asking questions, exploring ideas, and learning in a more back-and-forth style of learning.
- Value and desire true understanding over memorization.

Students seeking highly individualized instruction or assignment-specific assistance may find 1-on-1 tutoring to be the more appropriate option.

Above all, these groups are intended to be both rigorous and, dare I say, fun? My hope is that students leave each meeting with greater confidence, a deeper understanding, and excited to return the following week!

Purpose

The purpose of these groups is not to cover more material but to understand the material they are already learning more completely, deeply.

AP courses, in my opinion, cover far too much material in far too little time. As a result, students are often taught to memorize procedures for specific problem types rather than truly understanding the underlying concepts. This can leave students feeling frustrated or convinced they simply "aren't good or smart enough" at the subject, when, in reality, they may have never been given enough time to develop a strong conceptual foothold to propel their efforts through such complex topics.

These discussion groups are designed to take the opposite approach.

Rather than emphasizing memorization, we'll focus on understanding the underlying ideas and concepts that make future learning more intuitive, more enjoyable, and far less dependent upon memorization. My hope is that students leave each meeting with greater confidence and the ability to reason through unfamiliar problems—not simply recognize ones they've seen before.

What Happens During a Typical Meeting?

Every discussion begins with one simple question: "What should we figure out together tonight?"

There is no rigid lesson plan. Each meeting is guided by the interests, questions, and current coursework of the participating students. Homework questions, difficult concepts, upcoming assessments, and student-requested topics are all fair game for discussion.

Students will also have access to a shared online folder where they can suggest future discussion topics, upload interesting problems, or request concepts they'd like to explore.

Because these are group discussions, conversations naturally focus on topics that benefit the greatest number of students. When a question becomes highly individualized, one-on-one tutoring may be the more appropriate option.

Above all, these meetings are meant to be engaging. Ask questions, challenge ideas, enjoy the discussion, and don't be afraid to be wrong. Genuine understanding takes time and, I'm hoping, learning should be something you look forward to each week

Student Expectations

Students are encouraged to arrive ready to learn, ask questions, and enjoy the discussion.

Beyond that... simply bring yourself!

Some students enjoy asking questions throughout the evening. Others prefer to listen, reflect, and participate only occasionally. Both approaches are perfectly acceptable and encouraged. The groups are intended to be respectful, welcoming environments where students feel comfortable participating in whatever manner best supports their learning.

Above all, I hope these discussions become something students genuinely look forward to each week. Challenging subjects deserve thoughtful discussion, good company, and laughter along the way (I made a mistake!? Yell at me, you nerds!).

Attendance & Make-Up Policy

The groups are designed as an ongoing semester experience. While regular attendance is highly encouraged, I understand that students balance demanding academic schedules, athletics, music, employment, family vacations, illness, and many other commitments.

Students should attend whenever reasonably possible and understand that discussion groups are not structured around individual make-up sessions. If a student misses a meeting, it is their responsibility to remain current with their coursework, much as they would in a college or university course.

Make-up discussions will not be provided for individual absences.

If a discussion must be canceled due to instructor illness, emergency, or another unforeseen circumstance, a make-up meeting, tuition credit, or other appropriate accommodation will be provided.

Tuition & Enrollment

Enrollment is semester-based and available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each discussion group has limited enrollment and a student's seat is reserved only after full tuition has been received.

Registration will remain open until the group reaches capacity or enrollment is otherwise closed at the instructor's discretion.

Tuition is collected in full before the semester begins. This allows the discussion groups to remain focused on providing a high-quality learning experience throughout the semester rather than ongoing administrative tasks. It also reflects the semester-long commitment made by both the student and the instructor.

If a discussion group does not reach minimum enrollment, the group may be canceled at the instructor's discretion. In that event, all tuition paid will be refunded, in full, using the original payment method.

Refund & Cancellation Policy

These groups are intended to be semester-long commitments. Before enrolling, students and parents should carefully consider academic schedules, extracurricular activities, employment, vacations, and other anticipated commitments.

Refund requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and remain at the sole discretion of the instructor. Depending upon the circumstances, refunds may be issued to the original payment method, provided as 1-on-1 tutoring credit, or respectfully declined.

Requests resulting from changes in personal schedules, extracurricular activities, or other circumstances outside the instructor's control will generally not qualify for a refund.

If a student feels the discussion group is not meeting their expectations, I encourage them to reach out as soon as possible. I genuinely welcome constructive feedback and will always make a reasonable effort to address concerns before they become larger issues.

If a discussion group is canceled by the instructor or cannot continue due to instructor illness, emergency, or other unforeseen circumstances, an appropriate make-up discussion, tuition credit, or full refund will be provided.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will homework be assigned?

No.

Students already have demanding academic schedules. Rather than assigning additional work, these discussion groups are intended to help students better understand the work they already have. Bring homework questions, confusing concepts, or simply your curiosity.

My class is covering a different topic. Can I still attend?

Absolutely.

While discussions naturally focus on the greatest overlap among participating students, every school and teacher progresses through the curriculum a little differently. Feel free to bring questions or suggest future discussion topics.

What if I don't know the answer?

Perfect!

These subjects are challenging and nobody is expected to know everything. Questions, mistakes, and curiosity are all valuable parts of the learning process. Sometimes the best discussions begin with, "I don't understand..."

What if I'm shy or prefer to listen?

That's perfectly okay!

Some students enjoy asking questions throughout the discussion while others prefer to listen, reflect, and participate only occasionally. Both approaches are welcome and valuable!

Will every student's question be answered each week?

I'll certainly do my best.

Discussion topics are generally selected to provide the greatest benefit to the group as a whole, with particular emphasis on the underlying, fundamental concepts that support future learning.

Are parents welcome to stay?

In general, no.

These discussion groups are intended to provide students with a comfortable environment where they can ask questions, make mistakes, and participate freely alongside their peers. If a parent has an interest in the subject and would like to enroll as a student, they are certainly welcome to do so!

May I bring food or drinks?

Absolutely!

Coming right from school or practice? You're welcome to bring a snack or beverage, order food, or step away for a restroom break whenever needed. You're an adult, do what you need to do!

Can I join after the semester has started?

Yes, provided space is still available and joining the group is appropriate based on the material already covered. Enrollment remains open until a group reaches capacity or registration is otherwise closed.

What if I decide 1-on-1 tutoring might be a better fit?

That's perfectly okay!

If you decide that individual tutoring would better meet your needs, I'll gladly work with you to apply any available tuition credit toward 1-on-1 tutoring, subject to availability and the policies described elsewhere in this handbook.

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions about the discussion groups, this handbook, or whether this format is the right fit, please don't hesitate to reach out before enrolling. This can be done via the Home page of my website.

I'd much rather answer your questions in advance than have anything be unclear after the semester begins.

Enrollment Acknowledgement

Students and parents or guardians wishing to enroll in **Guided Discussion Groups — AP Subject Support** are required to review this handbook in its entirety before completing enrollment.

By signing below, both the student and parent or guardian acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to the information, expectations, and policies described within this handbook.

This handbook is intended to establish clear expectations so that students, families, and the instructor begin the semester with a shared understanding of how Guided Discussion Groups operate.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____