

The Homeschool Exam Roadmap

Everything that has to happen before your homeschooled student can sit the AP Physics 1 exam on **May 5, 2027** — with dates, and no physics.

Start here

You cannot register your own student. The College Board states it plainly: parents and students cannot order AP Exams directly.^[1] A homeschooled student is added to *a school's* exam order by that school's AP coordinator. So the first task of your AP year is not physics. It is finding a school — and most families discover that in February.

Who does what

Five moves. You make two; a school makes three.

The path, end to end

	The move	Who makes it, and what it means
1	Find candidate schools	You. The College Board points homeschooled students to the AP Course Ledger to find nearby schools where they might test. ^[1] It lists courses authorized to carry the AP label, ^[10] so treat it as a directory of AP schools, not a search for AP Physics 1.
2	Ask for the AP coordinator	You. Ask whether one of them can arrange testing; schools set their own deadlines and policies for outside students. ^[1] Page 3 is the email.
3	Create an “exam only” section	The school. The coordinator creates an <i>exam only</i> section for the subject. ^[1] The school does not have to teach AP Physics 1 — the section exists precisely for students in none of its classes.
4	Issue the join code	The school. Only the AP coordinator can create and provide the join code. ^[1] There is nowhere else to get one.
5	Enroll in My AP with that code	You and your student. The join code puts the student on the school's exam roster — and opens AP Classroom (page 5). ^[1]

Two things that surprise families

- **A school may say no, and that is allowed.** The AP Program *encourages* coordinators to help these students,^[1] but hosting one is a choice. Contact several.
- **The school sets the terms.** Its deadline comes before the national one, and it may charge more than the published fee for proctoring.^{[1][3]} Ask for both in your opening email — two schools twenty minutes apart can quote different numbers.

If you do one thing after reading this page

Open the AP Course Ledger, search your state and county, and write down five to eight schools with a phone number. Twenty minutes of work, and the foundation of the whole year.

The calendar: what to do, and when

Dates below are for the **2026–27** AP year, checked on College Board pages in September 2026. They are reset annually — for a different year, look them up again (page 6 shows how).

From now to exam day

When	What to do in that window
September — early October	Build the school list from the Ledger and send the email on page 3. Send it to <i>all</i> of them in the same week rather than one at a time: replies take days, refusals are common, and sequential emailing is how October disappears.
October	Follow up once with anyone who has not replied — coordinators are running PSAT administrations this month. From every school that says yes, get three things in writing: their local deadline, their fee, and whether your student must bring a testing device. ^[1] Also start the photo ID now: a student testing at a school they do not attend must bring a government-issued or school-issued photo ID, ^[4] and a state ID card can take weeks to arrive.
November 13, 2026 11:59 p.m. ET	The final ordering deadline: the date by which the AP coordinator submits the school's exam order. ^[1] Your student needs to be in that order, so treat the school's own deadline as the real one. Ask the coordinator to confirm, in writing, that the order went in.
November 14, 2026 — March 12, 2027	The homeschool exception. A student who contacts a school after November 13 can still be added without incurring a late order fee; the coordinator can contact AP Services no later than March 12 to request that the fee be waived. This applies to homeschooled students and students whose school does not administer the exam — and those students must be in the school's exam order by March 12. ^[1] It is a genuine second chance, not a rumor. It is also the last one.
As soon as you have the join code Early 2027	Enroll in My AP. That is what places the student on the roster and opens AP Classroom (page 5). ^[1] Do not leave a join code sitting in an inbox. The College Board says it will publish full-length sample free-response booklets for the hybrid digital exams in early 2027. ^[7] Print one when it appears and have your student write in it. This is the single cheapest piece of exam-day preparation available.
April 2027	Schools receive their booklet shipment in April. ^[7] Confirm with the coordinator: date, room, arrival time, what your student brings, and whether the school provides a testing device. Page 4 lists what to ask about.
Wednesday May 5, 2027	The AP Physics 1 exam, in Session 2 of that day. ^[2] For schools in the lower 48, Hawaii and Washington, D.C., Session 2 begins at 12 p.m. local time ; in Alaska, 11 a.m. Exams may begin up to an hour after the listed start time, ^[6] so ask your school for <i>its</i> reporting time rather than assuming noon.

The one sentence to keep

Being ready for the exam and being *registered* for it are two separate projects, and only one of them has a hard external deadline. A student who is brilliantly prepared and not on an exam order on March 12 does not sit the exam.

The email to an AP coordinator

Coordinators are teachers or counselors with a second job attached. The email that gets answered is short, says at once what is being asked for, and makes the answer easy. Copy this, change the bracketed parts, send it to every school on your list on the same day.

Send this

Subject: Homeschooled student — AP Physics 1 exam, May 2027

Dear [Name or “AP Coordinator”],

I am the parent of a homeschooled student in [town/district], and I am writing to ask whether [School] would be able to include my student in its AP Exam order this year.

The exam is **AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based**, scheduled for **Wednesday, May 5, 2027**. I understand that a family cannot order an exam directly and that a student from outside the school is added through an “exam only” section created by the AP coordinator.

If your school is able to do this, could you tell me your **fee** for an outside student and your own **local deadline** for being added to the order? I would also be glad to know whether my student should bring a testing device or whether the school provides one.

We can travel to [School] for the exam, and my student will follow all of your school’s testing procedures.

Thank you for considering this — I know exam ordering adds work to an already full year.

[Your name]

[Phone] • [Email]

Why each sentence is there

- **The subject line names the subject and the year**, so a coordinator handling twenty exam subjects need not open the message to know which one this is.
- **“I understand that a family cannot order an exam directly”** signals that you know how this works, so the reply can be yes or no rather than an explanation.
- **Asking for the fee and the local deadline up front** saves an exchange, and those two numbers are what you actually need. Both are the school’s to set.^{[1][3]}
- **The testing-device question** is no small detail: the coordinator is the one who tells students whether to bring a testing device or whether one will be provided.^[1]
- **“We can travel”** removes the objection a coordinator is likeliest to be weighing — that hosting an outside student becomes their logistical problem.

If the answer is no

Most refusals are about capacity, not about your student. A one-paragraph reply costs nothing and occasionally produces the school you were looking for.

Send this instead

Thank you for letting me know, and for taking the time to reply.

If you happen to know of another school in the area that does host outside students for AP Exams, I would be very grateful for a name — I am contacting schools across [county] and any pointer saves a great deal of guessing. Either way, thank you.

What a yes actually looks like

A yes is not a friendly reply. A yes is: a fee, a local deadline, and a **join code** for an exam only section. Until a join code exists, keep emailing other schools — and once the code arrives, use it in My AP the same week.^[1]

The money

2027 exam fees, as published by the College Board

Item	What it is
\$99	The 2027 fee per exam taken in the U.S. The College Board states the cost per exam is unchanged for 2026–27. ^[3]
–\$37	A College Board fee reduction per exam for students with significant financial need, handled through the AP coordinator — not by us, and not by the family directly. ^[3]
Possibly less again	Depending on the state, additional funding may be available on top of that reduction; the College Board’s instruction is to ask your AP coordinator what support exists. ^[3] We publish no state-by-state amounts: they change, and a wrong number here would cost a family money.
Possibly more	A school may require a higher fee than the published one to cover proctoring and administration. ^[3] That is legitimate, and it is the school’s decision.
\$40	The charge for an exam ordered and then not taken. After November 13, withdrawing costs \$40 rather than the full fee — and it applies even to a student who qualifies for the fee reduction. Tell the coordinator early if plans change. ^[3]

Nobody pays the College Board directly: your school collects the fee and submits it with its own.^[1] Ask what form of payment it wants, and when. That answer is local and is on no College Board page.

Exam day

The exam is **hybrid digital**. Multiple-choice questions and free-response prompts appear in the Bluebook app; free-response answers are **handwritten** in a paper booklet that is collected and returned for scoring.^{[2][7]} Section I is 42 multiple-choice questions in 85 minutes, Section II four free-response questions in 95 minutes, each half the score.^[2]

The practical consequence of “handwritten”

A student who spent the year typing will be writing four extended physics answers by hand, under time, in a booklet, for the first time. Work on paper during the year, and print the sample free-response booklet when the College Board posts it in early 2027.^[7]

What your student brings, and what they must not

Bring: a **photo ID**, government-issued or school-issued, required because your student does not attend the testing school; a watch that is not a smartwatch; two sharpened No. 2 pencils with erasers, or pens with black or dark blue ink, for the booklet; up to two approved calculators; and a **ruler or straightedge**, permitted specifically for AP Physics exams. If the school is not providing a device, a charged device with Bluebook installed, plus its charger.^[4]

Calculators for Physics 1: 4-function, scientific or graphing, all allowed on both sections, with a Desmos scientific or graphing calculator built into Bluebook. Memories need no clearing, the proctor checks calculators before the start, and a student may sit the exam without one.^[5]

Do not bring: phones, smartwatches or wearable technology; mechanical or colored pencils; a protractor; your own scratch paper or reference sheet, since the proctor supplies what is allowed; food or drink.^[4]

The one families forget: your student must know their College Board username and password to sign in to Bluebook. A password saved in the browser will not work.^[4]

What an “exam only” student gets in AP Classroom

Half a door, and it is worth opening

Once the join code is entered, **all** students — including those in exam only sections — have access to *select* course resources in AP Classroom.^[1]

What an exam only student does **not** get: resources that only become available when a class section teacher assigns them.^[1] In practice that means the material a classroom teacher hands out is not part of the package, and no teacher is attached to your student’s account. The exception the College Board names is a student enrolled in *both* an exam only section at one school and a teacher-led class section at another — that student sees the assigned resources too.^[1]

Plan the year as though AP Classroom will not carry it. Treat whatever appears there as a supplement to a course you are already running.

The laboratory work, and what it has to do with credit

This is the part of a homeschool AP year that is easiest to postpone and most expensive to reconstruct in April.

What the College Board actually says

- **A minimum of 25% of instructional time** is spent on hands-on laboratory work.^{[8][9]} For a 34-week year, that is not a weekend project.
- **It is recorded and kept by the student**, in a portfolio of lab reports or a lab notebook, print or digital.^[8] The course description adds that any type of notebook can fulfill the requirement, even an online document.^[9]
- **Home labs count.** Where circumstances prevent onsite access to a laboratory, the College Board lists three ways the requirement can be met: virtual labs, simulations accompanied by student work, and *labs that can be safely conducted at home*.^[8] A kitchen table is not a loophole; it is one of the named routes.
- **Supervision is required regardless of route.** All student laboratory experiences must be supervised by a science educator.^[8] What that means for your family is a question we cannot answer for you — but it is a question to settle in September, not in March.
- **Why the notebook matters beyond the course.** The course description states that colleges may require students to present their laboratory materials from AP science courses before granting college credit for laboratory work, and that students should therefore be encouraged to retain their notebooks, reports and other materials.^[9]

Read that last point precisely

It does not say a lab notebook earns credit, and neither do we. It says a college *may ask to see one*. Keeping the notebook does not guarantee anything; not keeping it means that if the request comes, you have nothing to send. That asymmetry is the whole argument for starting in week 1.

A home lab program is being written

Deciding *that* the lab work has to happen is the easy half. The next material for this page is a set of twelve investigations built around household equipment and a phone, with a printable lab notebook page for each and an hours log — so the record exists as the year goes, rather than being assembled in April. It will appear at sample.stepbystepsciencepublishing.com/for-parents when it is finished. Nothing on this page depends on it.

Where these facts come from, and how to re-check them

Ten College Board pages, each opened and read on **September 1, 2026** — no aggregator, no forum, no score calculator. If anything here disagrees with a College Board page, that page is right, and dates reset yearly: treat anything older than your own school year as a prompt to look it up. Bookmark [1], [2] and [3].

College Board sources, checked September 2026

Page	What it supports here
[1] Ordering AP Exams for Students Who Don't Attend Your School	Families cannot order exams; Course Ledger; exam only sections and join codes; local school deadlines; November 13; the homeschool exception and March 12; AP Classroom; fee collection; who tells students about a testing device.
[2] AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based Exam	Exam date and Session 2; hybrid digital format; 42 MCQ / 85 min and 4 FRQ / 95 min from May 2027; reference information in Bluebook.
[3] 2027 AP Exam Fees	The \$99 fee; the \$37 reduction; possible state funding; higher school fees; the \$40 unused or canceled exam charge.
[4] What to Bring on AP Exam Day	Photo ID for a student not attending the testing school; pencils and pens; the ruler permitted for AP Physics; the prohibited list; Bluebook sign-in.
[5] AP Exams Calculator Policy	Calculator types for Physics 1; built-in Desmos; two handhelds; proctor checks; testing without one.
[6] 2027 AP Exam Start Times	Session 2 start times by time zone, and the one-hour window after the listed start.
[7] Hybrid Digital AP Exams	Handwritten booklets; the April shipment to schools; sample free-response booklets published in early 2027.
[8] AP Physics 1 Course Audit	The 25% laboratory minimum; portfolio or notebook; virtual labs, simulations and labs safely conducted at home; supervision by a science educator.
[9] AP Physics 1 Course and Exam Description (PDF)	The same 25% minimum; any notebook type, including online; colleges may require laboratory materials before granting laboratory credit.
[10] AP Course Ledger	Courses authorized to carry the AP or Pre-AP designation on a transcript.

The full addresses:

- [1] apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/ordering-fees/ordering-exam-materials/special-ordering-circumstances/students-other-study
- [2] apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-physics-1/exam
- [3] apstudents.collegeboard.org/exam-policies-guidelines/exam-fees
- [4] apstudents.collegeboard.org/exam-policies-guidelines/what-to-bring-on-exam-day
- [5] apstudents.collegeboard.org/exam-policies-guidelines/calculator-policies
- [6] apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/exam-dates/start-times
- [7] apcentral.collegeboard.org/exam-administration-ordering-scores/administering-exams/digital-ap-exams/hybrid-digital
- [8] apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-physics-1/course-audit
- [9] apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-physics-1-course-and-exam-description.pdf
- [10] apcourseaudit.inflexion.org/ledger/

What we cannot do, and who wrote this

Written and published by **Jakub Jan Borkała, PhD** — **StepByStep Science Publishing**, an independent publisher with **no affiliation to the College Board**. I am the author of the workbook named below, so treat that part as coming from an interested party.

We cannot register a student for an exam, contact a school on your behalf, or influence whether a school agrees to host one. Only a school's AP coordinator can add a student to an exam order. Nothing here is legal advice, and nothing here decides how a college treats an AP score.

The physics side of the same year is covered by the workbook: 183 worked problems across all eight units, each multiple-choice question solved along a fast exam-speed path with an explanation of why every wrong choice is tempting, and each free-response question worked in full. Nothing in this PDF is withheld behind a purchase.

Where to find the full workbook

AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based Practice Workbook — by Jakub Jan Borkała, PhD

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/8398112816>

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