

Exam Overview

The AP Environmental Science Exam assesses student understanding of the science practices and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours and 40 minutes long and includes 80 multiple-choice questions and 3 free-response questions. A four-function, scientific, or graphing calculator is allowed on both sections of the exam. The details of the exam, including exam weighting and timing, can be found below:

Section	Question Type	Number of Questions	Exam Weighting	Timing
I	Multiple-choice questions	80	60%	90 minutes
II	Free-response questions	3	40%	70 minutes
Question 1: Design an investigation (10 points)				
Question 2: Analyze an environmental problem and propose a solution (10 points)				
Question 3: Analyze an environmental problem and propose a solution doing calculations (10 points)				

The exams assess content from the four big ideas of the course.

Big Idea 1: Energy Transfer

Big Idea 2: Interactions between Earth systems

Big Idea 3: Interactions between different species and the environment

Big Idea 4: Sustainability

How Student Learning Is Assessed on the AP Exam

The AP Environmental Science practices are assessed on the AP Exam as detailed below.

Science Practice	Multiple-Choice Section Exam Weighting	Free-Response Section Exam Weighting
Practice 1: Concept Explanation	30–38%	13–20%
Practice 2: Visual Representations	12–19%	6–10%
Practice 3: Text Analysis	6–8%	Practice 3 is not explicitly assessed in the free-response section.
Practice 4: Scientific Experiments	2–4%	10–14%
Practice 5: Data Analysis	12–19%	6–10%
Practice 6: Mathematical Routines	6–9%	20%
Practice 7: Environmental Solutions	17–23%	26–34%

Section I: Multiple-Choice

The multiple-choice section includes both individual and set-based questions. All set-based questions include stimulus material:

- Three to four sets include quantitative data, such as data tables, charts, or graphs. These questions primarily assess Practice 5, but can also assess Practices 1, 4, 6, or 7.
- Three to four sets include qualitative data or information, such as models, representations, or maps. These questions primarily assess Practice 2, but can also assess Practices 1, 4, or 7.
- Two sets include text-based sources. These questions primarily assess Practice 3, but can also assess Practices 1, 6, or 7.

Section II: Free-Response

The second section of the AP Environmental Science Exam includes three free-response questions.

FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 1

Design an investigation presents students with an authentic environmental scenario accompanied by either a model/visual representation or quantitative data, and may assess student ability to:

- Describe and/or explain environmental concepts, processes, and models presented in written format (Practice 1).
- Analyze visual representations or data (Practice 2 and/or 5).
- Analyze research studies that test environmental principles (Practice 4).
- Describe environmental problems and/or potential responses (Practice 7).

FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 2

Analyze an environmental problem and propose a solution presents students with an authentic environmental scenario accompanied by either a

model/visual representation or quantitative data, and may assess student ability to:

- Describe and/or explain environmental concepts, processes, and models presented in written format (Practice 1).
- Analyze visual representations or data (Practice 2 and/or 5).
- Propose and justify solutions to environmental problems (Practice 7).

FREE-RESPONSE QUESTION 3

Analyze an environmental problem and propose a solution doing calculations presents students with an authentic environmental scenario and may assess student ability to:

- Describe or environmental concepts, processes, and models presented in written format (Practice 1).
- Apply quantitative methods to address environmental concepts (Practice 6).
- Propose and justify solutions to environmental problems (Practice 7).