# State Minimum High School Graduation Requirements

Minimum set of courses required for high school graduation.

Beginning in the 1986–87 school year, California*Education Code (EC)* Section 51225.3 has specified a minimum set of courses to meet state requirements to graduate from high school and receive a diploma. The governing boards of local education agencies (LEAs) have the authority to supplement the state minimum requirements at the local level.

*EC*Section 51225.3 states that all pupils receiving a diploma of graduation from a California high school must have completed all of the following courses, while in grades nine to twelve, inclusive:

* Unless otherwise specified, each course shall have a duration of one school year:
* Three courses in [English](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/index.asp)
* Two courses in [Mathematics](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrmath.asp), including one year of Algebra I (*EC*Section 51224.5)
* Two courses in [Science](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrscience.asp), including biological and physical sciences
* Three courses in [Social Studies](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/index.asp), including United States history and geography; world history, culture, and geography; a one-semester course in American government and civics, and a one-semester course in economics. \*(Note that pursuant to AB 2927 [2024], commencing with pupils graduating in the 2030-31 school year, a pupil who completes the below-referenced one-semester personal finance course requirement may elect to be exempt from this one-semester course in economics requirement.)
* One course in [Visual or Performing Arts](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/vp/),  [World Language](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/fl/index.asp), or [Career Technical Education](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/). For the purpose of satisfying the minimum course requirement, a course in American Sign Language shall be deemed a course in foreign language.
* Two courses in [Physical Education](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pe/index.asp), unless the pupil has been exempted pursuant to the provisions of *EC*Section 51241
* One semester of [Ethnic Studies](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/esmc.asp), commencing with pupils graduating in the 2029–30 school year (a course based on the model curriculum developed pursuant to Section 51226.7; an existing ethnic studies course; an ethnic studies course taught as part of a course that has been approved as meeting the A–G requirements; or a locally developed ethnic studies course approved by the governing board of the school district or charter school)
* One semester of a separate, standalone course in Personal Finance, commencing with pupils graduating in the 2030-31 school year

The local governing board of the LEA with the active involvement of parents, administrators, teachers, and pupils, shall adopt alternative means for pupils to complete the prescribed course of study, which may include:

* Practical demonstration of skills and competencies
* Supervised work experience or other outside school experience
* Career technical education classes offered in high schools
* Courses offered by regional occupational centers or programs
* Interdisciplinary study
* Independent study
* Credit earned at a postsecondary institution

Requirements for graduation and specified alternative means for completing the prescribed course of study shall be made available to pupils, parents, and the public.

A school district shall exempt a pupil in foster care, as defined in Section 51225.2, or a pupil who is a homeless child or youth, as defined in Section 11434a(2) of Title 42 of the United States Code, who transfers between schools any time after the completion of the pupil’s second year of high school from all coursework and other requirements adopted by the governing board of the school district that are in addition to the statewide coursework requirements specified in Section 51225.3, unless the school district makes a finding that the pupil is reasonably able to complete the school district’s graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school by the end of the pupil’s fourth year of high school. See the California Department of Education [Foster Youth Resources](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/resources.asp) and [Resources for Homeless Children and Youth](https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/) webpages for additional information.

[High School Graduation Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrfaq.asp)
Frequently asked questions regarding high school graduation requirements.

[Courses Required for California Public University](https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/gs/hs/hsgrtable.asp)
The University of California and the California State University systems have established a uniform minimum set of courses required for admission as a freshman.

The entire California Education Code may be found in the [California Law Library (Legislative Information)](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codesTextSearch.xhtml) .

Posted by: California Department of Education – February 2025