



Michael Mendoza
AP U.S. History (APUSH) teacher

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

How One AP® Teacher Helped Students Reach Their True Potential

THE CHALLENGE:

A Lack of Challenge

Limited in strenuous content, the material designed to support AP® course delivery did not adequately prepare students for the difficulty of the exam's questions or its time constraints.

"If students aren't challenged, when it's time for the test, they won't have the confidence or stamina to answer those questions," said Michael Mendoza, an AP U.S. History (APUSH) teacher in the Canutillo Independent School District (ISD) in El Paso, Texas.



THE SOLUTION:

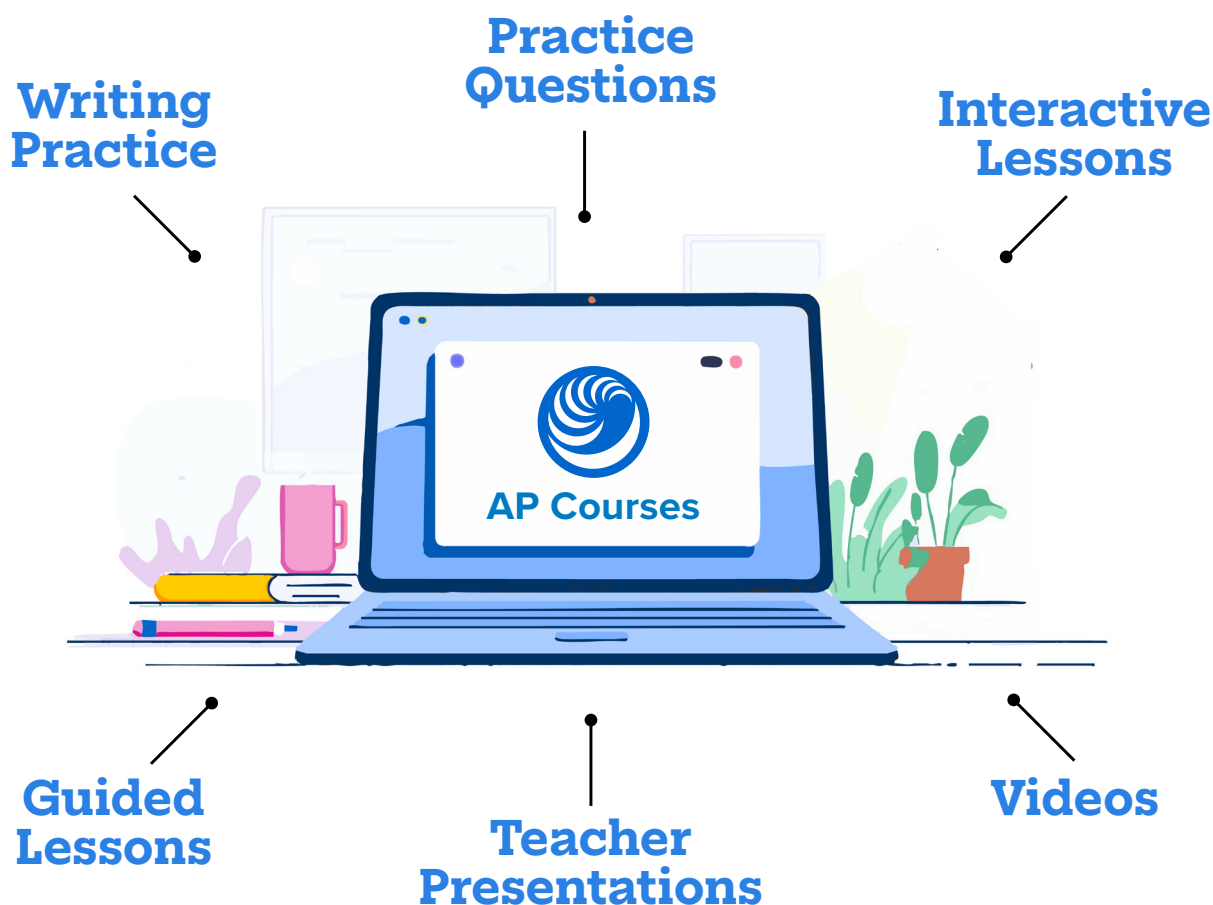
UWorld's Courses for AP

Mendoza initially relied on AP Classroom, a free, online platform developed by College Board® to support AP instruction with basic practice and exam prep tools. He also leveraged more traditional resources.

"We had a book prior to using UWorld," Mendoza recounted. "You can only learn so much from a book — things are constantly changing."

He understood it takes more than a history textbook to help students engage with challenging AP coursework. When his district received [UWorld's Courses for AP](#) through the AP Success Grant in 2023, he was overjoyed.

[UWorld's AP Success Grant](#) is designed to support districts in strengthening their AP programs by providing high-quality teaching and learning resources. Grant recipients get yearlong access



to the Courses for AP, training and ongoing implementation support, and personalized data reporting at the student, teacher, campus, and district levels.

Ideal grant applicants believe in equitable access to top-notch AP material, face challenges with resource gathering, and want rigorous content that truly prepares students for AP exam success. In other words, ideal grant applicants strongly resemble Canutillo ISD.

"You have guided lessons, the writing practice, and basically all the tools needed to succeed on the exam," Mendoza said.

While he lauded UWorld's course offerings, such as interactive lessons, videos, and teacher

presentations, the practice questions stood out most. To streamline his lesson planning, he incorporated them into in-class individual and group assignments, quizzes, end-of-unit tests, and bell ringers every other day.

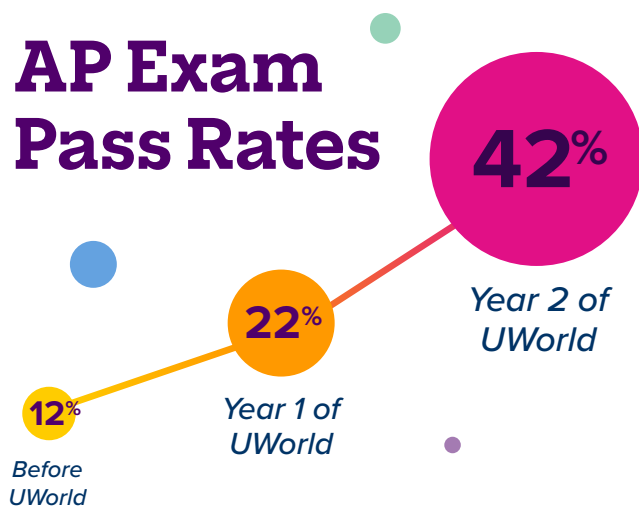
"The built-in timer also played a big part in students' success," he said. "They gained enough stamina to answer the 55 exam questions in 55 minutes."

UWorld's APUSH practice questions are modeled after College Board-level content and expertly crafted by seasoned AP educators. Created to mirror the exam in rigor and design, these questions provided the level of challenge Mendoza wanted and his students needed.

THE RESULTS:

From 12% to 42% and Beyond

“Before UWorld, our test scores were at a 12% pass rate,” Mendoza explained. “That first year we got it, they increased to 22%. The next we reached 42%. That’s a sharp difference in student achievement. If they can gain those valuable skills now, they’ll be able to answer questions at a higher level in college. A lot of that I attribute to UWorld’s complexity and the continuous addition of new features and rich content.”



Additionally, he offered UWorld to his non-AP students and achieved a 99% pass rate on the U.S. History State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR).

Another testament to Mendoza’s enhanced instruction came from 2 English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Although they struggled with reading and writing, they enrolled in the APUSH class, studied diligently, and earned 4s on the exam.

“Those 2 kids are a great example of just what your program provided,” said Mendoza. “Not to mention their own drive to be better than they can be — their potential.”

Along with UWorld’s practice questions, Mendoza added a question of his own: “Can you hold up your fingers and tell me what you want to score on this exam?” When many students responded with 4 or 5 fingers, he turned it into a ritual. At the start of each class, they would raise their goal numbers to hold themselves accountable. “My AP class has become more spirited and competitive. There’s a strong family-type atmosphere.”

With the help of UWorld, Mendoza plans to reach a 60% pass rate this year. He also hopes to see more 5s on the AP exam — just as he’s already seeing them outside the classroom. “My old students come and give me high-fives down the hall all the time. They’re so much more confident. They feel proud.”



For more information, please contact your local representative, or visit:

collegereadiness.uworld.com