

DP Studies in Language and literature curriculums changes – Frequently Asked Questions

Why are the changes being made?

All DP curriculums are reviewed on a seven-year teaching cycle. This ensures that each is fit for purpose and incorporates the latest educational research and lessons learned from a thorough evaluation of the existing curriculum. The aim of the review is to develop courses that allow enough flexibility to address the needs of all students in the modern world. As such, we believe the new DP studies in language and literature syllabi will offer more choice for a greater number of students as well as offer schools greater flexibility in the way that they group students, schedule lessons and teach the content.

When is first teaching and first examination of the new subjects?

First teaching will take place in 2019 with first assessment in 2021. New guides will come out to schools in early 2019 and subject specific seminars, to launch the new subjects, will also take place around this time, to give teachers and schools time to prepare for the new subjects.

Are schools and universities consulted about changes during a review?

Yes, and consultation with schools and universities is ongoing throughout the seven-year review process. From surveying schools and universities to gathering reports from senior examinations teams, there are many ways in which consultation takes place. The IB also conducts expert panel discussions, carries out literature reviews to consider current trends in language and literature education, and compares our syllabi to other syllabi worldwide. Further, we commission universities to conduct research on the direction of language and literature education, and gather feedback from our educator network through workshops, conferences and school visits.

What are the plans for the new subjects?

One of the main aims of the changes introduced was to achieve a greater consistency between the two syllabi. This was done, in the first place, by giving both subjects a common syllabus structure and by designing assessment components that could be applied equally to each of the courses, allowing, of course, for the differences in their object of study. There is also strong conceptual foundation to the parts of the syllabus in both courses. Another aim,

no less important than the one already mentioned, was to enable through the design of the syllabi a greater interconnectedness across the parts of the syllabus, and between the studies developed in language and literature and the broader local and global contexts.

Why has the number of assessment components been reduced?

A new IB policy establishes that three components for SL (Standard Level) and four components for HL (Higher Level) are the maximum number of components allowed in any Diploma course that undergoes a curriculum review. This new policy aims to address schools, students and parents' concern for the level of student stress in the Diploma Programme, and is a direct result of research that looked into ways student stress could be reduced. The decision about which assessment components would be in the new Studies in language and literature courses was a difficult one to make. Nonetheless, it was taken in consultation with schools and universities and aimed at guaranteeing that the set of skills targeted by each of the components was clearly different.

Which assessment components will change the most?

The internal assessment will change the most. The new individual oral assessment proposed aims at integrating aspects of the two internal assessment components currently present in both courses. On the one hand, the individual oral assessment will involve a detailed exploration of how meaning is created in the texts the students have studied – a central focus of the current Individual Oral Commentary (IOC). On the other hand, the future individual oral assessment will retain the element of choice of a personal line of inquiry in the exploration of a text which characterizes the Further Oral Activity (FOA) and the Individual Oral Presentation (IOP). The result is an individual oral assessment that we consider to be as rigorous in its demands for stylistic analysis as the current IOC, but which also allows students to choose a global matter to contextualize their analysis in order to make it more meaningful. This oral assessment will be prepared throughout the course.

Paper 1 will undergo some changes in format and timing. However, the focus of this paper will still be the detailed textual analysis and commentary of unseen texts. See more information about Paper 1 changes below. Paper 2 is likely to change the least.

Additionally, in response to feedback from schools and teachers, a written coursework component will be added for HL courses. At this stage in the review process, however, the review team is still exploring the possible formats such component could have, as well as whether it would target skills not already assessed by other components.

Does future emphasis on a global matter in the individual oral assessment move the focus of the task away from literary study?

This was a concern expressed by participants in the Online Curriculum Centre forum after the publication of the Second Report to Teachers. The individual oral assessment will have a strong literary focus in the sense that it will set out to explore how meaning is shaped by an author in a text. It will also require students to compare and contrast the ways in which two authors have explored a common global matter, through form and content. The global issue students choose to organise their oral assessment around will help contextualise the analysis of both texts and make it more meaningful to them. The extracts the texts students choose to focus on will also be analysed in the context of their chosen global issue. All stylistic analysis carried out will be assessed not only in terms of its depth and insight, but also in terms of its relevance to the global issues students have chosen.

What will be the new format of Paper 1?

The aim of Paper 1 will still be to assess how students can transfer analytical skills acquired throughout the course to the commentary of unseen texts. However, Paper 1 will no longer be comparative, as it currently is in Language and literature HL. The future syllabus has a strong comparative element in the Internal Assessment already, and it may be argued that comparative study is best carried out in texts that students know in depth, and have explored thoroughly.

Paper 1 will no longer offer a choice between texts or pairs of texts for students to comment on at HL. We believe that students taking HL Literature and Language and literature courses should be able to comment on any text type or genre they encounter.

For SL courses, students will have a choice between texts to comment on but these texts will not be limited to prose or poetry only, as in the current Literature Paper 1. In fact, any genre in the Literature course, or any text type in the Language and literature course, can be included in Paper 1. To provide a focus that students can use to organise their commentaries around, there will be a guiding question accompanying each of these texts that will suggest a fruitful point of entry into them. This focus will more likely be of a stylistic nature.

DP curriculum review and development is an in-depth and inclusive process, drawing on the information and expertise from a wide range of resources. Download this guide to learn more:

<http://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/rec4122recognitioncurriculumbrief-5web.pdf>