

Information on language use in the IB Diploma Programme English courses

This document aims to provide further information regarding the expected levels of achievement and proficiency of students undertaking IB Diploma Programme (DP) language courses.

Student performance is measured, using a variety of different methods, against the characteristics of work expected of each grade level (i.e. grade descriptors) reflecting the aims and objectives of each subject. Students receive grades ranging from 7 (highest) to 1 (lowest) for each DP course attempted.

The below provides a brief description of the assessment and grade descriptions for courses in the IB DP groups Studies in language and literature and Language acquisition.

Studies in language and literature (Group 1)

English A: literature HL/SL

English A: language and literature HL/SL

Literature and performance SL

In these courses, students are assessed on their use of written and oral language in relation to tasks that require them to analyze a variety of literary and non-literary texts. Students are assessed on specific elements of language use:

- clarity, variety and accuracy of language
- appropriateness of the choice of register, style and terminology for the task (“register” is understood in these courses to refer to students’ use of elements such as vocabulary, tone, sentence structure and terminology appropriate to the task)

Grade descriptors

Students earning a **grade 7** demonstrate both orally and in writing:

- responses that may be convincing, detailed, independent in analysis, synthesis and evaluation
- highly developed levels of expression; language is very clear, effective, carefully chosen and precise
- a very good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction
- a choice of register and style which is effective and appropriate to the task

Students earning a **grade 6** demonstrate both orally and in writing:

- responses that are, in the main, convincing, as well as detailed and independent to some degree, in analysis, synthesis and evaluation
- well-developed levels of expression; language is clear and carefully chosen
- a good degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction
- a choice of register and style which is consistently appropriate to the text

Students earning a **grade 5** demonstrate both orally and in writing:

- responses that offer generally considered and valid analysis, synthesis and/or evaluation
- good levels of expression; language is clear and carefully chosen
- adequate degree of accuracy in grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction
- a choice of register and style which, despite some lapses, is mostly appropriate to the task

Students earning a **grade 4** demonstrate both orally and in writing:

- responses that are generally valid in analysis and/or synthesis
- satisfactory powers of expression, with only some lapses in clarity of language
- grammar, vocabulary and sentence constructions which are fairly accurate, although errors and inconsistencies are apparent
- a choice of register and style which is to some extent appropriate to the task

Sample examination questions from May 2013 papers

English A: literature HL/SL Paper 2

Consider the means by which shifts in tempo are created, and the consequent dramatic impact of these shifts, in at least two of the plays you have studied.

Explore the means by which at least two poets in your study create a distinctive voice or voices in their work.

Though plot may be said, at its simplest level, to be a sequence of events, what truly distinguishes prose fiction is the use of narrative disruption: impediment, detour, diversion or digression. In at least two works in your study, how have writers created narrative disruption and to what effect?

English A: language and literature HL/SL Paper 2

Why are the works you have studied considered “literary” texts? Identify and discuss some of the features that make at least two of the texts you have studied literary.

Literature and performance SL Paper 2

Poems can be delivered in language that is formal and structured or expressed in a manner that seems more like everyday conversation. In the works of at least two poets you have studied, show how one or both kinds of language have been used to good effect.

For further curriculum and assessment information, please refer to the subject brief for each course:

- Language A: Literature Higher level:
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/1_LanguageA_HL_2011.pdf
- Language A: Literature Standard level
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/1_LanguageA_SL_2011.pdf
- Language A: Language and Literature Higher level
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/1_LangLitHL.pdf
- Language A: Language and Literature Standard level
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/1_LangLitSL.pdf
- Literature and Performance Standard level
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/1_LitPerfSL.pdf

Language acquisition (Group 2)

English B HL

In the English B HL course, students are assessed on their use of written and oral language in relation to tasks that require them to develop and organize relevant ideas of varying complexity, produce a range of text types, maintain interactions, and produce clear and convincing arguments. In addition, English B HL requires the study of two literary works. Students are assessed on specific elements of language use:

- accuracy, clarity and fluency of language
- range of vocabulary and variety of simple and complex sentence structures
- effectiveness and appropriateness of language use
- appropriateness of the choice of a text type to a task and adherence to conventions of text types

Grade descriptors

Students earning a **grade 7** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak with clarity and fluency
- use a richly varied and idiomatic range of language very accurately
- handle ideas effectively and skillfully with active and complex interaction
- demonstrate a thorough understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize almost all the subtleties of specific language usage
- write detailed and expressive texts demonstrating an excellent command of vocabulary and complex structures with a consistently high level of grammatical accuracy
- demonstrate an ability to engage, convince and influence the audience
- demonstrate clarity of thought in the organization of their work

Students earning a **grade 6** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak clearly, fluently and naturally
- use a varied and idiomatic range of language accurately
- handle ideas effectively with active and full interaction
- demonstrate a very good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize most of the subtleties of specific language usage
- write detailed texts demonstrating a very good command of vocabulary and complex structures with a very good level of grammatical accuracy
- adapt their writing appropriately to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work coherently and convincingly

Students earning a **grade 5** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak mostly clearly and fluently
- use a varied range of language mostly accurately
- handle ideas mostly effectively with generally full interaction

- demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize some subtleties of specific language usage
- write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy
- show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work coherently

Students earning a **grade 4** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak generally clearly
- use a basic range of language correctly
- handle ideas adequately with full interaction at times
- demonstrate an adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize a few subtleties of specific language usage
- write texts demonstrating an adequate command of vocabulary with an adequate level of grammatical accuracy
- show some ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work appropriately

English B SL

In the English B SL course, students are assessed on their use of written and oral language in relation to tasks that require them to develop and organize relevant ideas of varying complexity, produce a range of text types, and maintain interactions. Students are assessed on specific elements of language use:

- accuracy, clarity and fluency of language
- range of vocabulary and variety of simple and complex sentence structures
- effectiveness and appropriateness of language use
- appropriateness of the choice of a text type to a task and adherence to conventions of text types

Grade descriptors

Students earning a **grade 7** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak clearly, fluently and naturally
- use a varied and idiomatic range of language accurately
- handle ideas effectively with active and full interaction
- demonstrate a very good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize most of the subtleties of specific language usage
- write detailed texts demonstrating a very good command of vocabulary and complex structures with a very good level of grammatical accuracy
- adapt their writing appropriately to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work coherently and convincingly

Students earning a **grade 6** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak mostly clearly and fluently
- use a varied range of language mostly accurately
- handle ideas mostly effectively with generally full interaction
- demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize some subtleties of specific language usage
- write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy
- show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work coherently

Students earning a **grade 5** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak generally clearly
- use a basic range of language correctly
- handle ideas adequately with full interaction at times
- demonstrate an adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- recognize a few subtleties of specific language usage
- write texts demonstrating an adequate command of vocabulary with an adequate level of grammatical accuracy
- show some ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose
- express their ideas and organise their work appropriately

Students earning a **grade 4** demonstrate the following abilities:

- speak hesitantly and at times unclearly
- use a simple range of language correctly at times
- handle ideas with some difficulty with fairly limited interaction
- demonstrate some understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts
- write texts demonstrating a basic command of vocabulary and some awareness of grammatical structure
- show some ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose
- make some attempt at expressing their ideas and organizing their work.

Sample examination questions from May 2013 papers

English B HL Paper 2

You are taking part in a class debate on the motion: “When people move to another country and wish to adapt well, they should adopt its culture and forget about their own”. Write the text of the debate’s opening speech, either agreeing or disagreeing with this motion.

English B SL Paper 2

The local government in your town has decided to give free medical care to people who do not smoke; however, people who do smoke will be required to pay for all their medical care. Write a letter to your local government representative expressing your viewpoint on this matter.

For further curriculum and assessment information, please refer to the subject brief for each course:

- English B HL
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/2_LangBHL.pdf
- English B SL
http://www.ibo.org/recognition/resourcesanddocumentlibrary/documents/2_LangBSL.pdf