

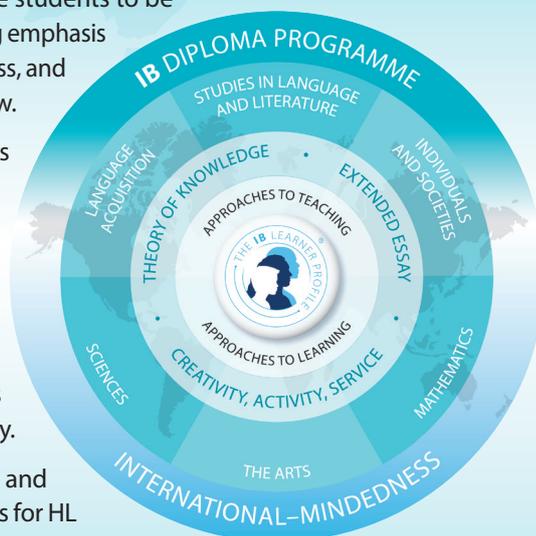
Language acquisition: Classical languages (Latin or Classical Greek)

First assessment 2024

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. Instead of an arts subject, students can choose two subjects from another area. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



I. Course description and aims

The classical languages course is designed for students who have already been introduced to Latin or Classical Greek language and culture. It encourages students to achieve competence in Latin or Classical Greek so that they can experience ancient texts in the most immediate way possible. The course focuses on the reading of unadapted Latin or Classical Greek literature: but this is complemented by students' examination of other linguistic, historical, archaeological, and art historical evidence, to better understand the classical world.

Three areas of exploration ground the study of this evidence and provide a framework for students as they build their proficiency in the classical language, develop their analytical and interpretative skills, and further their understanding of the historical, cultural, political, and artistic concerns reflected in the texts they study.

The course invites students and teachers of classical languages to engage in a fully integrated study of language, literature, and culture, and to position themselves not as passive readers or receivers of the classical world, but rather as active participants in an ongoing classical tradition. At the end of the course, all students are expected to be able to read, analyse, and discuss classical literature written in the original language. In addition, HL students are expected to submit a short original composition in prose in the classical language.

The aims of the classical languages course are to:

1. enable students to develop knowledge and skills to engage with, use, and enjoy the classical language
2. enable students to understand and make connections between texts written in the classical language
3. provide students with an appreciation of both the classical world and the perspectives of Roman and ancient Greek people
4. develop students' appreciation of the ongoing relevance and the literary merits of classical texts and the issues raised in them
5. develop students' ability to engage in inquiry that involves both texts in the classical language and other products of classical cultures or their traditions
6. improve students' understanding of their own language(s) and other languages as a basis for work and for further study.

II. Curriculum model overview

The recommended teaching time is 150 hours to complete the SL course and 240 hours to complete the HL course. The SL and HL syllabuses share a common list of prescribed core and companion texts, and a common set of areas of exploration through which to explore them.

The classical languages course contains three types of syllabus content, two of which are prescribed by the IB and a third selected by the school.

- **Prescribed core texts** are long excerpts that allow students to become familiar with an author's style and the concerns of a particular literary work. For example: Lysias, *Against Simon*; seven poems from Ovid, *Amores* 1.
- **Prescribed companion texts** are short excerpts that expand students' horizons, exposing them to different linguistic styles, text types, and genres. For example: Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 5.14; Homer, *Odyssey* 4.138–264.
- **Ongoing language development** is school-selected study using strategies and materials relevant to students' development of proficiency in the classical language, fostering a broader familiarity with classical literature, and expanding contextual knowledge through the study of non-literary texts.

The course is divided into three areas of exploration—how **meaning, form, and language** are related; the relationships between **text, author, and audience**; the dynamic connections across **time, space, and culture** that the study of the classical world affords.

These areas of exploration are not course parts, nor do they present a linear roadmap by which teachers and students should approach the course. Because the discussions they support engage with big ideas central to the study of classical languages, literatures, and cultures, the areas of exploration naturally overlap and are intrinsically linked.

Area of exploration	Overview	Time (hours)	
		SL	HL
Meaning, form and language	This area of exploration focuses on how morphology, syntax, and diction interact in the creation of meaning. It considers this not only from a linguistic perspective, but also a literary one: how tone, diction, and stylistic elements can shape meaning and create effect. Students consider this both in a receptive context—primarily as a reader of Latin or Classical Greek—but also in productive and interactive contexts, too: as writers, speakers, and interlocutors of the classical language.	70	120
Text, author, audience	This area of exploration focuses on the interrelationship between texts, authors, and audiences, both ancient and modern. Students consider the role that ancient texts played in communicating powerful thoughts and feelings, and what the role of the audience was (and is) in creating and generating meaning. Students consider similarities and differences between texts, authors, literary forms and/or genres, and the ideas expressed in them.	50	80
Time, space and culture	This area of exploration focuses on the connections between sources and ideas produced in different times and places, and how sources can represent, and be understood from, a variety of cultural and historical perspectives. Students interrogate the historical environments and cultural attitudes that shape the production and reception of texts, to arrive at a more complete understanding of them.	30	40

III. Assessment model

At the end of the classical languages course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate, in a variety of ways, their understanding of the classical language and texts read in the classical language
2. interpret and analyse texts written in the classical language through their knowledge of literary, stylistic, historical and cultural contexts
3. synthesize evidence from a variety of primary, secondary, and reference sources
4. construct arguments supported by relevant analysis of texts in the classical language and of other products from classical cultures or their traditions.

In the HL course, the assessments will measure 1, 2 and 3 of the above objectives, using both prose and verse texts written in the classical language.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)		Weighting of final grade (%)	
		SL	HL	SL	HL
External		3	3.5	70	80
Paper 1	<p>SL—Reading comprehension and translation questions based on an unseen extract.</p> <p>HL—Reading comprehension, translation, and guided analysis questions based on a set of two unseen extracts.</p>	1.5	2	35	30
Paper 2	SL/HL —Short-answer questions based on an extract from a prescribed core text and an extended response based on a prompt.	1.5	1.5	35	30
HL composition	HL only —An original composition in prose Latin or Classical Greek guided by intentions and informed by classical sources and additional research. Alongside the composition, students submit a rationale of no more than 10 entries that explains how the composition achieved the stated intentions.	—	—	—	20
Internal				30	20
Research dossier	SL/HL —An annotated collection of seven to nine primary source materials that answers a question on a topic related to the classical language, literature, or culture. The dossier is introduced by a further source that captures the inspiration for the line of inquiry.			30	20

IV. Sample questions

- **Paper 1, SL/HL comprehension, 4 marks:** Outline the arrival of the tidal wave and its aftermath. (Based on the passage provided from Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum* 26.10.16–18)
- **Paper 1, HL guided analysis, 6 marks:** Analyse the contrast between Cicero’s assertions about his talent and skill and the literary qualities of the text. (Based on a passage provided from Cicero’s *To the Senate on his Return* 1)
- **Paper 2, SL/HL extended response, 12 marks:** “Poetry is the ideal literary form for the expression of emotion.” Discuss. (Students must reference a prescribed core text in verse and at least one other source of their choosing.)

About the IB: For over 50 years, the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and are able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

For further information on the IB Diploma Programme, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/dp>.

Complete subject guides can be accessed through the programme resource centre or purchased through the IB store: <https://store.ibo.org>.

For more on how the DP prepares students for success at university, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/university-admission>.