

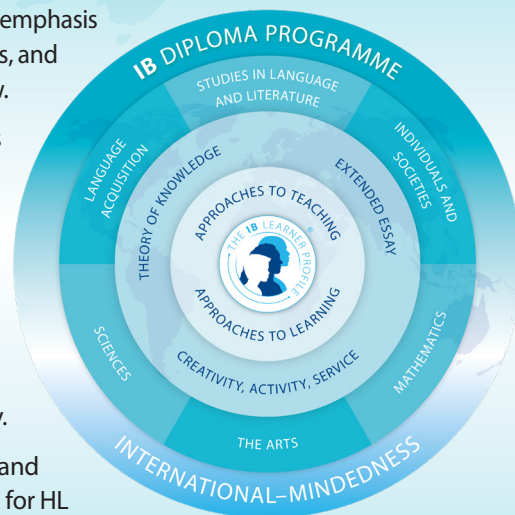
Studies in language and literature/individuals and societies: Language and culture

First assessment 2025

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 DP language and culture course, based on cross-disciplinary studies which draw from linguistics and social and cultural anthropology, engages with questions like how the linguistic and cultural practices we engage in help shape our identities and how do we in turn, both individually and collectively, help bring about change in these linguistic and cultural practices. It focuses on the complex interactions between individuals, societies, languages and cultures. It proposes an examination of language not as a neutral medium for communication but rather as a set of socially embedded practices. Through the exploration of central concepts such as identity, context, power and change, the course invites students to examine ways in which language both shapes and is shaped by cultural practices and values, as well as by social power dynamics.

The course will be studied in multilingual, multicultural contexts. In such contexts, students may be encouraged to engage in a comparative study of languages and/or cultures. Comparative studies of this kind may involve, for example, exploring the different ways in which meanings are constructed in two cultural contexts, how languages interact with one another or the reasons why one particular language thrives while another may be dying out. Not all comparative studies will be across different languages: students may decide to compare and contrast language varieties within a single language, investigate hierarchies, and critically explore why certain varieties are sometimes deemed to be the standard or superior ones.

II. Curriculum model overview

All students must study the introductory unit and two topics from two different areas of exploration. The study of a topic involves the study of a full-length ethnography and either i) a second ethnography (a full-length ethnography or a collection of shorter ethnographic texts) and a literary work or non-literary body of work; ii) two literary works; iii) two non-literary bodies of work or iv) a literary work and a non-literary body of work. These complementary ethnographies, works and/or bodies of work will be related to the language(s) and culture(s) studied by each student, and can be either in the language of the course or in a different language.

Parts of the syllabus	Recommended teaching hours
<p>Introductory unit</p> <p>This unit introduces students to some of the key terms of this cross-disciplinary subject and provides a framework for how students will engage with the course. The key terms studied in this unit are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Signs and symbols 2. Indexicality 3. Multifunctionality 4. Paralinguistic features 5. Multilingualism and interculturality 6. Discourse 7. Genres 8. Language ideologies 9. Hegemony 10. Symbolic power 11. Agency 	30
<p>Meaning-making</p> <p>The topics in this area of exploration are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language as a form of social action and a cultural resource 2. Multifunctionality of language 3. Modes and meaning—verbal, non-verbal, and written modalities 4. Language socialization 5. Language, thought, and culture 6. Language and performance 	120
<p>Time and space</p> <p>The topics in this area of exploration are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language endangerment and revitalization 2. Language, gender, and sexuality 3. Language race, ethnicity and class 4. Language ideologies 5. Language and agency 6. Literacy practices 	

Connections

The topics in this area of exploration are:

1. Multilingual and multicultural identities
2. Speech communities
3. Indexicality
4. Translation
5. Intertextuality: voices and texts
6. Language and belonging

III. Assessment model

Having followed the language and culture course, students are expected to demonstrate the following assessment objectives.

Know, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate, and synthesise:

- areas of exploration related to the study of language and culture, and the topics they include
- key terms, theoretical elements and central concepts related to the study of language and culture
- the ways meaning is created in variety of texts and modes
- research methods
- the ways in which linguistic and cultural practices interact with one another and with contextual elements
- the ways in which linguistic and cultural practices shape their identities and those of others.

Develop and refine language and culture skills including:

- utilising ethnographic, autoethnographic, and non-ethnographic materials to formulate arguments and come to conclusions
- comparing and contrasting the way meaning is created in different text-types, modes, language varieties and/or different languages
- exploring their own linguistic repertoires and their attitudes towards linguistic and cultural practices, and those of others.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External		3	70
Paper 1	This paper focuses on the introductory unit and on the ethnographies studied and consists of an extract from an unseen ethnography. Students answer three compulsory questions based on it.	1.5	35
Paper 2	The paper consists of four questions, each one based on one of the central concepts of the course. In response to one of those questions, students write a comparative essay based on two works, two bodies of work or a work and a body of work studied as part of the course. The comparative essay must include references to the contexts of production of the material studied and support from theoretical elements studied during the course.	1.5	35
internal			
Autoethnography: a story of the self in culture	On the basis of the work done in the language and culture diary, students present an autoethnographic text focused on an inquiry question related to one of the two topics studied, which demonstrates personal, reflexive and reflective engagement with the topic. Each student should submit a 1500-word autoethnographic text which uses evidence from the language and culture diary to engage in an exploration of the chosen inquiry question and evidence understanding of it. The examples from the diary can be multimodal. They can also be multilingual if care is taken by the student to make accessible to the external moderators any text that is in a language other than the response language.	N/A	30

IV. Sample questions

Paper 1

When presented with an extract from Lutz, W. D. (1987), "Language, Appearance and Reality: Doublespeak in 1984", Annual Editions. Anthropology 01/02, E. Angeloni (ed), 54-58, students are asked to answer the following questions:

1. By referring to the detail of the passage, identify the structure used by the writer to make his argument and analyse how it shapes meaning. [5]
2. Explain how the term multifunctionality can be understood and applied in the context of this passage. [5]
3. What constitutes a speech community? Discuss by making reference to the passage and one ethnography studied. [10]

Paper 2

Answer one question. Compare and contrast two of the works, two of the bodies of work or a work and a body of work that you have studied. In your answer, explain the way in which contexts affect meaning. Support your answer by referencing and applying theoretical approaches.

1. How is the struggle to be understood portrayed in the chosen study material?
2. Some texts, although set in a particular place or time, convey ideas that are universal. In what ways is this true in the chosen study material?
3. Which social groups are marginalized, excluded or silenced within the chosen studied material?
4. Some texts borrow from other texts, or resort to more than one mode to create meaning. In what ways does the chosen study material exemplify this?

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