

Talk The Talk

A Guide to IB Terminology

The IB program -- A worldwide program offered during the last two years of high school. It is linked by uniform teacher training and a common assessment system in which exams and other work are graded internationally. The full diploma programme is intended for students who are academically motivated. The IBO is a non-profit organization, with offices in Geneva, Switzerland, Cardiff, Wales and New York.

Diploma -- The name of a document issued by IB after a student has completed and passed the following requirements: six exams taken in six different academic areas, three at the Higher Level and three at the Standard Level; an Extended Essay; 150 hours of CAS activities; and completion of Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course. The Diploma is the highest level of IB achievement.

Higher Level (HL) – This is an IB course offered over two years and the exams are only available to high school seniors. HL credit with good grades can often be submitted to colleges and universities for transfer credit.

Standard Level (SL) - An IB course that must be taught over a minimum of 150 hours of instruction. Standard Level exams are usually slightly shorter than Higher Level exams due to the fact that they cover less in-depth curriculum. An SL level course may be examined at the end of Grade 11, if the school chooses.

Scores -- Students earn a single score ranging from “1-7” for each IB subject exam taken. The scores indicate a level of achievement compared with students around the world. Diploma candidates must accumulate a minimum of 24 cumulative points, out of a possible 45 points, to earn the diploma. A “1” is low; a “7” is high, indicating excellent or exceptional work.

Internal Assessment – The individual student evaluation done by the teacher of a subject on a piece of work and communicated to the IB Curriculum and Assessment office. Internal assessments are criterion-based. In addition, samples of candidates' work, representing a range of performances, are also submitted to external assessors. Oral exams, portfolios, lab books and essays all comprise parts of the internal assessment.

External Assessment- IB Exam taken at the end of an IB course, whether at the Standard or Higher Level.

Descriptors – The course-specific expectations or criteria for performance evaluation used by the teacher. These descriptors exist in all subjects to assist teachers in grading internal assessment assignments.

Moderation – The process by which the internal assessment (which is graded by the teacher) is evaluated by an external assessor appointed by IBO. After a teacher submits internal assessment samples that are requested by IBO, they will be compared to work submitted by IB teachers around the world. Teachers and students both receive feedback and suggestions through the moderation process. The purpose of moderation is to analyze our students' work in regard to the global standard and to determine a thorough evaluation of the student's work. This is the process whereby the IB Organization maintains high standards and uniformity throughout the world.

Predicted grades -- Teachers submit predicted scores to IBA. These are the scores they believe each student will achieve on the IB Exam for their subject. Through this process, the IB teacher can determine whether or not their thinking is in line with the IBO. This is yet another way that teachers can receive feedback from across the globe in order to constantly improve instruction.

Oral Commentary -- In English and second languages, an oral presentation by each student is recorded for internal assessment. Samples of the resulting recording is sent by the IB Coordinator for moderation of all scores.

Language A1—This is one's first language. For all students at West High School, this will be English. The syllabus is literature-based and covers authors from around the world.

Language B—This is a “learned” language. The aim of this course is to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the student's world language of choice. Students at WHS may choose from French, German, Latin or Spanish.

Certificate -- The name of the document that a student earns after successfully completing an IB class along with the attendant work and exams. Students who opt not to pursue the full Diploma can take individual IB courses for certificate credit. Exams and course work for both Diploma and Certificate candidates are the same in any given subject and level.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) -- A course required of Diploma candidates in every school in the world, in which the concept of knowledge -- its worth, veracity, and forms -- is considered. One essay is required for outside assessment; the class teacher assesses the other assignments or projects.

CAS – This is an acronym standing for Creativity, Action, and Service. CAS is the non-school portion of the requirements for the Diploma, in which 150 hours of community service, activity in the arts and athletics is expected. No more than

20 hours can be earned in a single activity. This IB requirement encourages IB students to be well-rounded global citizens.

Extended Essay (EE)-- A 4000-word independent research paper due in the senior year, chosen and undertaken by the student in one of over 20 IB disciplines (foreign language, literature, history, physics, biology, etc.). The student chooses a school or community-based mentor for guidance in research and writing. The Extended Essay is sent to moderators around the world to be graded. Form is emphasized as well as content.