



Headwaters™  
SCHOOL

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# Demystifying the IB

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# The International Baccalaureate

Founded in 1968, the International Baccalaureate® (IB) is a non-profit educational foundation offering four highly respected programmes of international education, which develop the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. The four programs are:

- The PYP (Primary Years Programme)
- The MYP (Middle Years Programme)
- The CP (Career-related Programme)
- **The DP (Diploma Programme)**

The diploma programme is “an academically challenging and balanced program of education that prepares students for success at university and life beyond. It has been designed to address the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of students.”

[Click Here](#) for a video from the IB about the diploma programme.

# The IB Diploma Program at Headwaters

The diploma programme:

- Is a framework and not a set curriculum
- Is concerned with developing big ideas and placing learning in context
- Is inquiry based
- Encourages students to think about how they learn (critical self-reflection)
- Places an emphasis on writing across the curriculum

**Why:** The IB curriculum is holistic and aligned with the purpose, promise, and principles of the Headwaters School. Our promise transcends basic education and enters the world of emotional intelligence, character education, and personal development. The IB program does the same.

# A few basics for understanding coursework in 11th/12th

- **Preparation prior to 11th grade: similar pedagogical approaches by teachers, similar types of assignments and expectations, IB Foundations course in 10th grade**
- **In the winter and spring of sophomore year, the following occurs:**
  - Paul meets with the sophomores to go over the basics of the program and how to think about choosing courses.
  - Sophomore teachers make course recommendations to Paul, and share those with the students. For example, the 10th grade English teacher will make recommendations for students to go to Literature HL or Language & Literature SL.
  - Paul consults with students and parents in light of teacher recommendations in order to figure out the best fit for the students. The aim is best fit not “IB diploma or bust.”

Courses are designated SL for “standard level” or HL for “higher level.”

All courses are for two years.

If wishing to pursue the “IB diploma” students take three SL courses and three HL courses for a total of six courses.

Students not taking six IB courses (or the minimum three HL courses) to be eligible for the diploma are still pursuing a very vigorous, enriching course of study, and are considered “Certificate” candidates (for the individual IB Certificates they can receive in each subject).

All students are enrolled in Theory of Knowledge, write the Extended Essay, and complete CAS hours over the two years of the program.

## Our Courses

**Group 1:** Literature HL, Language & Literature SL

**Group 2:** Spanish B HL & SL, Mandarin Ab Initio (SL)

**Group 3:** History HL & SL

**Group 4:** Environmental Systems & Societies SL, Physics HL,

**Group 5:** Math Studies SL, Mathematics SL, Mathematics HL

**Group 6:** Music HL & SL, Film HL & SL, Visual Arts HL & SL

# Qualities a student needs to succeed *in the words of our guides*

The ability to work independently and to take responsibility for your education.  
~Marshall Escamilla, Music

Willingness to be self-directed. Training and experience in being responsible for work. Curiosity helps a lot, too.  
~Kelly Dickens, Mathematics

They need to be open minded and ready to think creatively and out of the box.  
~Lorena German, Language & Literature

Willingness to find things to love about each class. Meet deadlines. Ask questions and address holes in understanding proactively.  
~Kelley Janes, Physics

Intrinsic interest in the subject. Resilience is a vital attribute for this class.  
~John Mulvany, Visual Arts: Studio Art

Students should be willing to think, write, and speak critically about a wide range of topics--politics, psychology, sociology, history, art theory--then connect it all back to movies.  
~Alex Thomas, Film

# Qualities a student needs to succeed *in the words of our guides*

Self-motivation during in-class sessions and outside of class. If students use in-class time for what it's used for, they will be able to accomplish a lot and be able to focus on content. If they don't use their time wisely, they will experience stress (the bad kind).

~Suzanne Koett, Visual Arts: Photography

Critical thinking; The ability to receive ideas, understand those ideas within their context, form one's own opinions around those ideas, and then understand those opinions within their context.

~Sean Manning, Spanish

Ability to accept doubt and certainty about what actually happened in the past. Students should also be aware of how to structure coherent paragraphs and basic writing skills.

~Joe Sokolik, History

Curiosity. TOK is challenging for students who take comfort only in answers. It is much healthier, in TOK, to cultivate a thirst for really good questions.

~Dave Wofford, Theory of Knowledge

# What to Expect Years 1 and 2

## 11th Grade/Year 1

**Individual Courses:** Students are exposed to the particular approaches, knowledge, and requirements of each course. “Internal Assessments” (IA’s) are begun in most courses at a measured pace. Some “External Assessments” in the Arts and English are begun as well.

**Creativity, Activity, Service:** During S1 students choose first year CAS experiences and a CAS Project, and have an interview with the IB Coordinator. During S2, students complete a CAS Project and have a second interview with Coordinator at the end of the year.

**Extended Essay:** Guidance on subject and topic choice, creation of research question early in S2. Research, outlining, and writing begins in S2

**Theory of Knowledge:** Students build knowledge and approaches to inquiry throughout the year.

For more information on CAS, EE, and TOK, please see the “Core” page on our IB website.

## 12th Grade/Year 2

**Individual Courses:** “Internal Assessments” (IA’s) are finished. Some “External Assessments” in the Arts and English are finished. Students sit for exams in May, except for the Arts courses (Music sits for one exam). All Exams have two or more components, called “papers,” over two days.

**Creativity, Activity, Service:** Students continue CAS experiences in each of the three strands, finishing them by spring. During S2 students will have a final interview with the IB Coordinator.

**Extended Essay:** Students, having written over the summer, continue to write and polish with a finished essay due by November. A public symposium of student work follows.

**Theory of Knowledge:** Students refine their approaches, continue to delve deep, and then write the TOK Essay and do the TOK Presentation by early March

# Details on Points and Assessments

Talking about the details of points and assessments is tricky because of the sheer amount of information. I encourage you to scan the references guides, linked to below, and use myself or individual teachers to receive more information. My hoped for takeaway is that you look at the variety of assessments to see how they lead to a more complete way of evaluating a student's understanding and skills in a subject area. One note of caution: worrying too much about points and the details of the points gets in the way of education.

[What are IB Assessments?](#)

[Scoring and Points in the IB](#)

# University and the Future

A great reason to pursue the IB diploma is not just because it will help a student get into her “best fit” college but because it will prepare her to thrive once there; as well as help the person thrive beyond the college years.

**The average acceptance rate of IB students into university/college is 22% higher than the average acceptance rate of the total population.<sup>1</sup>**

After you are accepted your IB courses may count towards college credit. This will depend on your scores and the institution’s policy.

**The rate of first year retention of IB Diploma Program students enrolled at 4-year institutions was 98%, while the national rate was 75%.<sup>2</sup>**

IB students graduated from colleges at higher rates, with 81% of them graduating within 6 years of enrolling full-time at 4-year university, compared to the national average of 57%.<sup>3</sup>

[Click Here](#) for a short video on the IB from an admissions standpoint

## IB Diploma student acceptance vs. total population acceptance rate

University or College	IB students acceptance rate	Total population acceptance rate	IB students vs total population
University of Florida	82%	42%	<b>+40%</b>
Florida State University	92%	60%	<b>+32%</b>
Brown University	18%	9%	<b>+9%</b>
Stanford University	15%	7%	<b>+8%</b>
Columbia University	13%	9%	<b>+4%</b>
University of California - Berkeley	58%	26%	<b>+32%</b>
Harvard University	10%	7%	<b>+3%</b>
New York University	57%	30%	<b>+27%</b>
University of Michigan - Ann Arbor	71%	51%	<b>+20%</b>
University of Miami	72%	30%	<b>+42%</b>

Source: IBDP Graduate Destinations Survey 2011/12 conducted by i-graduate International Insight Strictly copyright © IGI Services 2011

## My Takeaway on the Benefits of IB

- Writing ability, across disciplines, increases dramatically
- Skills of organization and prioritization develop
- Communication skills increase in effectiveness
- The skill of critical reflection develops
- The appreciation of both critical and creative approaches grows
- Ability to engage in high level theoretical thinking that is still tied to real world situations
- Open and international-mindedness increases

**For more details on the IB Program at  
Headwaters, contact Paul Cronin at  
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