

**International Baccalaureate Program  
Bellaire High School  
Houston ISD**



### **What are the overall goals of the IB curriculum?**

The IB curriculum provides a cohesive and comprehensive program of study in both the liberal arts and sciences for highly motivated juniors and seniors of different educational backgrounds, abilities, and interests. It is not just a set of examinations, but a rigorous pre-university program which will provide the basis for life-long education. IB aims to provide a balanced program, which stimulates thought and creativity and enhances the international perspective of students. Students who satisfy the demands of the program demonstrate a strong commitment to learning, both in terms of mastery of content and the development of skills. The purpose of the IB curriculum is to:

- educate young people to act intelligently and responsibly in a complex society;
- ensure knowledge of traditional academic disciplines and of the individual's own heritage, while fostering inquisitiveness and openness to new ideas; and
- equip students with a genuine understanding of themselves and others, heightening the capacity for tolerance and engendering respect for different points of view.

Within the International Baccalaureate Program, students can choose one of two pathways: the student can elect to pursue the IB Diploma, or a student can elect to pursue one or more IB certificates.

### **What is the IBO?**

The IBO Headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland, and the IBO Curriculum and Assessment Center is in Cardiff, Wales. The IBO has regional offices in North and South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. IB North America, the support office for Bellaire High School, is located in New York City. Bellaire became a member IB school in 1980 and is the oldest IB program in Texas.

The IB diploma is highly regarded for entry into universities throughout the world and for advanced placement at many colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. Oxford University was the first university to accept the IB diploma as an entrance qualification. Now universities world-wide recognize the IB diploma graduate as having completed one of the finest liberal arts educations available.

### **Who is an excellent candidate for the IB Program?**

IB is for the student who is willing to work hard at his or her studies. A student with the following characteristics would be a good candidate for the program:

- an ability to cope with several demanding classes simultaneously
- a willingness to develop personal study habits, including self-discipline, self-motivation, and time management
- a capacity for thinking critically and creatively
- some fluency in a second language, or the willingness to become fluent
- an international outlook and a genuine concern for others

The entire IB program is self-selecting, which means the opportunities afforded by IB are open to all BHS students.

## **IB Learner Profile:**

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

### **IB learners strive to be:**

**Inquirers** They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

**Knowledgeable** They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

**Thinkers** They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

**Communicators** They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

**Principled** They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

**Open-minded** They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**Caring** They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

**Risk-takers** They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

**Balanced** They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

**Reflective** They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.

## **What kind of coursework and requirements are involved in IB?**

To earn the IB Diploma, a student must successfully complete the courses and IB assessments in the six subject area groups listed below. Students in the IB programme complete course work in three higher-level subjects and three standard-level subjects. Higher-level subjects (HL) require 250 hours of course work; standard level subjects (SL) can be completed in one year, but are still very much on par with college-level introductory coursework. Both HL and SL classes include internal and external assessments, which students must complete successfully to earn the diploma. In addition to exams at the end of the junior and senior year, these assessments include a portion of their regular course work completed in each class.

### **IB subject area groups:**

Group 1 – Language A1 (English) at standard level and higher level

Group 2 – Foreign Language: Arabic, Chinese, French, Spanish, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Latin and Russian at standard level, higher level & ab initio

Group 3 – Individuals & Society: Geography, Economics, Environmental Systems & Societies\*, Psychology\* at standard level and higher level

Group 4 – Experimental Sciences: Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Systems & Societies\*, Physics at standard level and higher level

Group 5 – Mathematics: Calculus or HL Math at standard level and higher level

Group 6 – Elective: Music or Visual Arts at standard level and higher level

\* standard level only

In addition, students will also complete a Theory of Knowledge course, an Extended Essay on a topic of the student's own choice, and projects to complete the Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS) requirement.

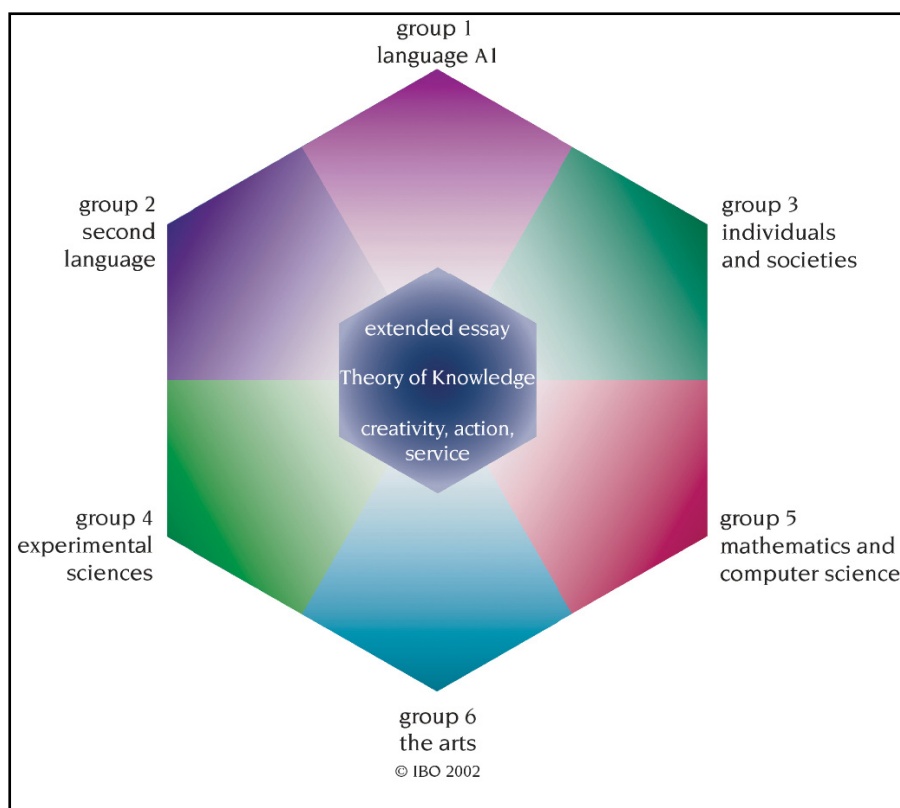
### **Special Components of IB: Theory of Knowledge, Extended Essay, and CAS**

The **Theory of Knowledge** (ToK) course is an interdisciplinary program designed to review and challenge knowledge. It involves the study of language, logic, ethics, knowledge, and truth. The course examines the methods used to obtain knowledge in various subject areas. ToK requires 100 hours of class contact time; instruction in ToK is imbedded into the English/History of the Americas schedule block.

The **Extended Essay** introduces the student to personal research. It is based on a topic of the student's choice, chosen from one of the six subject areas. The Extended Essay is written outside of the classroom on a student's own time. Students begin the Extended Essay during the junior year, and submit essays in the fall of their senior year. Each student asks a FDHS faculty member to serve and his or her supervisor to guide him or her through the months spent in research and writing. This is excellent preparation for similar tasks given to students in higher education.

**Creativity, Action, and Service (CAS)** reinforces the IB philosophy that there is more to education than what occurs in the classroom. Students are required to complete projects over two years which meet eight objectives. CAS aims to challenge and extend the student by developing a sense of discovery and self-reliance, and encouraging development of individual skills and interests.

The IB hexagon illustrates the relationships among the six subject areas, the extended essay, Theory of Knowledge, and the CAS component.



## How is the IB program assessed?

IB classes are assessed through both internal and external assessments. All assessment procedures are designed to value both process and content and to achieve a balanced assessment of a student's performance. The assessment procedure emphasizes understanding and application of knowledge, not just the student's ability to regurgitate information.

Assessment for the IB diploma is criterion-referenced, not norm-referenced. This means that students are not placed onto a normal distribution curve with a set portion of students deemed as having failed the course. Knowledge and skills are assessed according to the student's own achievement against a set of criteria.

In order for students to have the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, a variety of assessment methods, which take into account the different learning styles and cultural experiences of students, are used. All subjects are externally examined, which means that an international grading team, hired by the IBO, evaluates the student's work. Most subjects also require internal assessment, which involves an external moderation procedure to ensure that uniform standards are maintained.

All forms of assessment are designed to measure the extent to which the individual student has met the aims of the subject. Therefore, the assessment tools go far beyond testing the ability to memorize isolated facts and bits of information. The assessment tools measure what students have acquired in terms of their ability to integrate knowledge, apply academic skills, and effectively communicate their understanding of subject matter.

The diploma requires that you test in each of the Groups 1-5 and either in Group 6 or complete a second exam area from Groups 1-5. A student cannot test in HL and SL of the same subject to satisfy this requirement. One can only test for IB in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade you can take up to 2 standard level exams. In 12<sup>th</sup> grade you can take a minimum of 3 higher level exams and no more than 3 standard level exams. Most students will take 4 higher level exams in 12<sup>th</sup> grade and 1-2 standard level exams in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. However, all exams can be taken in 12<sup>th</sup> grade if desired. The IB organization does not allow a student to take any exams in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade. A student must be enrolled in an IB course to be a diploma candidate.

## What is the IB grading scheme?

Each of the six subject areas is graded on the following scale:

Grade 7 – Excellent	Grade 3 – Mediocre
Grade 6 – Very good	Grade 2 – Poor
Grade 5 – Good	Grade 1 – Very poor
Grade 4 – Satisfactory	

The number represents the student's score on both internal and external assessments. Up to three bonus points can be added to the student's total score based on overall performance in Theory of Knowledge and the Extended Essay.

In general, **the diploma is awarded to a student whose total score, including any bonus points, reaches or exceeds 24 points.**

Approximately 70 – 75 percent of diploma candidates earn the diploma worldwide. The student who does not satisfy the requirements of the full diploma is awarded a certificate for the courses completed successfully.

## What are the benefits of an IB diploma?

Upon completion of an IB diploma, the student has had a first-class education, which is accepted as an entrance qualification for higher education in over sixty countries around the world. Universities are eager to attract IB diploma students because

- they are recognized as being prepared to accept educational challenges;
- they have self-confidence with university-level material;
- they have developed the capacity for independent research and study;
- they have cultivated sound thinking and communication skills;
- they have engaged in extracurricular activities alongside academic studies;

- they have thought in global terms and have a cultural sensitivity and international orientation.

## **Why make the effort to complete the IB program? Why work so hard when there are other avenues available?**

The IB Program is truly unique. The goal of the IB Program is to prepare high school students for quality university life in a way no other educational program can. This program will offer one of the most enriching experiences possible. The IB Program is not a different version of already existing programs that are academically challenging; rather, it blends together key ingredients of many academically challenging programs into one comprehensive piece. There are three key components to the IB Program:

1. Academic Rigor: Students learn how to learn, how to analyze, how to reach considered conclusions about humankind, its languages and literature, its ways in society, and the scientific forces of its environment. An IB diploma candidate is indeed functioning at a level of an introductory college student.
2. Comprehensiveness of the Program: Students encounter rigor throughout ALL disciplines. Students refine areas of strength and developmentally improve areas of weakness. Students also submit a significant portion of their course work for evaluation (e.g., essays, oral commentaries, lab books).
3. Internationalism: The IB Program encourages students to think globally and the IB curriculum is based on true international standards. Coursework and exams are graded by an international grading team, professionals from North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia.

The IB Program enjoys an exceptionally good relationship with universities abroad and is rapidly growing in recognition among United States universities. Many competitive United States universities are now granting advanced standing for students with the IB Diploma and those students are being recruited due to their excellent academic preparation and study skills.

However, it is important to remember that the IB Program is not for everyone. Many students want the external benefits (e.g., weighted grades, advanced college standing), but the true benefit of earning the IB Diploma is intrinsic in nature. The change that occurs within a student academically and personally while pursuing the diploma produces far greater personal growth and satisfaction than the diploma itself.

## **How do I make sure my son or daughter becomes a successful IB student?**

Students will spend much time studying outside of class. Ideally, students will become very familiar with school and community libraries and use them as resources. Students will need a quiet, uninterrupted study environment, and they will also need to access libraries and other resources frequently. Students also benefit from working with each other in self-selecting study groups, and you can help insure your child's success by offering your home for study group sessions.

Students should work hard to develop study habits that work for them. Students often enter our program thinking that the study skills they have used through elementary, middle, and the first two years of high school are sufficient. However, IB teachers have found that students develop much more refined study habits as they progress through the IB program. Additionally, students must develop organizational skills and time-management skills. While we certainly encourage students to participate in school, community, and church activities, we also encourage parents to watch their children's grades and help them to choose priorities if time management becomes an issue.

- *Student responsibilities*: Students are expected to share responsibility for creating a challenging and fruitful learning environment. Students should demonstrate mutual respect and consideration for others. This assists in creating an atmosphere of harmony and cooperation, which is necessary for the kind of learning that takes place in an IB classroom.
- *Academic honesty*: Maintaining academic integrity within a program is paramount. Within the IB Program, this goal is taken especially seriously. Students must abide by the BHS academic honesty policy. It is a

policy in the International Baccalaureate program that malpractice, which includes plagiarism and cheating, will result in disciplinary action and can result in dismissal from the program. You and your child will be asked to sign a document stating that you understand the definition of “malpractice” as it applies to IB.

Malpractice, in this instance, includes, but is not limited to:

- communicating with another candidate during a test or examination;
  - copying information from another candidate’s paper, such as a homework assignment or lab report;
  - downloading information from the Internet and submitting any part of that information as the candidate’s own work;
  - not properly citing information obtained from outside sources;
  - cheating or using unauthorized materials while taking a quiz or exam.
- *Assignment due dates:* Students must meet course, CAS, and Extended Essay deadlines. The IB Coordinator, sets due dates for all student work evaluated by the international grading team. Teachers set other major course assignments. The timing of submission dates spreads the workload fairly across the two years of the program.

The IB is a demanding program of study, but well-organized students are able to do well and still find time to pursue other interests both inside and outside of school.

### **How do college admissions officers view IB candidates?**

Parents and students are sometimes concerned that their child’s participation in the IB program will lead to a lower GPA and class rank. IB classes are graded on a college level, and so it is natural that students’ grades will drop to some extent upon entrance into the program. Some students in your child’s class will take less demanding coursework and end up with higher raw grades on their report cards as a result. However, when college admissions officers examine students’ transcripts, the first criterion often is the rigor of the academic program that that student has chosen. Students seeking admission in Texas, Colorado, California, and Florida are automatically awarded college credit for earning the IB Diploma. The reward later is worth the effort and the sacrifice now. Students enter college completely prepared for the academic demands of college; while their peers struggle to adjust to a college-level workload IB students have already made that adjustment and can apply their study skills, time management skills, and organizational skills to the challenges of college life. Our IB graduates overall have had great success in college. In terms of college admission, students should be aware that a high school academic program that includes IB is considered very rigorous and is evaluated by colleges as such. Substantial data show that IB candidates enjoy higher acceptance rates to selective colleges than non-IB candidates. Studies also show that once in college, IB candidates also perform significantly better academically than others. Recent IB graduates consistently report that they feel well-prepared for college because of the nature of the IB curriculum and the time management skills they have learned by taking IB courses.

### **Speaking IB-ese...**

**IBO:** International Baccalaureate Organization [www.IBO.org](http://www.IBO.org)

**EE:** Extended Essay: Completed in 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, under the supervision of a mentor IB teacher in a testing area of your choice.

**CAS:** Community, Action, Service: volunteer service within the school and community required as part of the diploma program. This commitment is organized and carried out by the student over the course of their tenure at BHS. IB requires 150 hours of CAS activities.

**IA:** Internal Assessment: Work completed in each of the testing areas within in the course and under the direction of the content IB teacher.

**TOK:** Theory of Knowledge: Required for all diploma candidates in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade year

**HL:** Higher level: These are courses and exam areas that you can test in, in 12<sup>th</sup> grade

**SL:** Standard level: These are courses and exam area that you can test in, in either 12<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade, with the exception of English.

### ***For more information contact:***

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