

English B



What is the course about?

English B is about developing your ability to speak and write in English, using the right words for the situation you are in: to communicate effectively. This means expanding your vocabulary and knowledge of grammar, but also being more aware of language nuances, of what is culturally appropriate, and the effects of your words on readers and listeners. Similarly, you will be learning to understand a wide range of written and spoken English precisely, and to respond.

You will study issues such as concepts of beauty, or the future of education, and how they play out in English-speaking cultures all over the world, and for Higher Level, you will also study works of literature related to these issues.

How is the course structured?

The course is divided into units which last approximately 6 weeks. Each unit has a topic such as War & Peace, Education or Food (some of these will be chosen by you, the class), and within each unit, we will cover the five Language B themes – identities, experiences, social organization, human ingenuity and sharing the planet.

For example, as part of the unit on Education, we might investigate the theme of “sharing the planet” by listening a South African radio programme about access to education around the

world. You will have exam-style comprehension questions to practise for the Listening exam, and also gain knowledge of this issue, leading to class discussion. We will also cover reading, speaking and writing in each unit, along with the other Language B themes.

What distinguishes this course from others?

This course is not based around a text book (although we will use one from time to time). Each unit is planned around authentic materials such as newspaper articles, podcasts, radio programmes and documentaries from different English-speaking countries, from Ireland to New Zealand.

In keeping with the I.B. Approaches to Learning, you will have the opportunity to choose some units of study with the teacher, and will have a say in which works of literature you study at Higher Level. You will develop your thinking and research skills by investigating some topics independently, and teaching what you have learned to the class. You will also have the chance to link what you are learning to other DP subjects: when we study Social Organization in the Food unit for example, we could look into international corporations such as Monsanto, and link this to Business and Management.

How is the course assessed?

During the course, you will be assessed on your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and will get feedback from your classmates and the teacher. You will also learn to assess yourself using the I.B. criteria for the course. We will use this information to set goals and decide on priorities for the course.

The final I.B. Diploma assessment is as follows:

Internal Assessment (during the second year of the course, date to be confirmed):

Individual oral (25%) – recording of conversation with teacher, based on a picture or photograph (Standard Level) or an extract from one of the books we have studied (Higher Level).

Final Examinations

Paper 1 – Writing (25%). One writing task from a choice of three.

Paper 2 – Listening and Reading (50%). Comprehension questions based on three audio texts and three written texts.

Are there any requirements?

The I.B. guidelines suggest that students at CEFR (Common European Framework for Languages) A2 or B1 can comfortably take the English B Standard Level course, and students with CEFR B1 or B2 can comfortably take the English B Higher Level course. However, this is a guideline, not a requirement.

Students who take this course should still be learning English, so that the course is a useful educational experience. If you have lived in an English-speaking country or studied at an English-speaking school for more than three years, or if your English is already very advanced for another reason, we will talk with you to decide whether English A would be a better option.

What materials will I need?

It would be helpful to have a good monolingual dictionary at home, such as Collins Cobuild Learner's Dictionary, or Cambridge Learner's Dictionary. The explanations for each word should be in English, with examples and pronunciation guides. You will also need a small vocabulary notebook – you will learn more about useful vocabulary learning techniques in class.

What will I learn?

- You will develop your ability to speak and write in English: correctly, articulately and in an appropriate way for a given situation.
- You will learn to understand more complex reading and listening texts, in different varieties of English
- You will explore English-speaking cultures, developing your ability to see issues from different perspectives.
- You will investigate topics such as the digital age and education, developing your critical thinking and research skills and gaining new knowledge and understanding.

In what ways does the English B syllabus promote the attributes of the IB learner profile?

In many ways. For example, by exploring issues from the perspective of different English-speaking cultures, students become more **open-minded** and **knowledgeable**. In researching and debating these issues themselves, students are **inquirers** and **thinkers**. When responding to these issues, whether in a written task or a real-life CAS project, students are **principled** and **caring**.

By developing each different language skill (reading, writing, speaking and listening) students work towards being **balanced**, and in evaluating their own progress and setting goals, they are **reflective**. Students work on their speaking and writing skills to become better **communicators**, and applying this to new situations encourages them to be **risk-takers**.

What aspects of the course can make worthwhile extended essay questions?

You might choose to investigate an area of language, such as English idioms and their origins, or a cultural topic, such as investigating the claims made by a documentary film about an English-speaking country. You might also write an extended essay on a work of literature studied in English B.

Can English B lead to a CAS project?

Absolutely - in each unit, we will look at issues which could lead to an individual or group CAS project.

For example, when we look at “sharing the planet” in the Digital Age module, you will be looking into digital waste; in other words, the huge amounts of electronic devices that are thrown away, and the environmental consequences. A possible CAS project would be to organize a collection of unused electronic devices for EMAUS, a local organization which repairs and sells furniture and electronic goods, supporting local families and homeless people in the process.

What is the relationship between TOK and English B?

Knowledge questions arise from each unit studied. For example, in the Digital Age unit, when looking at artificial intelligence, we might ask “what is intelligence?” and “what distinguishes humans minds from artificial intelligence?”

What career paths are open to me?

Developing your ability to communicate accurately and effectively in English enhances your career prospects in almost any field you choose.

Where can I find more information about the course?

You can find more information in the International Baccalaureate Language B guide. You are also welcome to email the English B teacher at u.odonoghue@bisc.krakow.pl.

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