

Language B (English, French, German, Spanish)

I. Course description and aims

In the Language B course, students develop the ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understandings of how language works. Communication is evidenced through receptive, productive and interactive skills across a range of contexts and purposes that are appropriate to the level of the course.

The study of language requires careful attention to forms, structures, functions and conceptual understandings of language. Knowledge of vocabulary and grammar—the what of language—is reinforced and extended by understanding the why and how of language: audience, context, purpose, meaning. Students expand the range of their communication skills by understanding and producing a wide variety of oral and written texts for audiences, contexts and purposes associated with academic and personal interests. For the development of receptive skills, language B students must study authentic texts that explore the culture(s) of the target language. In addition, the study of two literary works is required at Higher Level.

A key aim of the Language B course is to develop international-mindedness through the study of language, culture, and ideas and issues of global significance. Explicit links to Theory of Knowledge strengthen the ability to communicate in the target language by increasing students’ self-awareness as inquirers in their own language learning process. As appropriate to the level of the course, communication skills are reinforced through the other categories of approaches to learning skills: thinking, research, social and self-management skills.

II. Curriculum model overview

Prescribed themes

Five prescribed themes are common to the syllabuses of language B and language ab initio; the themes provide relevant contexts for study at all levels of language acquisition in the DP, and opportunities for students to communicate about matters of personal, local or national, and global interest. The five prescribed themes are:

- identities
- experiences
- human ingenuity
- social organization
- sharing the planet

Texts

In theory, a text is anything from which information can be extracted, including the wide range of oral, written and visual materials present in society. For example:

- single and multiple images, with or without written text
- non-literary and literary written texts and extracts
- broadcast media texts: films, radio and television programmes, and their scripts
- oral texts: presentations, debates, interviews, speeches, recorded conversations, and their transcripts
- electronic texts that share aspects of the above areas: text messaging, web pages and blogs, social media and video-sharing websites.