

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief

Language acquisition:

Classical languages—Higher level

First assessments 2016 – Last assessments 2021

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous, academically challenging and balanced programme of education designed to prepare students aged 16 to 19 for success at university and life beyond. The DP aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and compassionate, and to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary to respect and evaluate a range of viewpoints. Approaches to teaching and learning within the DP are deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the teaching and learning environment. DP students develop skills from five ATL categories: thinking, research, social, self-management and communication.

To ensure both breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, students must choose at least one subject from five groups: 1) their best language, 2) additional language(s), 3) social sciences, 4) experimental sciences, and 5) mathematics. Students may choose either an arts subject from group 6, or a second subject from groups 1 to 5. At least three and not more than four subjects are taken at higher level (240 recommended teaching hours), while the remaining are taken at standard level (150 recommended teaching hours). In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

These IB DP subject briefs illustrate four key course components.

- I. Course description and aims
- II. Curriculum model overview

- III. Assessment model
- IV. Sample questions



I. Course description and aims

The classical languages higher level (HL) course can be taken in Latin or Classical Greek. The course provides students with the opportunity to study an historically significant language that is also embedded in many modern languages. Latin and Classical Greek are separate subjects, but they share the same syllabus and assessment criteria.

The DP classical languages course provides an opportunity for students to explore the languages, literatures and cultures of ancient Greece or Rome. The study of classical languages gives important insights into the cultures that produced them, and leads to a greater understanding of contemporary languages, literature and cultures. Fundamentally, the study of classical languages trains the mind, developing skills of critical thought, memory and close analysis, as well as an appreciation of the beauty and power of language.

It is a fundamental principle that the texts be studied in their original language. Linguistic skills lie at the heart of the course, since it is through a deep understanding of the workings of a language that true intellectual contact can be made with the peoples of the past. Students learn to translate Latin or Classical Greek works accurately and sensitively. Students also study different genres of classical texts, examining the ideas in these works and their artistry within their historical, political and cultural contexts. Teachers explicitly teach thinking and research skills such as comprehension, text analysis, transfer, and use of primary sources.

Aims

1. Enable the student to reach an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of the language and to use this understanding for a variety of purposes, including translation, comprehension and research.
2. Develop the student's appreciation of the literary merit of classical texts and an awareness of the issues raised in them, as well as their connections and relevance to our times.
3. Encourage, through the study of texts and other products of classical cultures, an awareness and appreciation in the student of the different perspectives of people from those cultures.
4. Provide the student with an opportunity for intellectual engagement through the process of inquiry and the development of critical thinking and learning skills.
5. Provide the student with a basis for further study, work and enjoyment in a variety of contexts.

II. Curriculum model overview

Component	Recommended teaching hours
<p>Part 1: Study of language Latin: The study of Cicero or Ovid in order to develop language skills. One extract from each author will be set and students will be required to translate one of the extracts.</p> <p>Classical Greek: The study of Xenophon in order to develop language skills. Students will be required to translate an extract written by that author.</p>	220
<p>Part 2: Study of literature A detailed study of literature from two options in the original language chosen from five prescribed options.</p>	
<p>Part 3: Individual study—research dossier A collection of annotated primary source materials demonstrating an in-depth exploration of an aspect of classical language, literature or civilization chosen by the student.</p>	20

III. Assessment model

It is expected that by the end of the classical languages course, students will be able to:

1. understand and translate texts in the original language
2. demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of texts in the original language and other products of classical culture within their historical, political, cultural and geographical contexts
3. analyse the style of, and demonstrate a critical understanding of, a variety of classical texts in the original language
4. construct an argument supported by relevant examples in the original language or supplementary reading.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External		3.5	80
Paper 1	Translation of one extract from a prescribed author in Part 1 of the syllabus.	1.5	35
Paper 2	Questions based on ten extracts, two from each option in Part 2 of the syllabus. Students answer questions on four extracts from two options, and provide a written response to a prompt on one option.	2	45
Internal			20
Research dossier	An annotated collection of 10 to 12 primary source materials relating to a topic in classical history, literature, language, religion, mythology, art, archeology or some aspect of classical influence		20

IV. Sample questions

Text for translation: Cicero, Pro Cluentio 50–51 (Cicero describes a previous case and his nervousness at speaking.)
(Latin HL, paper 1)

Text for translation: Xenophon, Anabasis 6.1.5–8 (At a banquet offered by the Athenians to the Paphlagonian envoys, some Thracians provide entertainment by performing very elaborate dancing.)
(Classical Greek HL, paper 1)

(Question based on Tibullus, Elegies 3.11) Analyse the poem showing how Tibullus's poetic style emphasizes major themes of Roman love poetry. Support your argument by quoting the Latin text.
(Latin HL, paper 2, section A)

(Question based on Herodotus, The Histories 7.12.1–13.3) Briefly describe Xerxes's dream. Analyse the dream as an example of Herodotus's use of dreams and/or divine knowledge as a narrative device in the prescribed reading from The Histories.
(Classical Greek HL, paper 2, section A)

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For further information on the IB Diploma Programme, and a complete list of DP subject briefs, visit: <http://www.ibo.org/diploma/>.

Complete subject guides can be accessed through the IB online curriculum centre (OCC) or purchased through the IB store: <http://store.ibo.org>.

For more on how the DP prepares students for success at university, visit: www.ibo.org/recognition or email: recognition@ibo.org.