

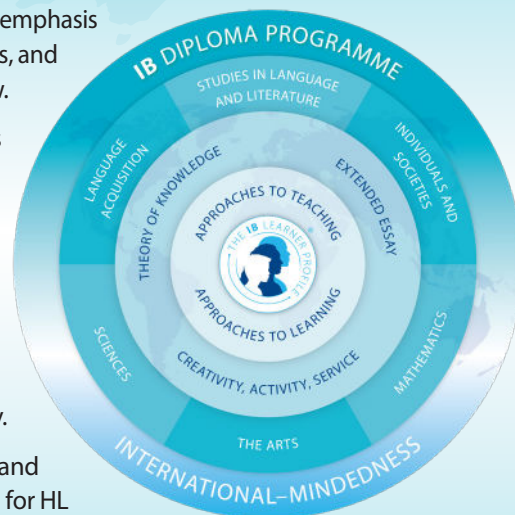
Individuals and societies: Global politics

First assessment 2026

The Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable and inquiring, but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness, and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. Instead of an arts subject, students can choose two subjects from another area. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the Diploma Programme a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 240 teaching hours for HL subjects and 150 hours for SL. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



I. Course description and aims

DP global politics is a course for students who want to understand more about how the world they live in works, and what makes it change (or prevents it from changing). The course draws on a variety of disciplinary traditions in the study of politics and international relations, and more broadly in the social sciences and humanities. Students build their knowledge and understanding of the local, national, international, and global dimensions of political activity and processes by critically engaging with contemporary political issues and challenges.

The course integrates concepts, content and contexts through inquiry.

- **Concepts** such as power, sovereignty, legitimacy and interdependence are explored and examined critically throughout the course.
- **Content** informs inquiries through a variety of global politics topics, encompassing political systems and actors, power interactions, frameworks, treaties and conventions, terminology, and analysis models.
- **Contexts** diversify, shape and channel inquiries through contemporary real-world examples and cases.

The flexible syllabus allows educators to build the course around their students' contexts and interests, as well as contemporary events and developments in global politics. Thinking, analysis and research skills are fostered through guided and independent inquiries into political issues and challenges, with a special focus on identifying and engaging with diverse perspectives.

The aims of the global politics course at SL and at HL are to enable students to:

- explore and evaluate power in contemporary global politics
- examine how state and non-state actors operate and interact within political systems
- investigate and analyse contemporary political issues and challenges from multiple perspectives
- develop a lifelong commitment to active global citizenship through collaboration and agency.

II. Curriculum model overview

The recommended teaching time is 150 hours to complete the SL course and 240 hours to complete the HL course. Students and teachers enjoy a great deal of freedom to personalize and integrate the required course components as outlined below.

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
Core Understanding power and global politics	125	125
Thematic studies • Rights and justice • Development and sustainability • Peace and conflict		
Internal assessment Engagement project	25	35
HL extension: global political challenges	-	80
Total	150	240

III. Assessment model

By the end of the global politics course, students are expected to achieve the following assessment objectives.

Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- power relationships
- political concepts
- relevant source material
- political issues and challenges.

Application and analysis

- Apply relevant concepts and tools to analyse contemporary political issues and challenges in a variety of contexts.
- Identify and analyse information, claims and perspectives in source material.
- Identify and analyse relevant evidence to formulate, present and sustain an argument.

Synthesis and evaluation

- Synthesize and evaluate evidence (including source material) about global politics.
- Synthesize and evaluate perspectives and approaches to global politics.
- Examine and synthesize perspectives on political beliefs, positions, and biases.

Use and application of appropriate skills

- Research and investigate political issues and challenges.
- Communicate analysis of political issues and challenges.
- Reflect on the process and results of research and investigation.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)		Weighting of final grade (%)	
		SL	HL	SL	HL
External		2.75	4.25	70	80
Paper 1	Source-based questions that address topics from the global politics core in an integrated way	1.25	1.25	30	20
Paper 2	Extended response questions based on prescribed content from the thematic studies	1.5	1.5	40	30
Paper 3 (HL only)	Stimulus-based questions related to the HL extension syllabus (global political challenges)	-	1.5	-	30
Internal		25	30	30	20
Engagement project	A written report on a political issue explored through engagement and research	25	30	30	20

IV. Sample questions

- Using Source C (included in the paper) and **one** example you have studied, **explain** the reasons why international cooperation may be problematic for some states.
- **Discuss** the view that development always results in inequalities.
- **To what extent** is addressing structural violence increasingly important to achieving lasting peace?
- With reference to **two** of the cases you have researched, examine the links between multiple global political challenges.
- With reference to **two** cases, evaluate the effectiveness of international governmental organizations for addressing global political challenges.

About the IB: For over 50 years, the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and are able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

For further information on the IB Diploma Programme, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/dp>.

Complete subject guides can be accessed through the Programme Resource Centre or purchased through the IB store: <https://www.ibo.org/new-store>.

For more on how the DP prepares students for success at university, visit: <https://ibo.org/en/university-admission>.