

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief



Individuals and societies: Global politics—higher level

First assessments 2017—last assessments 2024

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 (ATL) are deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the teaching and learning environment. In the 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 six courses from six distinct groups: 1) studies in language and literature; 2) language acquisition; 3) individuals and societies; 4) sciences; 5) mathematics; 6) the arts. Students may choose to replace the arts course with a second course from one of the other five groups. 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, activity, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.



These 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 DP global politics course explores fundamental political concepts such as power, equality, sustainability and peace in a range of contexts. It allows students to develop an understanding of the local, national, international and global dimensions of political activity and processes, as well as to explore political issues affecting their own lives. The course helps students to understand abstract political concepts by grounding them in real-world examples and case studies. It also invites comparison between such examples and case studies to ensure a wider and transnational perspective.

Teachers explicitly teach thinking and research skills such as comprehension, text analysis, transfer, and use of primary sources. The study of global politics enables students to critically engage with different and new perspectives and approaches to politics in order to comprehend the challenges of the changing world and become aware of their role in it as active global citizens.

The aims of the global politics course are to enable students to:

- understand key political concepts and contemporary political issues in a range of contexts
- develop an understanding of the local, national, international and global dimensions of political activity
- understand, appreciate and critically engage with a variety of perspectives and approaches in global politics
- appreciate the complex and interconnected nature of many political issues, and develop the capacity to interpret competing and contestable claims regarding those issues.

II. Curriculum model overview

Component	Recommended teaching hours
Core units: People, power and politics Four compulsory units: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Power, sovereignty and international relations 2. Human rights 3. Development 4. Peace and conflict 	130
Engagement activity An engagement on a political issue of personal interest, complemented with research.	20
HL extension: Global political challenges Political issues in two of the following six global political challenges are researched and presented through a case study approach. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environment 2. Poverty 3. Health 4. Identity 5. Borders 6. Security 	90

III. Assessment model

There are four assessment objectives for the DP global politics course. Having followed the course at higher level (HL), students will be expected to meet the following objectives.

Assessment objective 1: Knowledge and understanding

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key political concepts and contemporary issues in global politics.
- Demonstrate understanding of relevant source material.
- Demonstrate understanding of a political issue in a particular experiential situation.
- Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of political issues in two detailed case studies.

Assessment objective 2: Application and analysis

- Apply knowledge of key political concepts to analyse contemporary political issues in a variety of contexts.
- Identify and analyse relevant material and supporting examples.
- Use political concepts and examples to formulate, present and sustain an argument.
- Apply knowledge of global politics to inform and analyse experiential learning about a political issue.
- Apply knowledge of global politics to analyse political issues in two case studies.

Assessment objective 3: Synthesis and evaluation

- Compare, contrast, synthesize and evaluate evidence from sources and background knowledge.
- Compare, contrast, synthesize and evaluate a variety of perspectives and approaches to global politics, and evaluate political beliefs, biases and prejudices, and their origin.
- Synthesize and evaluate results of experiential learning and more theoretical perspectives on a political issue.
- Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation of different approaches to, and interpretations of, political issues in two case studies.

Assessment objective 4: Use and application of appropriate skills

- Produce well-structured written material that uses appropriate terminology.
- Organize material into a clear, logical, coherent and relevant response.
- Demonstrate evidence of research skills, organization and referencing.
- Present ideas orally with clarity.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External		4	60
Paper 1	Stimulus-based paper on a topic from one of the four core units	1.25	20
Paper 2	Extended response paper based on the four core units	2.75	40
Internal			
Engagement activity	A written report (2,000-word maximum) on a political issue explored through engagement and research.	20	20
HL extension: global political challenges	Two video-recorded oral presentations (10-minute maximum each) of two case studies chosen from two different HL extension topics.	90	20

IV. Sample questions

Paper 1

- According to the stimulus material, what are three advantages of NGOs over other actors in global politics?
- Explain the term “civil society”, using both the information in the sources and examples you have studied.

Paper 2

- “A national or regional approach to human rights enforcement is more effective than a global approach.” Discuss.
- Evaluate the claim that humanitarian intervention is a justifiable intrusion into the sovereignty of a state.

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