



# Somers High School

## International Baccalaureate Diploma Candidate Handbook *Class of 2028*



## Congratulations! You're an IB Diploma Candidate... What's Next?

We are so proud of you! You've just embarked on a journey that will be challenging and thought-provoking, frustrating and exciting, difficult and rewarding. It will also change you – as a student and as a human – in fundamental and significant ways. IB Diploma Candidates learn a good deal about themselves and their own communities; combined with the lens of international mindedness that IB values, you will come to understand a lot about yourselves and about the world in which we all live.

We are so excited that you have chosen this path and this program. Some of you might be feeling anxious or excited. Or maybe a little of both! That's normal. Every DP Candidate who came before you felt the same way. Just remember two things:

- 1) You are not expected to know how to do this from Day 1. We are going to help you.
- 2) You are not alone – you have a tremendous amount of support: from your teachers, your coordinators, from your counselors, and from each other. You will learn to rely on your fellow candidates by celebrating each other's accomplishments and nurturing each other through struggles.

You've made the choice to do it. The question is, Now What? And, Holy Moly<sup>1</sup>. We have created this guide to anticipate questions you may have and to help you begin at... the beginning.

### ➤ What do all these acronyms mean?

<b>IB</b>	International Baccalaureate	<b>DP</b>	Diploma Programme
<b>HL</b>	Higher Level, 240 hours of class time	<b>SL</b>	Standard Level, 150 hours of class time
<b>TOK</b>	Theory of Knowledge	<b>CAS</b>	Creativity, Activity, Service
<b>EE</b>	Extended Essay	<b>IA</b>	Internal Assessment
<b>EA</b>	External Assessment	<b>LP</b>	Learner Profile, with its 10 Traits
<b>ATL</b>	Approaches to Teaching	<b>ATT</b>	Approaches to Teaching
<b>DPC</b>	Diploma Programme Coordinator (Ms. Scanlon)	<b>MYP</b>	Middle Years Programme

### Which classes will I have to take?

IB has many courses, each of which falls into one of six groups. SHS offers many of the classes on IB's menu. Turn to the last section of this booklet for the SHS list of IB DP options for the 2026-2028 school year. Click [HERE](#) for a more thorough description of these from IB's website. Or, use this QR code.



<b>Group 1</b> Studies in Language & Literature, Language A	<b>Group 2</b> Studies in Language & Literature, Language B	<b>Group 3</b> Individuals and Societies
<b>Group 4</b> The Sciences	<b>Group 5</b> Mathematics	<b>Group 6</b> The Arts

<sup>1</sup> You will also learn how to use information responsibly. As an English teacher, Ms. Scanlon knows from reading Homer's eponymous epic poem *The Odyssey* that moly is the plant that Odysseus ate to prevent Circe from turning him into a pig. But since you can't cite a memory, we will give credit to the first item in a Google search that confirmed this bit of literary trivia. The citation looks like this: Wikipedia. "Moly (herb)." Wikipedia Foundation. Last modified June 6, 2023.

Each of these classes will have a combination of IA and EA work that gets submitted to IB for scoring. All IA and EA work will be combined to determine each course's final 1-7 score, all 6 of which are added together to calculate your diploma points.

*NB<sup>2</sup>: Students who do not pass year one of an IB course on their SHS transcript may not continue in that class as a senior for year 2, rendering them ineligible to continue in their pursuit of an IB Diploma.*

In addition to taking and passing the IB assessments for one course from each group (3 at the SL level and 3 at the HL level), IB Diploma Candidates must also:

Take the <b>Theory of Knowledge Course</b> over your junior and senior year and submit and pass relevant IB assessments for this course.
Write, submit, and pass their <b>Extended Essay</b> , and independent (and guided) research paper of 4,000 words (approx. 16 pages double-spaced) over your junior and senior years.
Successfully participate in <b>Creativity, Activity, and Service</b> activities and complete your CAS project over your junior and senior years.

### ➤ What will my schedule look like?

Your schedule in 11<sup>th</sup> grade can generally accommodate 5 out of your 6 groups of IB classes, as well as TOK (a requirement for both junior and senior years), Physical Education (required all 4 years), and an open space to take 1 elective class outside of the DP Programme, if you wish to do so. You'll notice there is also a period opposite PE that says "No Scheduled Courses." This differs from the potential elective period because there are no course offerings that run every other day that can fit opposite PE, TOK, or a Lab period. In both cases, juniors and seniors with unscheduled time in their day are not required to attend a study hall. Please see the sample schedules at the end of this handbook.

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Period								
1	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course	Group 5 Course	IB Theory of Knowledge Yr. 1	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course	Group 5 Course	Group 4 Course Lab
2	IB Theory of Knowledge Yr. 1	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course	Group 5 Course	No Scheduled Courses	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course	Group 5 Course
3	Group 5 Course	Group 4 Course Lab	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course	Group 5 Course	IB Theory of Knowledge Yr. 1	Group 4 Course	Group 1 Course
COMMUNITY LUNCH								
4	PE 11/12 Fall	Group 3 Course	Group 2 Course	Free or Elective	Lunch	Group 3 Course	Group 2 Course	Free or Elective
5	Free or Elective	No Scheduled Courses	Group 3 Course	Group 2 Course	Free or Elective	PE 11/12 Fall	Group 3 Course	Group 2 Course
6	Group 2 Course	Free or Elective	PE 11/12 Fall	Group 3 Course	Group 2 Course	Free or Elective	No Scheduled Courses	Group 3 Course

<sup>2</sup> Latin for *nota bene*, or, good to note

Each IB class will culminate in a score of between 1 and 7. Generally, a minimum score of 3 in SL classes and a minimum score of 4 in HL classes will be needed to earn the diploma. There are up to 3 bonus points available for doing a good job in TOK and on your EE.

### TOK/EE Bonus Points Matrix<sup>3</sup>

TOK / EE	A	B	C	D	E
A	3	3	2	2	Failing Condition
B	3	2	2	1	
C	2	2	1	0	
D	2	1	0	0	
E	Failing Condition				

<b>6 courses * 7 possible maximum points per course</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>TOK + EE possible maximum bonus points</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Perfect Score</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Minimum Passing Score</b>	<b>24</b>
Caveat #1: Required minimum on HL courses	<b>12</b>
Caveat #2: Required minimum on SL courses	<b>9</b>
Caveat #3: No failure of TOK or EE or CAS	<b>F</b>

### Sample DP Scores and Outcomes

The red arrows denote the criterion not met for diploma awarding.

Component	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Student F
Group 1	5	3	4	5	6	7
Group 2	4	5	4	4	7	6
Group 3	5	6	4	4	6	7
Group 4	3	3	3	3	5	7
Group 5	4	2	4	3	7	6
Group 6	6	7	2	4	6	6
Points Total	27	26	21	→ 23	37	39
TOK	B	D	A	D	B	→ F
EE	C	C	A	D	A	B
Bonus Points Earned?	2	0	3	0	2	0
Total Points Earned?	29	26	24	→ 23	39	39
CAS	P	P	P	P	→ F	P
Diploma Earned?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

<sup>3</sup> Once again, a reminder to use and share information responsibly: This screenshot is from the IB's "Diploma Programme Coordinator Guide," published by the IB Organization in 2021.

## ➤ **What should I do if I run into trouble?**

While we have complete confidence in your ability to find success as a DP candidate, there will be times when you may feel overwhelmed, stressed out, or just plain lost. It happens, at some point, to just about everyone. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with asking for help. As Ms. Scanlon says, “Better to have that experience now, when you’ve got a group of people who care about you, and will do whatever we need to do to support you, and help you work through it.” Your counselor, our school psychologists, and social workers remain a good source of support. In addition, the names below are a reminder of who else you can go to if you need help. If you’re not sure who to talk to, just pick any one of us! We are all here for you:

Ms. Scanlon – IB Coordinator, oversees all aspects of the Diploma Programme, and teaches the Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class. Always a good person to start with.

Mr. Rodrigues – The SHS Principal who knows a great deal about the IB Programme. Extremely familiar with all things IB. He even taught IB English at one point in his career!

Ms. O’Shea – CAS Coordinator. Will work with you to keep you on track with your CAS project requirements; also, as Student Life Coordinator is connected to just about all aspects of SHS – a good person to know!

Ms. Catania – Extended Essay Coordinator. We know the idea of writing a 4,000-word essay seems overwhelming all by itself. She will help you break it down into manageable chunks, help you develop a timeline to complete components so that it doesn’t feel like too daunting a task.

Mrs. Amato– Our school librarian, can connect you to resources and research tools that will help you with both in-class assignments, and your extended essay topic.

Mr. Benedetto – Runs the writing center, can workshop essay ideas, review drafts, and provide insight if you feel like you’ve hit a wall on a particular piece of writing.

Ms. Tracy – College and Career Center Counselor. Works collaboratively with your counselor to provide assistance for college searches so that you can find the right fit and maximize your IB transcript.

Your IB teachers – You see them almost every day, and you will get to know each other very well! Because of that, one of them may be the person you feel most comfortable going to if you need help. Please do so, because if you are struggling, whether it’s with something inside or outside the classroom, it’s ok to approach them first, even if they are not the best person that can help with a particular issue. It’s more important that you let them know if something is wrong. They will listen, help with the problem if they can, and if they cannot, they will connect you to the person best positioned to do so.

## ➤ What should I write my Extended Essay about?

We encourage you to pick something you really, actually, passionately want to know more about. Which IB class has inspired you the most? What unit do you wish you had more time to dig into? What's something you could find yourself lost in thought about or really needing to know the answer to? That's a great place to start.

Here are some research questions from past DP candidates (Classes of 2019-2025):

Category	Research Question
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent do R.H. Sin's messages about relationships and his devices differ between the platforms he uses?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the language of prevalent anti-Israel groups convince others to question the legitimacy of Israel as a country?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What role does the dystopian setting play in emphasizing character development of the narrators in the novels <i>We All Looked Up</i> and <i>The Rest of Us Just Lived Here</i>?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does the futuristic setting of the novel <i>When She Woke</i> alter the intended theme and plot of <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the rhetorical devices employed by ecofeminist writers ultimately contribute to the movements' lack of longevity?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent were the United States's actions in the Philippines during the Philippine-American War genocidal in nature?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what degree did the influence of "white male supremacy" affect Shakespeare's works, and does it either challenge or reinforce this ideal?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In what ways do the texts <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> by Oscar Wilde and <i>Tender is the Flesh</i> by Agustina Bazterrica utilize various literary techniques to craft their main characters into complex antiheroes as a social commentary?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does the use of dramatic irony within the lyrics of songs of <i>Wicked</i> help further emphasize Elphaba's character development to the intended audience?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent does science fiction world-building and setting in Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Aleph" and Ernest Cline's novel <i>Ready Player One</i> transcend time and simultaneously present the eras in which they were written?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does money impact characterization within late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century short stories?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are literary devices used in the three songs "Imagine," "Power to the People," and "Give Peace a Chance" helpful in giving an accurate portrayal of John Lennon's political beliefs?</li> </ul>
English A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did Ted Bundy's use of verbal manipulation persuade his audience to idolize him?</li> </ul>
English Literature and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do the lyrics, staging, and film techniques in the movie and musical adaptation of <i>Carrie</i> reflect Stephen King's original novel?</li> </ul>
English Literature and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does Elle Woods transform from an unlikable character to a strong feminine role model through the process of adaptation from the novel, <i>Legally Blonde</i>, to the Musical?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent were US efforts to undermine the Cambodian neutrality during the Vietnam War a cause of the Cambodian Genocide?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How accurately did West Coast Hip-Hop of the 1980s and 1990s reflect anti-police sentiment during the time period of the LA riots?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the Fair Housing Act of 1968 effective in reducing racial residential stratification seen in Levittown, NY?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did second- and third-generation Irish immigrants affect the Americanization process of "new immigrants" in US cities from 1880 to 1920?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the Dawes Act impact the Lakota Sioux tribe's ability to economically succeed in the United States?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did the Non-cooperation movement, Civil Disobedience movement, Quit India movement, and the Indian Independence Act of 1947 influence the end of British Rule in India?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What impact did espionage have on the Cuban Missile Crisis?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, influence and institute the westernization of the Russian Empire in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century?</li> </ul>

History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What significance did Social Darwinism have on business leaders such as Andrew Carnegie during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century American Gilded Age?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the comparison between socioeconomic status of Irish immigrants due to discrimination in the workforce in two different waves of immigration during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent was Queen Catherine de Medici of France the most politically and socially influential Medici in the scope of the European Renaissance (1300-1600)?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did fashion expectations and dress codes affect women during the late 1900s to early 2000s across western society?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the Government and its Policies Influence the Resolution of the Residential Building Fire Epidemic in the 1970s-80s Southern Bronx?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the crack epidemic of the 1980-1990s impact black communities of the United States?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did Napoleon's military strategy contribute to the successes of the Grande Armée during the Wars of the Third and Fourth Coalitions?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did Gutzon Borglum choose Theodore Roosevelt to be on Mt. Rushmore based on his accomplishments or their friendship?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent were the principles of communism manipulated to the advantage of the Khmer Rouge during the Cambodian Genocide?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does Turkish suppression and Assyrian culture impact the recognition and remembrance of the Assyrian Genocide?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did Nazi propaganda effect the persecution of Jewish people in Germany during the holocaust?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did WWII transform women's employment opportunities and careers in the United States, changing perceptions in society and ultimately causing huge long-term impacts on gender-roles nowadays?</li> </ul>
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the idea/fear of Cannibalism inform the way white people and brown people interacted during the Modernista movement in Brazil</li> </ul>
Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does Stereotype threat theory affect students in a city environment?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is martial arts training particularly beneficial for autistic children?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does technology have an impact of childhood development?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the effects of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy on athletes playing sports?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the genre of music affect a runner's performance in a 400 Meter Sprint?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does different music genre impact an athletes performance?</li> </ul>
Sports, Exercise, & Health Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does different coaching tactics impact performance in young athletes in team vs. individual sports?</li> </ul>
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can Fractal Image Analysis be used to explore the beauty of mathematics?</li> </ul>
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the view of the male dancer in ballet in America and in Russia been influenced by their contrasting foundations and histories during the 20<sup>th</sup> century?</li> </ul>
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the lives of Michael Kidd and Bob Fosse, and the time period of he release of these musicals, impact the difference in choreography in the two musicals <i>Guys and Dolls</i> and <i>Chicago</i>?</li> </ul>
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the cultural perception of ballet changed from 18th century France to modern day America?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the portrayal of the female villains within American cinema reinforce the idea that women should not be in power positions?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why were American cartoon short films about Germany a persuasive form of propaganda during WWII?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does costume design in <i>Freaky Friday</i> play a role on the audience and change to reflect the current times as the movies are remade?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are women generally portrayed as the victim in possession films (specifically <i>The Conjuring</i> and <i>The Babadook</i>) and how do the directors portray this through the use of film techniques and elements?</li> </ul>

Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does Wes Anderson use color and aspect ratio as the mean to facilitate storytelling in <i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i>, <i>The Fantastic Mr. Fox</i>, and <i>Moonrise Kingdom</i>?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways did the Disney Princess movies <i>The Little Mermaid</i> (1989) and <i>The Princess and The Frog</i> (2009) perpetuate certain stereotypes and how does this reflect the beliefs of the film industry and the treatment of specific groups in the future?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what ways do the animated films <i>When the Wind Blows</i> (1986) and <i>The Wind Rises</i> (2013) use different film techniques to criticize government?</li> </ul>
Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has the cultural shift at Marvel Studios impacted young teens of color?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent did the events of 9/11 impact the sound of the garage rock revival genre in NYC?</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extend did Black female jazz singers affect feminism in the mid-1900s?</li> </ul>
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes music remain timeless and iconic?</li> </ul>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the expression of femininity change throughout four different works of art associated with Venus?</li> </ul>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the symbolism and imagery of classic art (prior to 1940) reshaped and represented in modern works (1950s-present) to portray ideas of the feminist movement?</li> </ul>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Impact of Culture on the Interpretation of a Single Story: Hayao Miyazaki's "Ponyo" and Walt Disney's "The Little Mermaid"</li> </ul>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artistry of the estate Kykuit exemplify the Rockefeller family legacy?</li> </ul>
Visual Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does Bisa Butler use her family history and personal experiences to reinvent portraits of African American figures?</li> </ul>
World Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent can agricultural waste briquettes be implemented into China's economy as an environmentally friendly and economically feasible energy source?</li> </ul>
World Studies (Business/Sustainability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What impact does producing ethically sourced eggs have on the success of a business?</li> </ul>
World Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the messaging of feminist Greta Gerwig while advocating for woman's rights in the modern pop culture world similar or different than that of Betty Friedan in the 1900's?</li> </ul>

## ➤ What should I focus on for my CAS project?

We encourage you to pick something you value or care about. What do you want to see improve in the world? Or in yourself? What creative traits would you most like to nurture? What is an activity that you find yourself getting lost in? These are great places to start.

Here are some sample CAS projects from past DP candidates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redesigning the IB Corner in the library.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a video for future DP candidates for TOKtober.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint project for the PLJC program at Westchester Hospital: creating posters, Instagram posts, and Schoology posts to advertise this program to students interested in going into the medical field.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Resources on SHS Page: A re-design of the mental health page on the SCSD website so that there are more resources for students that are categorize it in a way that students no matter their need they have something for them, with the addition of a wider range of resources for parents.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A toy drive for a local daycare facility.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A donation drive for the VanTassel House.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clothing drive for a local women’s shelter.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A food drive for St. Luke’s church.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Madden Charity Tournament to raise money for the Dom Narcisco foundation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League of Women Voters Voter Registration Drive.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a buddy system to connect junior and senior DP candidates.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Putting on a musical production</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply drive for SPCA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mural created in a classroom</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized social media for a local music group</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digitized and organized music for the Music Department</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteered and ran a fundraiser for Able Athletics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led club recruitment and event planning</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply drive for Bowery Mission</li> </ul>

## ➤ The Workload and Testing

The workload for an **IB Diploma candidate** is **demanding but manageable**, especially for students who are organized and willing to plan ahead. (And if you're not good at these things, it can help you learn how to manage your time better!) It is often described as *consistently busy rather than overwhelmingly difficult*.

### What are assignments like?

- ♦ Sometimes you have to read (historical documents, novel chapters, scientific papers)
- ♦ Sometimes you have to research (locate and analyze or annotate articles in a database about your history topic, your science data, or the novel you're reading for English)
- ♦ Sometimes you will be doing math or science homework using Kognity, our online textbook, that has practice problems that help you analyze your strengths and weaknesses; as well, it will give you refreshers and more practice problems on topics you struggle with.
- ♦ Whatever it is, you'll find there is no busy work in IB classes

### What does a typical week look like?

For many IB DP candidates:

- ♦ 2-3 hours of homework per school night
- ♦ Longer blocks of homework on the weekends (some weeks are lighter, others – especially those during IA deadlines or when there is an essay or a project due – are heavier)
- ♦ You will be busiest when you have an IA due (see below), when you are working on your college applications and your Extended Essay, and from December to May of your senior year, which has many IAs, as well as prepping for exam season.

### What are the IAs like?

IA stands for *Internal Assessment*. Depending on the course, it is either 20% or 25% of your overall 1-7 score for each class. It is something you do here at school and at home, under that guidance of your teacher, who can give you feedback during the process. Unlike an exam, you have control over the topic and you get to choose what it's about. Each IB subject has at least one major project or investigation:

- ♦ Science labs
- ♦ Math explorations
- ♦ Oral commentaries
- ♦ Literary investigations and analysis
- ♦ Historical investigations
- ♦ Performances or portfolios

**It's important to note that students who do not submit an IA for their subject by the April 20<sup>th</sup> deadline will not be able to sit for the corresponding exams in the April/May testing season (Groups 1-5), or will not be able to submit their externally-assessed work (Group 6) and will therefore be ineligible for a 1-7 score for that course. This will take the IB Diploma off the table, since you need to pass all of your courses with a qualifying score.**

### What is testing like and when does it happen?

All IB exams occur at either the end of April or in May of the final year of the course. For one-year courses, it will be at the end of that year. In two-year courses, the testing occurs in the spring of senior year. In September, students will get copies of the IB exam schedule. It's important to note that exams cannot be moved or rescheduled for any reason. And, SCSD covers all testing fees for all IB (and AP) exams, so there is no cost to you! Here are some characteristics of IB exams:

- ♦ You will only encounter multiple choice in some of your science exams.
- ♦ Most exams contain an element of choice (Pick Part A OR Part B, or Complete one of these three questions, etc.)
- ♦ Most exams contain a combination of short-answer and longer response writing
- ♦ It's not a race against the clock. IB cares more about content than speed.
- ♦ All exams begin with a "Five-minute reading period," during which you look at the test, prepare and reflect, plan out your timing, etc. You are not allowed to use a pen(cil) during this reading period; instead, it's an opportunity to center your thinking, calm your nerves, and prepare. This does not count towards the overall timing of the test.
- ♦ To protect testing integrity, students must remain in the exam room for 2 hours, even for exams shorter than that.

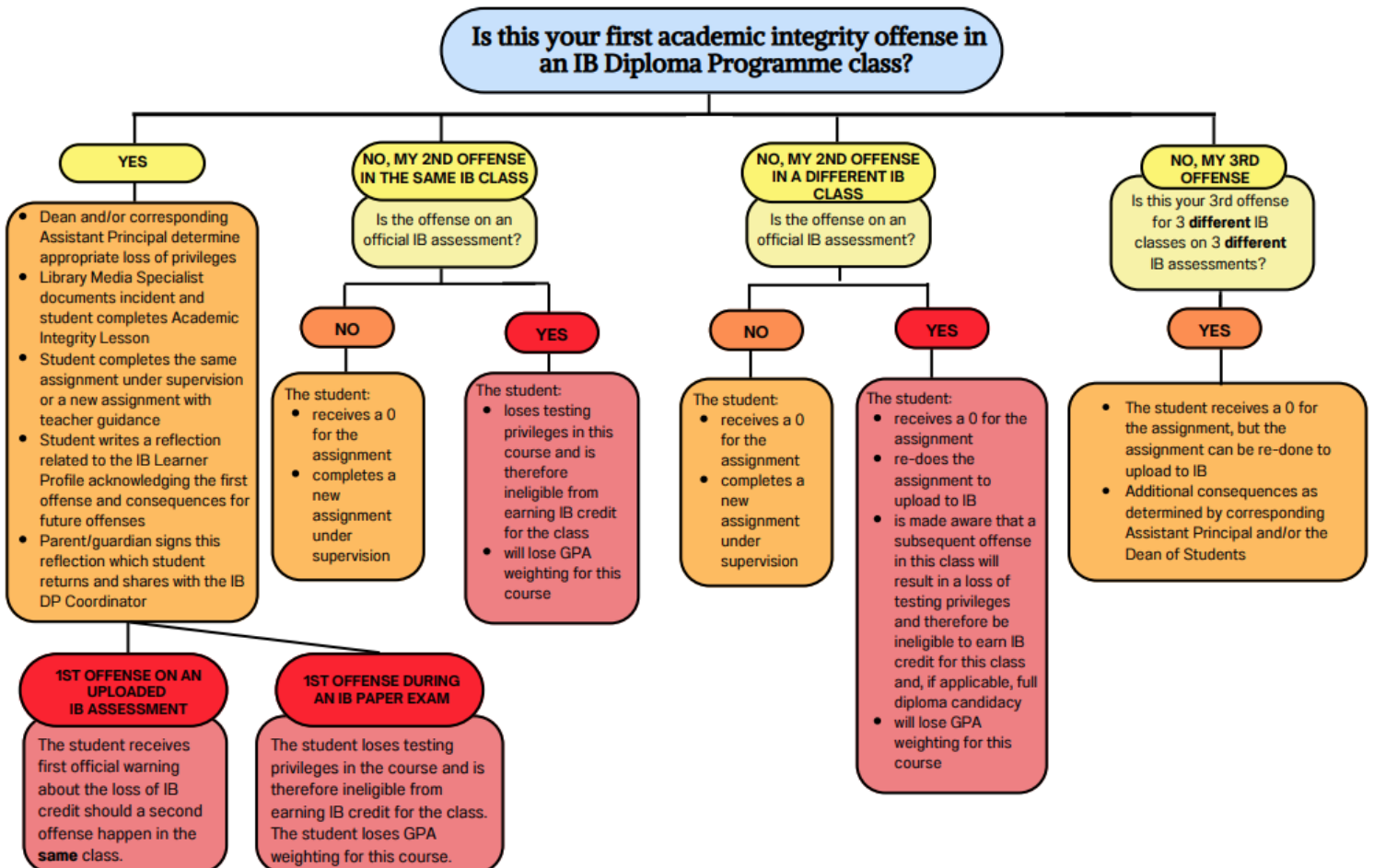
## ➤ Testing and Academic Integrity



Both SHS and the International Baccalaureate organization take academic integrity seriously. All work that you submit should be your own and you should cite your sources accurately and honestly. As outlined in the [SHS Academic Integrity Policy](#), there are several types of misconduct: *collusion* (unethical sharing of work), *plagiarism* (misrepresenting the ideas of another person or group, or of AI as your own), *duplication of work* (using your own work for multiple assessments), and *misconduct* such as direct copying or looking up information on your cell phone, etc., during an exam.

An additional layer for IB students is maintaining your integrity when you complete your IA work or any Externally-Assessed (EA) work that counts as part of your overall 1-7 performance in your IB classes. If you cheat on any of these, there are additional consequences. Students found guilty of academic misconduct on any official IB IA or EA work must:

- Redo that part of the work, choosing a new topic
- Meet with your assigned assistant principal to discuss consequences such as detentions, etc.
- Attend a course with our Library Media Specialist about how to avoid this mistake in the future
- Resubmit the new assignment for uploading
- Please note that there may be gradebook consequences for this action
- **IMPORTANT:** Any student who commits misconduct a second time, after completing the above steps, will not be able to submit their IA for that course. This means that you will not be able to sit for your exams for that course and, therefore, will not earn a 1-7 score. You will not be able to earn your IB Diploma if you commit this second infraction. Please see the flow chart below. This is a non-negotiable.



## ➤ Applying to College as a DP Candidate

Let's just say right at the outset that the decision to become a DP candidate solely for the purpose of getting into college is the wrong reason to join the program. It will make for a very long and frustrating two years, and it is important to note that you may not get into your first-choice school anyway. Having said that, there is no denying that college admissions counselors across the board view DP candidates in a very favorable light. When they review a student's high school transcript, they are not just evaluating your academic performance in terms of grades or GPA – they are doing so within the context of how rigorous a course of study you attempted while a high school student. How much did you challenge yourself with advanced level courses? Individual AP courses and individual IB courses are BOTH very good, and both will show colleges that you are trying to challenge yourself. Participating in Science Research is also a fantastic way to nurture and showcase your research skills. The full IB Diploma is another step. When colleges see that a student is pursuing the full IB Diploma, every school, from Community Colleges to the Ivy League, considers the IB Diploma the most challenging program a student can attempt, because it is a full program. They know you will be participating in research, learning how to think from an inquiry mindset, and sharpening your writing and analysis skills *in every class*. One of the DP program's greatest strengths is that you are ready to handle anything your professors may throw at you, because you've done it already.

This brings us to several important questions – how do you approach the college process as a DP Candidate? Are there some schools that look on it especially favorably, and is it possible to share some of the work you're doing outside of class (EE, CAS) with an admissions counselor?

The good news is there are some great resources to help you with the answers to all of those questions:

**First**, this chart of college acceptances (from 2018; this study is conducted every 10 years) compares the percentage of applicants who are admitted versus those who apply as a DP Candidate. Although the numbers are out of date, the acceptance

advantage still rings true. As you can see, IB students are accepted at a much higher rate than the rest of the applicant pool. This is largely because of the writing and inquiry skills you will hone in each of your IB classes, as well as by writing your Extended Essay, and because of the interdisciplinary thinking cultivated in TOK.

However, please understand that being an IB Diploma Candidate does not guarantee your acceptance into any of these highly-selective schools. It does mean that, if you do the program with fidelity, you will be much more ready to hit the ground running once you get to campus than you likely would have been if you didn't participate, and colleges know this.

### IB Acceptance Rate at The Top 25 US Universities

A survey conducted by the International Insight Research Group showed that the acceptance rate of IB students into Ivy League universities is up to 18% higher than the total population acceptance rate. The gap is even more significant for top-ranked universities outside of the Ivy League, where it is 22% higher, on average.

College or University	Acceptance Rate	IB DP Candidate Acceptance Rate
MIT	7.2%	23.1%
Stanford University	4.65%	17%
Harvard University	5.1%	12.2%
Cal Tech	8%	28.3%
University of Chicago	7.9%	60.3%
Princeton University	6.5%	17.2%
Cornell University	14.1%	47%
Yale University	6.3%	14.3%
Johns Hopkins University	11.4%	46%
Columbia University	6%	13.6%
University of Pennsylvania	9.4%	31.6%
U Michigan, Ann Arbor	28.6%	70.8%
Duke University	9%	36.2%

College or University	Acceptance Rate	IB DP Candidate Acceptance Rate
UC Berkeley	17.5%	45.5%
Northwestern University	9%	48.8%
UCLA	18%	41.4%
UC San Diego	35.9%	60.7%
Carnegie Mellon University	13.7%	69.6%
NYU	33%	46.8%
Brown University	9.3%	19.2%
University of WI, Madison	49%	75%
University of Washington	45%	63.4%
University of TX at Austin	39%	81.5%
University of IL at Urbana	66%	90.4%
Georgia Institute of Tech	25%	79.4%

This QR Code will lead you to the full study. IB students are Principled and always cite their sources!



**Second**, consider searching for colleges that actively recruit IB Diploma Graduates and those with generous IB credit policies. [This website](#) can help you locate schools that love IB by giving you a general breakdown of both US and international colleges and what type of credit you may receive.

Or use this QR code to link to the site.

It will depend on each individual school, but in general, it ranges from no credits (sorry!) to actually entering college with “Sophomore Standing” – in other words the ability to graduate in three years instead of four. Several of our past DP Candidates were able to attend their “dream school” because the ability to save an entire year’s worth tuition, room & board, and other expenses made that school the best fit not just academically and personally, but financially as well.




**Third**, when you are applying, you will note that every application, whether it’s the Common App, Coalition App, or individual school applications, will have a space at the end for “Additional Information,” if there is anything you want the college to know that isn’t covered elsewhere. DP candidates typically use this space to share a short summary of their Extended Essay topic, and the question they are trying to answer. If you are especially proud of your CAS project, a quick note about it can be helpful as well.

Your guidance counselor has all this information as well, and will guide you through every step of the process. Please seek them out with any questions, or just to check-in so that you keep them in the loop. The more you share with them, the better they will be able to steer you in the right direction!! You are also always welcome and encouraged to reach out to the admissions counselor for schools you are especially interested in—it can definitely help, as long as you correspond appropriately, as discussed in the next session.

## ➤ Information about IB quoted from various college websites

We looked up information about IB on the websites on some of the most common schools that SHS students apply to. Here is what they have to say. We highlighted the most relevant information in **bold font**.



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

**"NYU recognizes the rigor and difficulty of the IB diploma program, and welcomes many high-achieving students each year to our three degree-granting campuses who have successfully graduated from the program."**


### How Do Colleges View IB?



**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**


**"Take the most rigorous classes that you can. Academically, this [junior year] should be your most challenging year... Do the IB programme if your school offers it. The IB diploma is more valuable than individual IB classes, but it requires more, like community service and a research paper..."**

Take the most challenging courses that you can... Colleges take into account what opportunities you had as well as what you did with those opportunities. Talk to your academic counselor if you need help with your plan—they are your friends."



**RIT**

**"RIT considers the IB Diploma program to be among the most rigorous curricula offered worldwide. To be competitive for admission to RIT, students should be pursuing the diploma if they attend an IB school. In addition, we are generally able to give advanced standing credit to IB students who receive a 5, 6, or 7 on Higher Level exams."**



**CORNELL UNIVERSITY**

**"Cornell is a leader among American Universities in enrolling undergraduate students who have earned the International Baccalaureate (IB). Cornell regards the IB program as a rigorous, advanced program of study, and students are pleased to find similar opportunities here at Cornell through interdisciplinary courses, independent majors, honors programs, and undergraduate research opportunities."**



**ITHACA COLLEGE**

**"Ithaca College has found the IB curriculum prepares students well for the academic rigor they will encounter while enrolled in college."**




**GENESEO**  
NEW YORK'S PUBLIC HONORS COLLEGE

**"We highly value the diverse perspectives and academic excellence that International Baccalaureate (IB) students bring to our community. We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that embraces global cultures and experiences. Our institution recognizes the rigorous academic preparation that IB programs offer and warmly welcomes students who have pursued this challenging curriculum. At SUNY Geneseo, we provide a supportive and enriching academic atmosphere where IB students can thrive, contribute meaningfully, and achieve their fullest potential. We encourage IB students to explore the opportunities available at our institution and join us in pursuit of academic excellence & global engagement."**

**"SUNY Geneseo recognizes IB programmes, launches scholarships for IB students (USA) The State University of New York's (SUNY) Geneseo grants USD 1,000 scholarships to both national and international incoming students who have earned the IB Diploma. Students may also be eligible for a one-time, \$1500 innovation grant in their 2nd year at Geneseo. Using their extended essay research topic or CAS project (creativity, activity and service) as a foundation, they may choose to expand their ideas into new knowledge and make positive change in the world. No additional scholarship application is required."**

### How Do SUNY Colleges View IB?



**BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**"Students in the IB Diploma Program may receive up to 32 credits. The following conditions must be met: The IB Diploma must be completed with a score of 30 or more points; and The student must complete at least three Higher Level exams with a score of 5 or higher."**



**UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY**  
State University of New York

**Supportive statement for IB students**

**"We welcome IB students at UAlbany! We have excellent programs that will fit your accelerated academic background, and scholarships to help you fund your education. UAlbany will award up to 30 credits to students who have completed the requirements for an IB Diploma with a cumulative score of at least 30 — including both Standard Level and Higher-Level exams — and no score lower than a 4 (satisfactory)."**



**University at Buffalo**

**"Students who have completed an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma with a score of 30 will be awarded 30 credits (maximum) toward their degree and, in some cases, toward major or UB Curriculum requirements. Students with a score of 29 or less—or those who did not complete a diploma—are guaranteed credit for higher-level exams with scores of 5 or higher. This credit will apply toward their degree and, in some cases, toward major or general education requirements."**



**New Paltz**  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**"The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of studies, leading to examinations. Designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum that allows its graduates to fulfill requirements of various national education systems, the diploma model is based on the pattern of no single country but incorporates the best elements of several.**

**A student with an International Baccalaureate Diploma is eligible to receive up to 30 college credits."**

## ➤ Some Statistics about SHS IB Diploma Graduates

If you decide to pursue your IB Diploma, you will be joining a group of students who have tried to do something very hard! And very rewarding, often even for those who don't actually earn the Diploma. These students have reported feeling much more prepared for college than their peers, and more prepared than they would have felt if they had not pursued the IB path.

- From 2018-2025, 70 SHS students have attempted the IB Diploma. 51 have earned it.
- In 2025/26, there are 27 senior and 17 junior IB Diploma candidates.

Post-High School Destinations of SHS IB DP Graduates		Among the financial packages of SHS DP Graduates
Barnard College	SUNY Albany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$7,000 per year</li> <li>• \$12,000 per year (3)</li> <li>• \$15,000 per year (9)</li> <li>• \$20,000 per year (14)</li> <li>• \$25,000 per year (8)</li> <li>• 28,500 per year</li> <li>• \$33,000 per year (1)</li> <li>• 40,000 per year (5)</li> <li>• 50% tuition per year (4)</li> <li>• 100% tuition for 4 years (5)</li> </ul>
Bryn Mawr College	SUNY Buffalo	
Carnegie Mellon University	SUNY Geneseo	
Clemson University	SUNY New Paltz	
College of the Holy Cross	SUNY Stonybrook	
Connecticut College	Syracuse University	
Cornell University	Temple University	
CUNY Hunter Macauley	UCLA	
Honors College	University of Central Florida	
Franklin and Marshall	University of Georgia	
George Washington University	University of Exeter, UK	
Georgia Institute of Technology	University of Maryland, College Park	
Hofstra University	University of Notre Dame	
James Madison University	University of South Carolina	
Kenyon College	University of Southern California	
Lafayette College	University of Tennessee	
Lehigh University	University of Texas—Austin	
Loyola Marymount School of Film &TV	University of Wisconsin—Madison	
Northeastern University	Western Connecticut State University	
New York University (NYU)	University	
Penn State University	Washington University of St. Louis	
Pratt Institute	Vassar College	
St. Lawrence University	Yale University	

## One Final Tip – Communicating with Adults in Writing and Presenting the Best Version of Yourself as a Student

### ➤ How to embody the Learner Profile trait of being a good COMMUNICATOR

As you move through your junior and senior year, especially as a DP Candidate, you are going to find that you need to be in touch with your teachers, your counselor, and even college admissions counselors, for a variety of reasons. Given both you and they have busy schedules, the fastest and most direct way to contact them will be through email. In these cases, email takes the form of formal correspondence, and there is both a right way and a wrong way to communicate via this method. The steps outlined below will help you to avoid some common pitfalls:

- **Your Email Username:** You never get a second chance to make a first impression, and with email, that starts with the username you are emailing from. If you are using your school email (lastname.firstname@somersschools.org) you are fine. However, especially when applying to college and communicating with admissions, a personal email address might make more sense. If you haven't already, you should create a new email specifically dedicated for the college process. Below are some examples of what is appropriate and more importantly, what is not:
  - **Appropriate** (None of these email addresses are real)
    - Firstinitial.Lastname (ascanlon@gmail.com)
    - Lastnamethreenumbers (scanlon318@yahoo.com)
    - Firstname.MiddleInitial.Lastname (alisonascanlon@protonmail.com)
  - **Not Appropriate**
    - The first email address you probably ever created (hellokitty07@hotmail.com)
    - Anything that doesn't easily identify you (453239j@aol.com)
    - We hope it goes without saying: no address with curse words, allusions to illicit substances, etc.

You can see the appropriate usernames involve some combination of your first and last name. It helps you look more professional, that you're taking this seriously.

From there we go to what form the actual email should take. Especially if you are making a request of someone, or following up on a request already made, both the format and the phrasing of these requests is extremely important. Follow these steps to ensure that's the case:

- Do include some form of greeting at the start of your message.
- Do watch how you phrase your question or request.
- Proper Grammar, Spelling, and Punctuation is **Non-Negotiable**.

**If we put this altogether, here's what the wrong way and right way will look like:**

➤ **Wrong way:**

- From: Snowfreak24837u [Snowfreak24837u@hotmail.com](mailto:Snowfreak24837u@hotmail.com)
- To: John Fleck [jfleck@somersschools.org](mailto:jfleck@somersschools.org)
  - *its anthony wheres my rec letter, my college wants it asap*

➤ **Right way:**

- From: Anthony Smith [anthonypsmith@gmail.com](mailto:anthonypsmith@gmail.com)
- To: John Fleck [jfleck@somersschools.org](mailto:jfleck@somersschools.org)

- Good morning Mr. Fleck

I hope you are doing well! I wanted to follow up with you regarding my recommendation letter for my college applications. I'm sure you are swamped with the number of letters you are writing for me and my classmates, so first and foremost, I wanted to say thank you again for taking the time to support me in my application process. I am planning to submit my applications on or around October 1<sup>st</sup>, about two weeks from now, and if it is possible for you to submit your letter at that time, that would be really helpful. I'm happy to stop by your office if you would like to discuss this in person, and if there is anything else you need from me at this time, please let me know and I will get it to you as soon as possible.

Again, thank you so much, for all of your help, and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Kind regards,  
Anthony Smith




This kind of mindful approach helps us nurture the Learner Profile trait of being good communicators. It will go a long way when you need to ask the adults in your life for help, when you write to admissions officers for assistance, and when you need to communicate professionally.

And speaking of communicating, please remember to reach out. We are always here to help! Let us know about your successes and your struggles.

Sincerely,

The IB DP Team at SHS

# Appendix

<p><a href="#"><u>Class of 2028 Course Offerings</u></a></p> <p>This is a list of all Groups 1-6 options available for Class of 2027 and 2028 students</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>SHS Academic Integrity Policy IB DP Addendum</u></a></p> <p>There are some regulations about cheating on official IB Assessments that can affect your Diploma Candidate status</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>Applying to college as an IB DP Candidate</u></a></p> <p>Learn more about the benchmarks you must meet in order for your counselor to indicate that you are an IB DP Candidate in good standing when you apply to college</p>	
<p><a href="#"><u>How to Leverage IB Diploma Candidacy in Your College Application Process</u></a></p> <p>Learn more about how to find schools that actively recruit IB students, how to tailor your college application, and what you'll need to do.</p>	