International Baccalaureate Student Survival Guide

How to achieve the IB diploma
Introduction

*What exactly is the IB diploma program? What are the benefits for completing the program and receiving an IB diploma?*

The IB Diploma Programme is designed as an **academically challenging** and **balanced** programme of education with final examinations that prepares students, normally aged 16 to 19, for success at university and life beyond. The programme is normally taught over **two years** and has gained recognition and respect from the **world's leading universities.** ([www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org))

At Centennial High School the IB Diploma Program is offered during the **junior** and **senior** year. Certainly, this rigorous program is demanding and time consuming. **Rumor has it that** you will undergo one of the most **academically enriching** experiences that the modern education system has to offer...in exchange for surrendering any hope of fostering a balanced social lifestyle. **JK LOL 🧐**

Receiving the IB diploma is contingent on the development of effective study and **time management skills**, the ability to recognize one's **strengths and weaknesses**, and an extended effort to build a **network of peers, parents, and teachers** that students can utilize in times of need.

No other qualification at pre university level makes doing a **4,000 word essay** (EE) and a course in **TOK** (*Theory of Knowledge*) compulsory. This is precisely what universities love: it shows you have experience in writing university level essays and makes you stand out from the crowd. **College credit, advanced status, and such perks** as preferred housing can be some of the benefits of the DP. Most students who complete the program and attain the diploma **enter college as a sophomore!** More important than the college credit is the strong **inquiry-based instruction** that teaches students to take responsibility for their own education and explore the rapidly expanding **global avenues** of higher education that continue to become available to them. The following information may help you stay on course and learn to **manage your time and stress effectively.**
Part one: Classes

Students are required to take and test in seven subjects including TOK (Theory of Knowledge).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language A</th>
<th>Language B (Spanish or French)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Art, Drama, Music, or 2nd Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory of Knowledge</td>
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In a nutshell: You need three HL test (higher level) and three SL (standard level).

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<tr>
<th>Junior year</th>
<th>Senior year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take up to 2 SL exams</td>
<td>Take 3 HL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Begin Extended essay</td>
<td>Take 1-2 SL exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin TOK 2nd semester</td>
<td>Finish EE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete TOK/ TOK paper</td>
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Junior Year (Year 1): Available classes

1. Language A (English),
2. Language B (Spanish 3, or 4 – available to test SL), Language B (French 3)
3. History (AP/IB US History)
5. AP Calculus AB, Math Studies—available to test SL
6. IB Art Design—available to test SL, Drama, or Music 3rd year.
7. TOK begins in the 2nd semester junior year and concludes 1st semester senior year.

WARNING: Other classes are also available but not considered an IB class and therefore do not fulfill IB requirements.
Senior Year (Year 2): Available classes

1. Language A—HL test
2. Language B, Spanish 4 HL or SL test, French 4 HL or SL test
3. History of the Americas—HL test
4. Science: AP/IB Biology—HL or SL test, Physics—HL or SL test, AP/IB Environmental Systems and Societies—SL test
5. IB Math—HL or SL test, Math Studies—SL test
6. Arts
   • IB Art Design—SL test,
   • Advanced IB Drama—HL or SL test
   • Festival Winds IB—HL or SL test
7. TOK first semester

Other DP requirements:

4000 word Extended Essay
150 hours CAS

WARNING: Other classes are also available but not considered an IB class and therefore do not fulfill IB requirements

By being enrolled in the IB program, regardless of what actual IB classes you take and at what level (higher or standard), you've already proven that you can handle college level coursework.

It is YOUR responsibility to meet all requirements. Questions? Problems? Issues? Come and see the IB Coordinator in room 115.
Time Management:

“I can’t do this. I am not a machine. I want a life. I don’t want to write an extended essay. I want…..” These are common complaints made by many diploma students. However, the myth that IB students have no life, stay up all night every night studying is exactly that—a myth. There is no doubt that IB is a challenging and difficult program, but with a solid plan for good time management students will successfully prepare for college as well as achieve the IB diploma.

“It is rarely that IB students have an exorbitant amount of short-term homework due the next day—largely, it's that there is a wide variety of long-term projects that can all be due on the same day but that are also assigned several days, sometimes even weeks, in advance.” ex-IB student
**Procrastination = Stress**

**TIME MANAGEMENT= SUCCESS**

The following suggestions may help! Manage your time wisely and the stress takes care of itself.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Keep a daily agenda or schedule of all assignments and activities. Assignments are not the only things that require time.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Agenda" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> CHECK your agenda. Writing it down doesn’t help if you never look at your schedule.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Homework Alert" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Schedule due dates for long-term assignments on a monthly agenda. There is no excuse for missing due dates.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="No Excuses" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Take advantage of in-class time. When teachers allow working time, <strong>USE IT.</strong> If nothing else use the time to ask questions and clarify your understanding of the material.</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Classroom" /></td>
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</table>
5. Figure out an after school routine for yourself. Once you get home you might need a short break before working or maybe you work better diving right in.

6. Don’t upset your parents by skipping chores. Taking out the trash or vacuuming can provide a break and change of pace.

7. NO phone-Face Book- Twitter-Instagram- Pintrest
   Use these HUGE time wasters as a reward for completing a difficult assignment
   Are you staying up late because of all the work or because you spent working time socializing or playing games? **BE HONEST!**

8. Organize your notebooks & backpacks.
   You waste valuable time looking for papers you have already completed but did not put back in order. Leaving your assignment in the printer or on your desk are **PITIFUL** excuses.
9. Stay on top of group assignments and make sure your part of the assignment is completed to the best of your ability.

10. GET UP & MOVE
   Physical exercise stimulates brain cells
   RUN * WALK* DANCE*
   Give yourself a break from the mental demands of school work.

11. Remember that family and friends are an important part of your life. If you need to go see your grandma—GO!
   If your friends are all going to the movies on Friday night, go with them. Use good judgment, though. Hanging out at the mall the night before a big test just to be with friends is a poor use of time.

12. GO TO BED AT A DECENT TIME. Sleep is important. It should be a rare occasion when you need to stay up late to study or complete work.

There is some stress involved with any rigorous academic program. If there is no stress, then it is **NOT** very rigorous. Colleges are looking for students who step up and tackle the most demanding programs. The secret to success is to find a solid approach to good time management, which will help keep stress to a minimum.
**PART THREE—Resources: USE THEM!**

1. **Form study groups with other IB students.**
   Review lecture notes, prepare for exams, and complete homework. **DO NOT COPY HOMEWORK!**
   Exchange phone numbers and emails with like-minded classmates who are all working toward the same end.

2. **Post study group information on a common calendar and have a system or phone tree to make sure all members are kept informed.** (Calendar in 115 is available for this)

3. **Find and purchase IB study guides.**
   Amazon is one such publisher.

4. **You may purchase old exams and answers from the IBO.**
   There are a few websites that offer material from past IB exams.

5. **Subject area teachers may have specific guides or materials that they recommend.**
   Check with students who have completed these exams and see if they want to sell or donate study materials.

6. **If teachers offer review sessions before the exams take advantage of these and attend.** **BE PROACTIVE**

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**IB is reciprocal—you get out of it what you put into it.**

**Those who study and work hard will achieve the diploma.**

**More importantly, they will begin college well prepared and ready to pursue the career of their choice. They are more knowledgeable in the best sense of the word.**
**PART FOUR—EE and CAS:**

**PROcrastination Is Your Enemy.** Remember this when it comes time to do your 4,000 word EE.

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**STORY TIME!** Once upon a time, there was a brave IB junior named Ibeena who did not have a long-term strategy to manage her EE. She procrastinated with her research question and finding a supervisor. Ibeena didn’t bother doing the necessary research because she knew she could get it all done the week before it was due. She didn’t write a rough draft over the summer and never spoke to her supervisor, either.

The next year—her senior year—Ibeena still had only a vague idea, had done almost no research, and had only scribbled a few sentences for her rough draft.

Two weeks before it was due, Ibeena was frantic! IB homework took up most of her time after school, leaving her little time left to complete the EE. She panicked, began to plagiarize and used inappropriate sources.

The night before the EE was due, Ibeena dashed off a hurried version of the EE. Misspellings, an incomplete thesis, and fragmented thoughts plagued her work! Ibeena whined that IB was too hard! And that the EE was too difficult! She cried to her friends and complained to her parents.

That summer after graduation, Ibeena learned that she only scored an N (no score) on her EE, making her ineligible for the diploma. Four years of hard work without the reward of the Diploma gone because she procrastinated.

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Don’t be Ibeena!
EE Tips:

1. Pick a topic that holds some interest for you.
2. Your supervisor must teach the subject, that way they can offer constructive criticism or suggestions pertaining to your topic.
3. Meet with your supervisor regularly. Advice and help can only be given with interaction between you and your supervisor.
4. Meet deadlines! The EE guide will give you suggested deadlines to help you stay on track and complete your essay long before your final paper is due.
5. Learn how to cite your sources. Plagiarism will result in a disqualification of your paper and you will lose your diploma.
6. Proofread! A good, well-written paper can result in an extra point towards your diploma.

CAS (Creativity, Action, and Service) will begin in your junior year.

- 150 hours must be completed over the course of your junior and senior year.
- The CAS coordinator will review the CAS program with you and provide some guidance and suggestions for activities that will help you meet this requirement.

**WARNING! BAD THINKING AHEAD**

DO NOT give up your IB diploma because you cannot make some time for community service. There are additional benefits to CAS beyond looking great on your college applications. Creativity hours allow you to explore new avenues and learn new skills. Be bold.

Don’t wait until second semester of senior year to start recording hours. CAS gives you multiple opportunities to find ways to contribute to your community, your world.
Part five—Taking Exams:

Taking advanced exams such as AP and IB can be rewarding when you receive college credit for a passing score, as well as the satisfaction you feel for a successful result. How can you be successful? Working carefully throughout the courses will best prepare you for the exams.

Study groups, IB guides, and teacher reviews can also be helpful.

EXAM TIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make sure that you take a couple of SL exams your junior year <strong>IF POSSIBLE.</strong></th>
<th>Chemistry (AP/IB SL), IB Art Design SL, Math Studies SL, and Language B (Spanish 4 SL).</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose your third HL exam in a subject where you feel strong.</td>
<td>Language A HL, History of the Americas HL, and ? (IB Math, Physics, Biology, Drama, Music, Language B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan carefully the number of extra exams you will take. Just because you have an AP/IB class does <strong>NOT</strong> mean that you need to take both the AP and the IB exam in that subject.</td>
<td>Obviously, if you are attempting to achieve the IB Diploma, you need to take the IB exams. The AP exams should be reserved for the extra subjects.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STUDY</strong></td>
<td><strong>ATTEND</strong> teacher review sessions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Obtain IB guides or reviews for your subject areas and levels.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The IB Guide to Physics HL!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be on time for exams.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Come prepared!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>No one else is going to supply you with pens and pencils!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Read directions carefully and follow them. If it says to answer one question in a section, answer one question.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Write LEGIBLY!!!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Examiners do not want to decipher scribbles!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BE CONFIDENT.</strong></td>
<td><strong>PREPARATION=SUCCESS!</strong></td>
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</table>
IB IS TOUGH.

It is rigorous, challenging, time consuming, and demanding. Can you do it?

YES!

If you can manage your time, be conscientious about both work quality and meeting deadlines, you can be successful and still have time for fun in high school.

Like anything, punctuality, quality work, and dedication will become good habits.

MAKE IT HAPPEN!