

BIHS & IB: How International Baccalaureate Works at BIHS

What is “IB”? “IB” refers to the International Baccalaureate Organization and its education program. Founded in 1969, this global organization offers an innovative and interdisciplinary curriculum meant to prepare all students for the opportunities and challenges of a career and/or college. The IB is similar to the College Board in that they help establish college credit for their course offerings, offer training, and provide the structure for how we run our “IB Diploma Program”. Unlike AP classes, IB only begins in 11th grade and continues through 12th.



How is BIHS different from IB? “BIHS” is our learning community, while “IB” is a curricular framework we use in the 11th and 12th grade. Founded in 2006, BIHS is our small learning community and a program at Berkeley High. BIHS offers a wide variety of courses, including courses that are part of the International Baccalaureate program. We are encouraging the use of “BIHS” or “IHS” in place of “IB” in conversations with students, other parents and BHS staff. BIHS more accurately describes who we are, and is more inclusive. Only some of the classes BIHS students take in the 11th and 12th grade are IB courses.



Why is IB helpful beyond exams/credits? The ideas and ways of thinking in the IB curriculum allow our teachers to make connections between the world and their disciplines. The framework IBO provides also guides our assessments and ways of thinking about students. The IB Learner profile is an excellent example of an idea from IB that we apply to ALL of our classrooms at BIHS.

What is the learner profile? The IB Learner Profile is a set of character qualities that IB encourages and we promote in our classrooms, tying them into our curriculum and how we ask students to consider their own growth and in working with others.

Who does “IB” in BIHS? Everyone. The ideas of IB begin in 10th grade with the way we ask questions and the type of assessments in humanities courses. All students take both IB Language & Literature HL and IB History HL in 11th and 12th grade in addition to IB Theory of Knowledge. We also offer a variety of IB Courses that students can enroll in regardless of whether or not they wish to take the IB Exam in 11th or 12th grade.

What are IB Exams? IB Exams take place in May each year and are an option for students in an IB course. Exams include a project done during the year and rarely offer multiple-choice based questions. IB Exams are scored on a 1-7 scale with a 4 or 5 earning some form of college credit at most colleges and universities. Exams for HL or Higher Level courses cover two year's worth of content and are worth more than SL or Standard Level course exams. These exams are also excellent practice for the wide variety of tasks that most college and career paths demand.

What is the IB Diploma? All students will graduate BIHS with a Berkeley High diploma. the IB Diploma is a separate pathway in addition to that diploma. The IB Diploma is a globally recognized achievement for students that take six IB exams, an **Extended Essay**, and a **Creativity/Activity/Service project**. It is like being in college while being in high school. It is very rigorous and can be difficult for students with large commitments outside of class; however, the IB Diploma is just one of many paths you can take in BIHS. As few as 20 and as many as 80 seniors pursue the IB Diploma each year, with many students choosing to focus on other commitments and taking far fewer exams. The greatest advantage is in terms of college credits with some schools offering a year or more of college credit for the full diploma.



What IB Pathways does BIHS offer? The general pathway is that all BIHS students will graduate with Higher Level (college level) IB Courses on the transcript (English and History) and take Theory of Knowledge (TOK) 2nd semester of junior year and 1st semester of senior year. Beyond that is the student's choice:

- o **PATHWAY #1: Required IB Work Only** - Take no additional IB courses and may or may not take IB exams. Choose your own adventure. We do recommend at least taking Higher Level English and History at the end of the Senior Year for the chance at college credit.
- o **PATHWAY #2: Additional IB Work** - Take some IB classes beyond those required in 11th or 12th grade. Possibly take an IB SL course and exam in 11th grade to see if you want to do the IB Diploma.
- o **PATHWAY #3: The IB Diploma** - Take six IB certificate exams and courses over two years and write a passing Extended Essay and CAS project to receive the IB Diploma.

What IB Courses/Exams do you offer? Check out our course catalog for any updates as we currently offering the following: IB Language and Literature (English) HL, IB History (of the Americas) HL, IB Economics SL, IB Environmental Systems & Societies, IB Biology SL, IB Math SL and HL, IB Film SL and HL, IB Studio Art SL and HL, IB Art History SL, IB Computer Science SL and HL, IB French SL and HL, IB Spanish SL and HL, IB Chinese SL, IB Latin SL and HL, IB Music SL & HL.

HL= 2 years of study; SL = 1 year of study. "IB" courses are only in 11th & 12th grade.

More questions about IB? Confused? Excited? Just need to talk about all this?

Contact the IB Coordinator, Keldon Clegg at keldonclegg@berkeley.net for more information. Please be sure to let him know who your student is and their grade level!