

Tigard High School IB Program

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What is IB?

IB stands for International Baccalaureate. IB is a prestigious program of advanced classes designed to prepare students for success in college and beyond!

What are HL and SL?

HL and SL are the two levels of IB courses and IB exams. HL stands for higher level, SL stands for standard level. HL courses are two years, while SL courses may be one or two years, depending on the subject. HL exams are longer and cover more content. Colleges usually give more credit for HL exams.

Who should take IB classes?

Anyone who is intellectually curious, who loves to learn, or who wants to challenge themselves should take IB classes. IB is not just for straight A students; anyone who is serious about their education can benefit from IB. Students who are planning to go to college should definitely take at least a few IB classes. The more IB classes you take, the better prepared you will be for the rigor and workload of college.

Are IB classes hard?

In general, they are usually harder than non-IB classes. They cover more content in greater depth, and have higher expectations for students. However, the difficulty and workload vary greatly by subject and level. If you want to find out more about a specific IB class, the best person to ask is the IB teacher or your current teacher in that subject.

What are IB exams?

IB exams are optional tests over each IB course given each May that can earn you college credit. They are scored on a 1-7 scale.

Who can take IB exams?

Only juniors and seniors can take IB exams. If you are going for an IB Diploma, you must take six IB exams during 11th and 12th grade. This is an IB rule, not a Tigard High School rule.

How do I sign up for IB exams?

Signups take place each October for exams in the following May. You will need to fill out an IB exam registration form to sign up. Your IB teachers will talk about IB exams in class and post a link to the registration form on their Canvas pages.

How much do IB exams cost?

IB exams cost approximately \$135 each. Exact prices are on the IB exam registration form, which is updated each year. They are expensive, but they can potentially save you thousands of dollars in college tuition costs if you do well. Students who qualify for free or reduced lunch can get a fee waiver to reduce the cost of IB exams.

How much college credit can I get for IB exams?

Most colleges award credit for exam scores of 5+. Many colleges, including U of O and Oregon State give credit for scores of 4+. IB Diploma students who pass all 6 exams often earn the equivalent of a full year's worth of college credit.

To find out how much credit a particular college gives for IB exams, google the name of the college + "IB credit". Here are links for some popular schools: [U of O](#) (click the "I" and then click International Baccalaureate), [Oregon State](#), [PSU](#), [PCC](#), [U of Washington](#), [UCLA](#), [U of Portland](#), [Willamette](#), [U of Arizona](#),

Can I take an IB exam without taking the IB classes in that subject?

No. This is an IB policy, not a Tigard High School policy.

Can I take an IB class online or through independent study?

No. This is an IB policy, not a Tigard High School policy.

What is the Language B ab initio exam?

This is a World Language IB exam that is easier than the SL exam. It can only be taken by IB Diploma candidates who are in 12th grade and who are in French, Spanish or Japanese 3. It counts toward an IB Diploma, but it does not give you any college credit.

Do most THS students pass IB exams?

Yes. Over the past ten years, approximately 89% of Tigard High School exams received scores of 4 or higher, which is good enough to earn college credit at U. of O., Oregon State, University of Washington, and many other colleges and universities. Approximately 60% of Tigard High School IB exams received scores of 5 or higher, which is good enough to earn college credit at the vast majority of colleges and universities in the United States. (But that doesn't mean the exams are easy or that you won't have to study. Our students do well because they work hard in class **and** study outside of class!)

What is an IB Certificate?

A transcript that shows you took an IB exam. You also get a graduation cord for earning one!

How do I get an IB Certificate?

Take an IB class and then take the IB exam in May. That's it! You get an IB Certificate for each IB exam you take and pass with a 4 or higher.

How many certificates can I earn?

As many as you want!

What is an IB Diploma?

A diploma from the International Baccalaureate organization, separate from your regular Tigard High School diploma.

What are the benefits of an IB Diploma?

1. Many IB Diploma graduates earn enough **college credit** from their six IB exams to skip an entire year of college.
2. Having an IB Diploma significantly [increases your chances of being accepted to highly selective colleges](#) such as Stanford, Princeton, Duke, etc.
3. Many colleges offer special **scholarships** and other perks for IB Diploma graduates.
4. Earning an IB Diploma greatly increases the chances you will **succeed in college**. The college graduation rate for all students who start 4 year colleges is only around 63%. The college graduation rate for IB Diploma students is nearly 90%!
5. **Exceptional classroom environment.** Everyone in IB classes wants to be there and wants to learn. IB teachers celebrate knowledge and strive to create a positive academic environment that supports all students while pushing them to reach their full potential.

What are the requirements to earn an IB Diploma?

- Take IB classes in English, World Language, History, Science, Math, and one Elective.
- Take six IB exams, including at least three HL (Higher Level) exams.
- Earn at least 24 total points from your six exams.
- Take IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK) junior year and do the TOK Exhibition.
- Take IB Seminar senior year and do the TOK Essay and Extended Essay.
- Complete CAS: 150 hours of Creativity, Activity and Service, over 2 years.
- *Sophomores planning to earn an IB Diploma: You must fill out an IB 2 Year Plan and share it with Mr. Savage! He will review it and make sure you are taking all the classes you need!

How many IB exams can I take junior year?

If you are going for an IB Diploma: Two, at most. And only SL exams.

If you are NOT going for an IB Diploma: as many as you want, HL or SL.

(These are IB rules, not Tigard High School rules.)

How many IB exams can I take senior year?

As many as you want! It is not uncommon for IB Diploma Candidates to take six IB exams senior year. But if your schedule allows, it is a good idea to take one or two exams junior year.

Can I take seven IB exams?

Yes, though it's not recommended, since a full IB schedule is already pretty hard. Adding another IB class is too much work for most students. But, I have seen a few students do this successfully in the past.

Can I retake an exam senior year if I get a low score junior year?

Yes, but you have to pay for the retest.

What is IB Seminar?

IB Seminar is a one semester class for IB Diploma Seniors taught by Mr. Savage where you will complete your Extended Essay, TOK Essay and CAS. It is designed to make the IB Diploma easier and to give you credit for all the extra work you have to do as a Diploma Candidate.

Do I have to take IB Seminar if I'm going for an IB Diploma?

Yes. IB Seminar is required for all Diploma Candidates.

Why is IB English HL highly recommended for Diploma Candidates?

You need to take three HL exams, and you need at least 24 total points on your exams. Tigard students have done extremely well on the HL English exam in the past, with most earning 5, 6 or 7. So having this as one of your three HL exams increases your chances for successfully earning the 24 points you need. In addition, HL English is a fantastic class for improving your reading, writing and analytical skills, which will help you on the EE, TOK essay, your IAs, and other IB exams! However, if you don't like reading, or if English 9 and 10 were not easy classes for you, you might want to take IB English SL, since the workload is significantly less.

Why is IB History HL highly recommended for Diploma Candidates?

The requirements for SL History and HL History are the same. For either exam, you must take IB History of the Americas and IB Modern World History. Since you have to take both classes anyway, you might as well sign up for the HL exam. This has also been our highest scoring IB HL exam for the last several years.

Do I need to be a genius to earn an IB Diploma?

No! You don't need straight A's to get an IB Diploma, but you do need to be a serious student who is willing to work hard. You need to make academics a high priority in your life.

Can I still take (AVID, Leadership, Choir, TWI, etc.) if I'm going for an IB Diploma?

Usually yes. You will always have room in your schedule for at least one non-IB class, and with careful planning, you can have two non-IB classes each year. However, sometimes that elective you really want is only offered the same period as a required IB class. In that case, you might have to choose between your elective and the IB Diploma. For TWI IB students, your 11th and 12th grade TWI Language Arts classes are also IB classes and will prepare you well for the IB Spanish HL exam.

If I start the Diploma Program junior year, can I change my mind?

Yes. You can drop the IB Diploma Program at any time.

Why is it easier than ever to get an IB Diploma?

THS offers more HL and SL options than ever before, so you can play to your strengths when choosing your exams. Also, IB Seminar walks you through the TOK Essay, Extended Essay and CAS. In the past students had to do these on their own, outside of class, with minimal guidance. This resulted in large numbers of students dropping out of the IB Diploma Program senior year. Since implementing IB Seminar, over 90% of students who start their senior year as Diploma Candidates continue all the way through and successfully earn their IB Diploma!

Can I do extracurriculars and IB?

Yes. All IB Diploma students are heavily involved in extracurricular activities such as sports, music, leadership, the arts, clubs, etc. IB values well rounded students inside and outside of the classroom.

What is CAS?

CAS stands for Creativity, Activity and Service. All IB Diploma students must perform 50 hours of each to earn an IB Diploma. See the [CAS link on the THS IB webpage](#) for more information.

What is the Extended Essay?

The EE is a 3000 - 4000 word research paper in the subject of your choice. Only full IB Diploma candidates write the EE. The EE is excellent preparation for college. IB Diploma candidates start the EE in April of their Junior year. To learn more about the EE, check out the [EE page](#) on the THS website.

Can I still get an IB Diploma if I was in AGS 1 as a freshman?

Maybe. Right now we have an option for students who are in AGS 3 as juniors. Those students would take two math classes senior year: IB Math Applications and PSU Statistics. Another option is to take a math class in summer school so that you can get one year ahead in math. That would take you to IB Math Analysis 1 in 11th grade and IB Math Analysis 2 in 12th grade, which would prepare you for the IB Math Analysis SL exam. Talk to your counselor or math teacher about summer school options.

Do I need to take a Foreign Language in 9th grade to be ready for an IB Diploma?

Unless you already have a background in French, Spanish or Japanese, then yes, you should take a foreign language Freshman year so that you can get to level 4 by senior year. You must complete level 4 to be eligible for the standard level IB exam.

What are IA's?

IA's, or "Internal Assessments," are major projects done in every IB class that count toward your IB exam score. The format of IA's varies greatly from class to class. For example, the History IA is a research paper; the English IA is an oral presentation; the Psychology IA is a group experiment; the science IA is a lab that you design and carry out.

Who has to do IA's?

Everyone taking the IB exam must do the IA in that subject. In some IB classes, all students do the IA, and it counts for a class grade. In other IB classes, only exam takers do the IA, and it does not count for a class grade. For exam takers, you must turn in an IA to be eligible for a passing score on the IB exam.

Why do IA scores matter?

Depending on the subject and level (HL vs SL), the IA score counts for between 15% and 30% of your overall IB exam score. Also, in some classes, your IA score counts for a class grade.

Are IA's hard?

It varies from class to class, but in all classes your teacher will guide you through the process and break it down into multiple smaller steps to make it manageable. Also, for written IA's, your teacher will give you feedback on your first draft and you will have a chance to fix any mistakes before turning in your final draft. (The same is true for your Extended Essay and TOK Essay.)