

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about International Baccalaureate at The Rock School

Do I have to take IB courses at The Rock School?

Yes, all students will take IB coursework in grades K-12. Students in grade 11-12 do not have to complete the Diploma track, but they will still complete a full schedule of IB courses & related requirements.

How does the IB Diploma affect high school graduation?

Students who complete the IB Standard Track, as well as those who complete the IB Diploma Track, will graduate with a high school diploma from The Rock School. Students who complete all of the requirements of the IB's Diploma Programme and earn the qualifying number of points, will also be awarded an IB Diploma. The IB Diploma is awarded independent of the traditional high school diploma. In short, every graduating student earns a high school diploma from The Rock School regardless of the status of the IB Diploma candidacy.

How does IB compare to Advanced Placement (AP) courses?

Because the IB is taught much more like a college or university class, some schools believe that the IB offers a more seamless transition to higher education. Further, an IB diploma stands out because a student has had in-depth study in all types of subjects, not just the ones in which a student is "strong."

The IB program is not solely about academics; it also challenges students to enhance their personal growth. IB aspires to help schools develop well-rounded students with strong character and a global mindset. IB students often indicate that they have gained excellent time-management skills and other critical attitudes needed for academic and personal success.

Finally, in terms of assessment, students have multiple opportunities in each course to "show what they know" using various modes of communication and formats. The IB program is not about memorizing and guessing from a list of answers, but about truly understanding the material at a deeper level.

What about honors credit and weighted GPAs?

IB high-level (HL) courses carry a similar weight in GPA as AP and dual-credit courses.

Do I have to take PE / Arts / Spanish?

PE/Health and The Arts are required courses in the MYP for grades 6-10. The Diploma Programme requires the completion of an Arts course, but offers an exemption for students who choose to instead take a second course in the sciences or Individuals & Societies.

Language Acquisition (foreign language) is required in grades 2-12. At present, The Rock School offers Spanish as its language acquisition course. In PYP, it is part of the activities classes along with PE, art, music. In MYP, it is a half-time course in grades 6-8 and a standard course in grades 9-10. Language Acquisition is a required course for the Diploma Programme in grades 11-12.

All IB courses are required. Students may not opt-out of any of their IB coursework.

How much does it cost to do IB?

There is no additional fee to families to participate in IB. In grades 11-12, there are IB exam fees, but these will be built into the tuition costs for these grades.

How do you earn an IB Diploma?

In the IB diploma program, each IB course is scored on a scale from one to seven, with seven representing the highest mark possible. Students take six courses and must also complete the theory of knowledge; extended essay; and creativity, action, service requirements.

To receive a diploma, a student must accumulate at least 24 points across all classes. Higher level and standard level courses count equally.

Students can gain up to three additional points from the extended essay and theory of knowledge components, but all three of the above requirements must be completed satisfactorily for you to earn a diploma – even if you receive sevens in all of your classes.

What types of assessment will I encounter in a single IB course?

In a traditional high school, class consists of a cumulative score that is derived from class participation, exams, homework, projects and quizzes. Your teacher completes the associated grading.

In IB classes, however, student assessment involves a more complicated formula. The heart of IB assessment is a written exam administered near the end of each course.

Test specifics vary by subject, but the assessment is often centered around two or three papers – answers to essay questions; structured problems; case-study questions; or short-, data- or text-response questions – that are written on subsequent days. Multiple-choice questions are very rare.

In the IB system, this exam is referred to as external assessment because external reviewers – who are not your teacher – grade your work. Taken together, these external assessments typically count for 75 to 80 percent of your final grade, though this number may be lower in certain instances.

An additional component of your grade is derived from internal assessments, such as lab work in the science courses, conducted throughout the course. The course teacher generally assigns and grades these internal assessments. Internal assessments vary according to course type.