

The IB Diploma Programme, for students aged 16 to 19, is an academically challenging and balanced programme of education that prepares students for success at university and life beyond. Students take courses in six different subject groups, maintaining both breadth and depth of study. History higher level is in group 3, individuals and societies. In addition, three core elements—the extended essay, theory of knowledge and creativity, action, service—are compulsory and central to the philosophy of the programme.

About the IB: For over 40 years the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

The IB subject briefs illustrate key course components in the IB Diploma Programme.

- I. Course description and aims
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Overview of the history higher level course and curriculum model

I. Course description and aims

The IB Diploma Programme higher level history course aims to promote an understanding of history as a discipline, including the nature and diversity of sources, methods and interpretations. Students are encouraged to comprehend the present by reflecting critically on the past. They are further expected to understand historical developments at national, regional and international levels and learn about their own historical identity through the study of the historical experiences of different cultures. In addition, the course is designed to:

- encourage the systematic and critical study of human experience and behaviour; physical, economic and social environments; and the history and development of social and cultural institutions
- develop the capacity to identify, analyse critically and evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
- enable students to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society; test hypotheses; and interpret complex data and source material
- promote an appreciation of the way learning is relevant to both the culture in which the student lives and the culture of other societies
- develop an awareness that human attitudes and beliefs are widely diverse and that the study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
- enable the student to recognize that the content and methodologies of the subjects in group 3 are contestable and that their study requires the toleration of uncertainty.

II. Curriculum model overview

History higher level

Route 1

<i>History of Europe and the Islamic world—study one of two prescribed subjects</i>	40 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The origins and rise of Islam c500–661 • The kingdom of Sicily 1130–1302 	

<i>History of Europe and the Islamic world—study two of the following topics</i>	90 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynasties and rulers • Society and economy • Wars and warfare • Intellectual, cultural and artistic developments • Religion and the state 	
<i>Higher level option—study three sections in the selected option</i>	90 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the history of medieval Europe and the Islamic world 	
<i>Historical investigation</i>	20 hours
Total teaching hours	240 hours

Route 2

<i>20th century world history—study one of three prescribed subjects</i>	40 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacemaking, peacekeeping—international relations 1918–36 • The Arab–Israeli conflict 1945–79 • Communism in crisis 1976–89 	
<i>20th century world history—study two of the following topics</i>	90 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes, practices and effects of wars • Democratic states—challenges and responses • Origins and development of authoritarian and single-party states • Nationalist and independence movements in Africa and Asia and post–1945 Central and Eastern European states • The Cold War 	
<i>Higher level option—study three sections in the selected option</i>	90 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the history of Africa • Aspects of the history of the Americas • Aspects of the history of Asia and Oceania • Aspects of the history of Europe and the Middle East 	
<i>Historical investigation</i>	20 hours
Total teaching hours	240 hours

III. Assessment model

Assessment for history higher level

The IB assesses student work as direct evidence of achievement against the stated goals of the Diploma Programme courses, which are to provide students with:

- a broad and balanced, yet academically demanding, programme of study
- the development of critical-thinking and reflective skills
- the development of research skills
- the development of independent learning skills
- the development of intercultural understanding
- a globally recognized university entrance qualification.

The assessments aim to test all students' knowledge and understanding of key concepts through various activities that demonstrate:

- knowledge and comprehension of specified content, such as an ability to recall and select relevant historical knowledge
- application and analysis, including the ability to apply historical knowledge as evidence
- synthesis and evaluation abilities
- the selection and use of historical skills.

Students' success in the history higher level course is measured by combining their grades on external and internal assessment.

On external assessments, students must be able to demonstrate an understanding of both basic facts and complex concepts related to the historical periods studied, depending on the chosen route of study. The internal assessment measures students' ability to use their own initiative to take on a historical inquiry. Students should be able to develop and apply the skills of a historian by selecting and analysing a good range of source material and managing diverse interpretations. The activity demands that students search for, select, evaluate and use evidence to reach a relevant conclusion.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External			80
<i>Paper 1</i>	Route 1: short answer/structured questions from one of two prescribed subjects Route 2: short answer/structured questions from one of three prescribed subjects	1	20
<i>Paper 2</i>	Routes 1 and 2: two extended-response questions chosen from five topics	1.5	25
<i>Paper 3</i>	Three extended-response questions	2.5	35
Internal			20
<i>Study report</i>	Historical investigation on any area of the syllabus		

IV. Sample questions

The following questions appeared in previous IB Diploma Programme history higher level examinations.*

1. Using these sources and your own knowledge, analyse how and why Henry VI became King of Sicily in December 1194. (Route 1, paper 1)
2. Analyse the reasons for, and impact of, the Sunni/Shia divide. (Route 1, paper 2)
3. Compare and contrast the domestic policies of Disraeli and Gladstone. (Route 2, paper 3 Europe and the Middle East)

* the syllabus for examinations current until 2016

Learn more about how the IB Diploma Programme prepares students for success at university by going online to www.ibo.org/universities or email us at recognition@ibo.org.