



Geography subject outline

First examinations 2011

This document explains the major features of the course, and outlines the syllabus and assessment requirements.

More detailed information about the course can be obtained by referring to the guide for this subject, which is available on the subject page of the IB online curriculum centre (OCC) website (<http://occ.ibo.org>) and can also be purchased from the IB store (<http://store.ibo.org>).

Nature of the subject

Geography is a dynamic subject that is firmly grounded in the real world and focuses on the interactions between individuals, societies and the physical environment in both time and space. It seeks to identify trends and patterns in these interactions and examines the processes behind them. It also investigates the way that people adapt and respond to change and evaluates management strategies associated with such change. Geography describes and helps to explain the similarities and differences between spaces and places. These may be defined on a variety of scales and from a range of perspectives.

Within group 3 subjects, geography is distinctive in that it occupies the middle ground between social sciences and natural sciences. The Diploma Programme geography course integrates both physical and human geography, and ensures that students acquire elements of both scientific and socio-economic methodologies. Geography takes advantage of its position between both these groups of subjects to examine relevant concepts and ideas from a wide variety of disciplines. This helps students develop an appreciation of, and a respect for, alternative approaches, viewpoints and ideas.

Geography and prior learning

The geography course requires no specific prior learning. No particular background in terms of specific subjects studied for national or international qualifications is expected or required. The skills needed for the geography course are developed within the context of the course itself.

Links to the Middle Years Programme

Geography is often offered as one of the subjects in the humanities subject group within the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP). Geography is a natural way to build on the areas of interaction, concepts and humanities skills outlined in the MYP. Basic issues that are raised within the conceptual areas of change, systems, global awareness, and place and space are all solid foundations for IB Diploma Programme geography and can be developed to meet the specific demands of the syllabus. The Diploma Programme geography course extends the key skills learned in MYP humanities: technical, analytical, decision-making and investigative. Equally, the organization and presentation strategies introduced in the MYP humanities subject area will become more sophisticated while presenting and undertaking work within the Diploma Programme geography course.

Aims

Group 3 aims

The aims of all subjects in **group 3, individuals and societies** are to:

1. 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
2. develop in the student the capacity to identify, to analyse critically and to evaluate theories, concepts and arguments about the nature and activities of the individual and society
3. enable the student to collect, describe and analyse data used in studies of society, to test hypotheses, and to interpret complex data and source material
4. promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant both to the culture in which the student lives, and the culture of other societies
5. develop an awareness in the student that human attitudes and beliefs are widely diverse and that the study of society requires an appreciation of such diversity
6. 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.

Geography aims

In addition, the aims of the **geography** syllabus at SL and HL are to enable students to:

7. develop an understanding of the interrelationships between people, places, spaces and the environment
8. develop a concern for human welfare and the quality of the environment, and an understanding of the need for planning and sustainable management
9. appreciate the relevance of geography in analysing contemporary issues and challenges, and develop a global perspective of diversity and change.

Assessment objectives

There are four assessment objectives (AOs) for the SL and HL Diploma Programme geography course. Having followed the course at SL or HL, students will be expected to do the following.

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified content
 - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the core theme—patterns and change
 - Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of two optional themes at SL and three optional themes at HL
 - At HL only, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the HL extension—global interactions
 - In internal assessment, demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a specific geographic research topic
2. Demonstrate application and analysis of knowledge and understanding
 - Apply and analyse geographic concepts and theories
 - Identify and interpret geographic patterns and processes in unfamiliar information, data and cartographic material
 - Demonstrate the extent to which theories and concepts are recognized and understood in particular contexts
3. Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation
 - Examine and evaluate geographic concepts, theories and perceptions
 - Use geographic concepts and examples to formulate and present an argument
 - Evaluate materials using methodology appropriate for geographic fieldwork
 - At HL only, demonstrate synthesis and evaluation of the HL extension—global interactions
4. Select, use and apply a variety of appropriate skills and techniques
 - Select, use and apply the prescribed geographic skills in appropriate contexts
 - Produce well-structured written material, using appropriate terminology
 - Select, use and apply techniques and skills appropriate to a geographic research question

Syllabus outline

Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
Geographic skills—integrated throughout the course		
<p>Part 1: Core theme—patterns and change (SL/HL) There are four compulsory topics in this core theme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Populations in transition 2. Disparities in wealth and development 3. Patterns in environmental quality and sustainability 4. Patterns in resource consumption 	70	70
<p>Part 2: Optional themes (SL/HL) There are seven optional themes; each requires 30 teaching hours.</p> <p>Two optional themes are required at SL.</p> <p>Three optional themes are required at HL.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Freshwater—issues and conflicts B. Oceans and their coastal margins C. Extreme environments D. Hazards and disasters—risk assessment and response E. Leisure, sport and tourism F. The geography of food and health G. Urban environments 	60	90
<p>Part 3: HL extension—global interactions (HL only) There are seven compulsory topics in the HL extension.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Measuring global interactions 2. Changing space—the shrinking world 3. Economic interactions and flows 4. Environmental change 5. Sociocultural exchanges 6. Political outcomes 7. Global interactions at the local level 		60
<p>Fieldwork (SL/HL) Fieldwork, leading to one written report based on a fieldwork question, information collection and analysis with evaluation.</p>	20	20
Total teaching hours	150	240

Assessment outline—SL

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Assessment component	Weighting
<p>External assessment (2 hours 50 minutes)</p> <p>Paper 1 (1 hour 30 minutes) Syllabus content: Core theme Assessment objectives 1–4 Section A: Students answer all short-answer questions. Some include data. (45 marks) Section B: Students answer one extended response question. (15 marks) Section A and section B are common to both SL and HL assessment. (60 marks)</p> <p>Paper 2 (1 hour 20 minutes) Syllabus content: Two optional themes Assessment objectives 1–4 Students answer two structured questions based on stimulus material, each selected from a different optional theme. For each theme there is a choice of two questions. (20 marks per question) Some stimulus material is included in the resources booklet. This paper is common to both SL and HL assessment. (40 marks)</p>	<p>75%</p> <p>40%</p> <p>35%</p>
<p>Internal assessment (20 hours) This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Syllabus content: Any topic from the syllabus Assessment objectives 1–4 Written report based on fieldwork. Maximum 2,500 words (30 marks)</p>	<p>25%</p>

Assessment outline—HL

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Assessment component	Weighting
<p>External assessment (4 hours 30 minutes)</p> <p>Paper 1 (1 hour 30 minutes) Syllabus content: Core theme Assessment objectives 1–4 Section A: Students answer all short-answer questions. Some include data. (45 marks) Section B: Students answer one extended response question. (15 marks) Section A and section B are common to both SL and HL assessment. (60 marks)</p> <p>Paper 2 (2 hours) Syllabus content: Three optional themes Assessment objectives 1–4 Students answer three structured questions based on stimulus material, each selected from a different theme. For each theme there is a choice of two questions. (20 marks per question) Some stimulus material is included in the resources booklet. This paper is common to both SL and HL assessment. (60 marks)</p> <p>Paper 3 (1 hour) Syllabus content: Higher level extension Assessment objectives 1–4 Students answer one of three essay questions. (25 marks)</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>25%</p> <p>35%</p> <p>20%</p>
<p>Internal assessment (20 hours) This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course. Syllabus content: Any topic from the syllabus Assessment objectives 1–4 Written report based on fieldwork. Maximum 2,500 words (30 marks)</p>	<p>20%</p>