

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Subject Brief

Individuals and societies:

Geography – Higher level

First assessments 2011 – Last assessments 2017

The IB Diploma Programme (DP) is a rigorous, academically challenging and balanced programme of education designed to prepare students aged 16 to 19 for success at university and life beyond. The DP aims to encourage students to be knowledgeable, inquiring, caring and compassionate, and to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary to respect and evaluate a range of viewpoints.

To ensure both breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, students must choose at least one subject from five groups: 1) their best language, 2) additional language(s), 3) social sciences, 4) experimental sciences, and 5) mathematics. Students may choose either an arts subject from group 6, or a second subject from groups 1 to 5. At least three and not more than four subjects are taken at higher level (240 recommended teaching hours), while the remaining are taken at standard level (150 recommended teaching hours). 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.

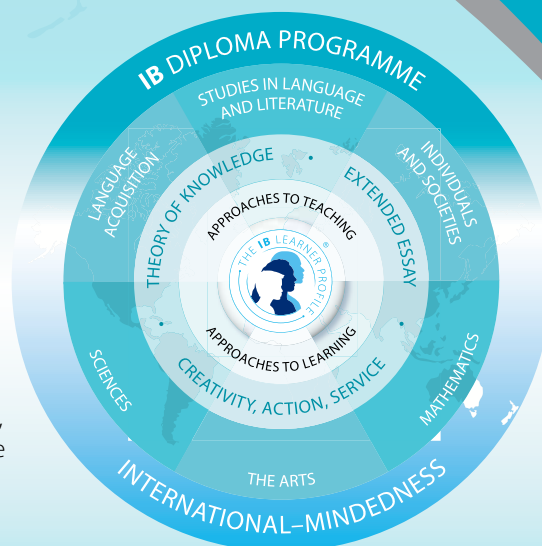
These IB DP subject briefs illustrate four key course components.

I. Course description and aims

II. Curriculum model overview

III. Assessment model

IV. Sample questions



I. Course description and aims

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. Geography is distinctive in that it occupies the middle ground between social sciences and natural sciences. The DP 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.

The aims of the geography higher level courses are 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 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

- 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
- promote the appreciation of the way in which learning is relevant both to the student's own culture, and the culture of other societies
- 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
- 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.
- develop an understanding of the interrelationships between people, places, spaces and the environment
- develop a concern for human welfare and the quality of the environment, and an understanding of the need for planning and sustainable management
- appreciate the relevance of geography in analysing contemporary issues and challenges, and develop a global perspective of diversity and change.

II. Curriculum model overview

Component	Recommended teaching hours
Part 1: Core theme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Populations in transition Disparities in wealth and development Patterns in environmental quality and sustainability Patterns in resource consumption 	70
Part 2: Optional themes - Three optional themes are required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freshwater—issues and conflicts Oceans and their coastal margins Extreme environments Hazards and disasters—risk assessment and response Leisure, sport and tourism The geography of food and health Urban environments 	90
Part 3: Global interactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring global interactions Changing space—the shrinking world Economic interactions and flows Environmental change Sociocultural exchanges Political outcomes Global interactions at the local level 	60
Fieldwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fieldwork, leading to one written report based on a fieldwork question, information collection and analysis with evaluation. 	20

III. Assessment model

Having followed the geography higher level course, students will be expected to:

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified content

- The core theme—patterns and change
- Three HL optional themes
- The HL extension—global interactions
- An internally assessed specific geographic research topic

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

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- Demonstrate the extent to which theories and concepts are recognized and understood in particular contexts

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
- Demonstrate synthesis and evaluation of the HL extension—global interactions

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.

Assessment at a glance

Type of assessment	Format of assessment	Time (hours)	Weighting of final grade (%)
External		4.5	80
Paper 1	Multiple short answer and one extended response	1.5	25
Paper 2	Three structured questions based on stimulus material	2	35
Paper 3	One essay question	1	20
Internal		20	20
Written report	Written report based on fieldwork (2,500 words maximum)		

IV. Sample questions

- Describe what is meant by a neo-Malthusian view.
- Discuss the connections between affluence and health.
- Explain how global interaction may be measured.