**A ROUGH GUIDE to ENGLISH B in the IBDP**

**THEMES and TOPICS**

The English B course covers five themes. These are:

* Identities
* Experiences
* Human Ingenuity
* Social Organisation
* Sharing the Planet

Within these themes, we are invited to explore various topics. For example:

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| **Theme** | **Guiding Principle** | **Optional Topics** | **Possible Questions** |
| Identities | Explore the nature of the self and what it is to be human | * Health and wellbeing * Lifestyles (e.g. urban vs. rural) * Beliefs and values * Subcultures * Language and identity | * What ideas and images do we associate with a healthy lifestyle? * What constitutes an identity? * How do language and culture contribute to our identity? * How do we express our identity? * What culinary heritages do we have? |

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| **Theme** | **Guiding Principle** | **Optional Topics** | **Possible Questions** |
| Experiences | Explore and tell the stories of the events, experiences and journeys that shape our lives | * Leisure activities * Holidays and travel * Life stories * Rites of passage * Customs and traditions * Migration | * How does our past shape our present and our future? * How and why do different cultures mark important moments in life? * How does travel broaden our horizons? * How would living in another culture affect our worldview? * What causes prejudice and discrimination? |

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| **Theme** | **Guiding Principle** | **Optional Topics** | **Possible Questions** |
| Human Ingenuity | Explore the ways in which human creativity and innovation affect our world | * Entertainment * Artistic expressions * Communication and media * Technology * Scientific innovation | * How do the arts help us understand the world? * What can we learn about a culture through its artistic expression? * How does science and technology influence our lives (for both better and worse)? * How do media influence our lives? |

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| **Theme** | **Guiding Principle** | **Optional Topics** | **Possible Questions** |
| Social Organisation | Explore the ways in which groups of people organise themselves, or are organised, through common systems or interests | * Social relationships * Community * Social engagement * Education * The working world * Law and order | * What is the individual’s role in the community? * What role do rules and regulations play in the formation and maintenance of society? * What is taboo and what is acceptable socially? * What role does language play in a society? * What opportunities does the 21st century workplace bring? |

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| **Theme** | **Guiding Principle** | **Optional Topics** | **Possible Questions** |
| Sharing The Planet | Explore the challenges and opportunities faced by individuals and communities in the modern world | * The environment * Human rights * Peace and conflict * Equality * Globalisation * Ethics * Urban and rural environments | * What environmental and social issues present challenges to the world, and how can these challenges be overcome? * What ethical issues arise from living in the modern world, and how do we resolve them? * What challenges and benefits does globalisation bring? * What challenges and benefits result from changes in urban and rural environments? |

**TEXTS**

As well as the study of themes and topics, we look at a range of text types. A text can be aural or visual. An important part of the English B course is learning which forms of language are typical of certain contexts, and how are different kinds of text organised. A newspaper report, for example, isn’t the same linguistically or structurally as a newspaper article. Speeches differ from blogs.

The texts we will encounter and produce come under three categories: *personal*, *professional* and *mass media*. The table below gives you an idea of which text type fits into which category. Note that a blog can fit into all three categories depending on its audience and purpose.

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| Personal | Professional | Mass Media |
| Blog  Diary  Informal letter or email | Blog  Formal letter or email  Essay  Proposal  Questionnaire  survey  Report | Blog  Advert  Editorial  Brochure  Pamphlet  Leaflet  Poster  Instructions  Interview  Literature  Newspaper report  Newspaper article  Podcast  Proposal  Public commentary  Radio programme  Review  Speech  Travel guide  Web page |

**CONCEPTS**

The following concepts are fundamental to your learning in English B.

* **Audience:** To whom are you speaking or writing? What language is appropriate?
* **Context:** In what situation are you speaking or writing? An informal one? A formal one? These questions will influence your choice of language.
* **Purpose:** What is the aim of your communication? To inform? To argue? To entertain? Use language that will help you to achieve your aim.
* **Meaning:** What is that you want to say? Choose words and organise your speech and writing in ways that will help deliver your message clearly.
* **Variation:** How might language use reflect differences in cultures?

**ASSESSMENT**

Here is an overview of how your development will be assessed. As you can see, the IBO differentiates between Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL) courses in the following ways.

* The length of the exam.
* The level of difficulty of tasks.
* The level of difficulty of stimulus texts and recordings.
* The number of words you have to produce for writing tasks.
* The descriptors of proficiency levels in the assessment criteria.

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|  | **SL** | **HL** | **‘Loading’** |
| Paper 1: Writing  (Externally assessed) | * 1 hr. 15 mins. * One writing task from a choice of three * Each task based on a course theme * Student responsible for choosing text type * 250-400 words * 30 marks | * 1 hr. 30 mins. * One writing task from a choice of three * Each task based on a course theme * Student responsible for choosing text type * 450-600 words * 30 marks | 25% |
| Paper 2: Reading and Listening  (Externally assessed) | * I hr. reading for 40 marks * Three reading tasks based on course themes * 45 min. listening for 25 marks * Three audio passages | * I hr. reading for 40 marks * Three reading tasks based on course themes * 1 hr. listening for 25 marks * Three audio passages | 50% |
| Individual Oral  (Internally assessed) | * Presentation of a photograph * Conversationsal with teacher about photo and theme(s) it raises | * Presentation of a literary passage * Conversationsal with teacher about passage and theme(s) it raises | 25% |