

# Global politics guide

First assessment 2026

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# Diploma Programme

## Global politics guide

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## IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



# IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

## **INQUIRERS**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

## **KNOWLEDGEABLE**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## **THINKERS**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## **COMMUNICATORS**

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## **PRINCIPLED**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## **OPEN-MINDED**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## **CARING**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

## **RISK-TAKERS**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## **BALANCED**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

## **REFLECTIVE**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

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## About this publication

This resource guides the planning, learning, teaching and assessment of the International Baccalaureate (IB) global politics course. Teachers and students are the primary audiences. This publication, along with additional support materials, subject reports and grade descriptors, can be found on the subject page of the Programme Resource Centre at [resources.ibo.org](https://resources.ibo.org). It can also be purchased from the IB store at [store.ibo.org](https://store.ibo.org).

## Prior learning

The global politics 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 course are developed within the course itself.

## Additional resources

Additional publications, such as specimen papers and markschemes, teacher support materials (TSM), subject reports and grade descriptors, can also be found on the Programme Resource Centre. Past examination papers as well as markschemes can be purchased from the IB store. Teachers are encouraged to engage with official IB [online communities](#) to find and share resources used and created by other teachers.

## Acknowledgement

The IB wishes to thank the educators, experts and schools who generously contributed time and resources to the production of this guide.

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## About the IB

### The aims and design of an IB education

An IB education develops internationally minded people who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet. The IB believes that we can create a better and more peaceful world through high-quality learning and teaching informed by passionate pedagogical leadership.

All IB courses are designed to be:

- **mission driven**—by working with committed educators and experts, the IB provides a unique and valuable educational experience rooted in shared values
- **insights based**—the IB draws on data and insights across the IB ecosystem to ensure that IB courses are informed by research and practice anchored in the practical realities of the contemporary classroom
- **future focused**—IB courses prepare students to live, lead and thrive in a rapidly changing world and workforce.

The IB consists of four programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP) (ages 3–11), the Middle Years Programme (MYP) (ages 11–16), the Diploma Programme (DP) (ages 16–19), and the Career-related Programme (CP) (ages 16–19).

Any school, or group of schools, wishing to offer the IB programmes must first be authorized to do so by the International Baccalaureate. For more information about the IB, see the following resources.

- [The IB mission statement](#)
- [What is an IB education?](#)
- [Programme standards and practices](#)

### Inclusion and the IB

The IB is committed to ensuring access and engagement for all students by identifying and removing barriers to learning. For more information about inclusion, see the following resources.

- [Access and inclusion policy](#)
- [Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning](#)
- [Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom](#)
- [The IB guide to inclusive education: A resource for whole school development](#)
- [Using Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) in the IB classroom](#)



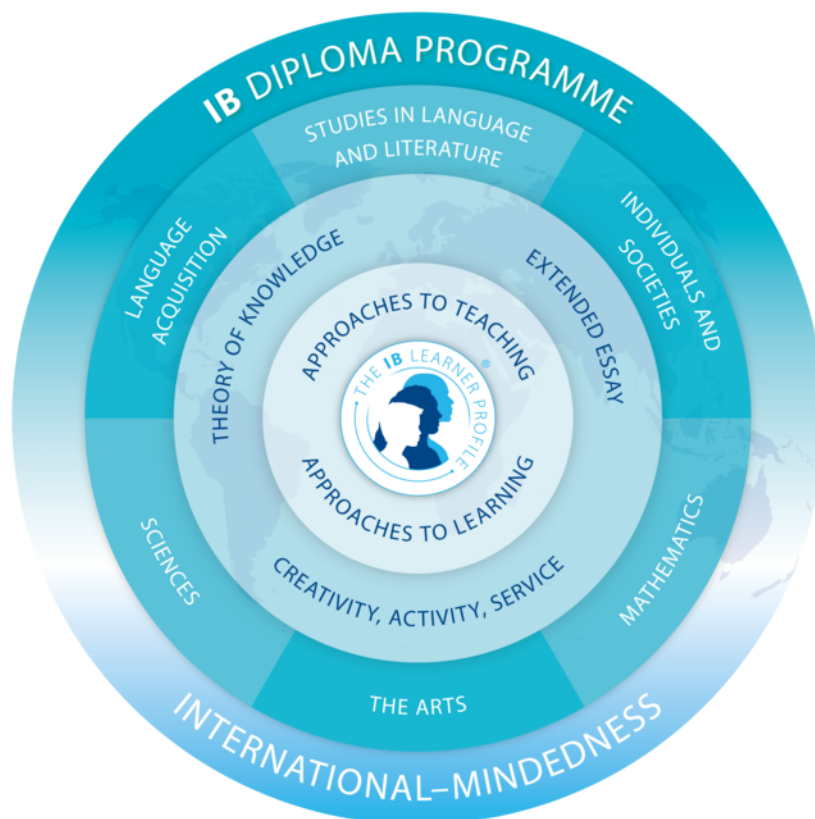
## About the Diploma Programme

The DP is a rigorous pre-university course of study designed for students in the 16 to 19 age range. It is a broad-based two-year course that aims to encourage students to be not only knowledgeable and inquiring but also caring and compassionate. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging students to develop intercultural understanding, open-mindedness and the attitudes necessary for them to respect and evaluate a range of points of view.

### The Diploma Programme model

The course is presented as six academic areas enclosing a central core (see figure 1). It encourages the concurrent study of a broad range of academic areas. Students study two modern languages (or a modern language and a classical language), a humanities or social science subject, an experimental science, mathematics and one of the creative arts. It is this comprehensive range of subjects that makes the DP a demanding course of study designed to prepare students effectively for university entrance. In each of the academic areas, students have flexibility in making their choices, which means they can choose subjects that particularly interest them and that they may wish to study further at university.

Figure 1  
Diploma Programme model



## Choosing the right combination

**Students are required to choose one subject from each of the six academic areas, although they can, instead of an arts subject, choose two subjects from another area.** Normally, three subjects (and not more than four) are taken at higher level (HL), and the others are taken at standard level (SL). The IB recommends 150 teaching hours for SL subjects and 240 teaching hours for HL subjects. Subjects at HL are studied in greater depth and breadth than at SL.

At both levels, many skills are developed, especially those of critical thinking and analysis. At the end of the course, students' abilities are measured by means of external assessment. Many subjects contain some element of coursework assessed by teachers.

## The Diploma Programme core

The DP core reflects the IB's commitment to providing a holistic educational experience for young people. The DP core provides opportunities for students to think about their own values and actions, to deepen their understanding of their place in the world and to consider sensitively the contexts and views of others. There are three required components in the DP core.

- In the **theory of knowledge (TOK)** course, students explore themes and questions about knowledge and knowing. TOK emphasizes comparisons and connections between areas of knowledge while encouraging students to become more aware of their own perspectives and the perspectives of others.
- The **creativity, activity, service (CAS)** component provides students with opportunities to participate in real-world experiences to enrich their academic studies. The three strands of CAS are creativity (experiences that involve creative thinking and making), activity (experiences contributing to a healthy lifestyle) and service (engagements with communities).
- For the **extended essay (EE)**, students investigate a topic of special interest, either through one of their six DP subjects or through an interdisciplinary approach. The EE helps students to develop the research and communication skills that they need to fulfil their aspirations at university and in future work.

## Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching

Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching across the DP refers to deliberate strategies, skills and attitudes that permeate the learning and teaching environment. These approaches and tools, intrinsically linked with the [learner profile](#) attributes, enhance student learning and assist student preparation for the DP assessment and beyond. The aims of approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in the DP are to:

- empower teachers to create clearer strategies for facilitating learning experiences in which students are more meaningfully engaged in structured inquiry and greater critical and creative thinking
- promote both the aims of individual subjects (making them more than course aspirations) and linking previously isolated knowledge (concurrency of learning)
- encourage students to develop an explicit variety of skills that will equip them to continue to be actively engaged in learning after they leave school, and to help them obtain university admission through better grades and also prepare for success during tertiary education and beyond
- enhance further the coherence and relevance of the students' DP experience
- allow schools to identify the distinctive nature of a DP education, with its blend of idealism and practicality.

The five approaches to learning (developing thinking skills, social skills, communication skills, self-management skills and research skills) along with the six approaches to teaching (teaching that is inquiry-

based, conceptually focused, contextualized, collaborative, differentiated and informed by assessment) encompass the key values and principles that underpin IB pedagogy.

The design of each subject in the DP is guided by these approaches. For more information see the following resources.

- [Programme standards and practices](#)
- [Diploma Programme Approaches to teaching and learning](#)
- The “Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in global politics” section of this guide

## The IB mission statement and the IB learner profile

The DP aims to develop in students the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to fulfil the aims of the IB, as expressed in the organization’s mission statement and the learner profile. Learning and teaching in the DP represent the reality in daily practice of the organization’s educational philosophy.

## Academic integrity

Academic integrity in the DP is a set of values and behaviours informed by the attributes of the learner profile. In teaching, learning and assessment, academic integrity serves to promote personal integrity, engender respect for the integrity of others and their work, and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies.

All coursework—including work submitted for assessment—is to be authentic, based on the student’s individual and original ideas, with the ideas and work of others fully acknowledged. Assessment tasks that require teachers to provide guidance to students or that require students to work collaboratively must be completed in full compliance with the detailed guidelines provided by the IB for the relevant subjects.

For further information on academic integrity in the IB and the DP, please consult the IB publications *Academic integrity policy*, *Effective citing and referencing*, *Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and the “General regulations” section in the *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures*. Specific information regarding academic integrity as it pertains to external assessment and internal assessment (IA) components of this DP subject can be found in this guide.

## Acknowledging the ideas or work of another person

Coordinators and teachers are reminded that students must acknowledge all sources used in work submitted for assessment. The following is intended as a clarification of this requirement.

DP students submit work for assessment in a variety of media that may include audiovisual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or electronic sources. If a student uses the work or ideas of another person, the student must acknowledge the source using a standard style of referencing in a consistent manner. A student’s failure to acknowledge a source will be investigated by the IB as a potential breach of regulations that may result in a penalty imposed by the IB final award committee.

The IB does not prescribe which style(s) of referencing or in-text citation should be used by students; this is left to the discretion of appropriate faculty/staff in the student’s school. The wide range of subjects, three response languages and the diversity of referencing styles make it impractical and restrictive to insist on particular styles. In practice, certain styles may prove most commonly used, but schools are free to choose a style that is appropriate for the subject concerned and the language in which students’ work is written. Regardless of the reference style adopted by the school for a given subject, it is expected that the minimum information given includes: name of author, date of publication, title of source, and page numbers as applicable.

Students are expected to use a standard style and use it consistently so that credit is given to all sources used, including sources that have been paraphrased or summarized. When writing text, students must clearly distinguish between their words and those of others by the use of quotation marks (or another

method, such as indentation) followed by an appropriate citation that denotes an entry in the bibliography. If an electronic source is cited, the date of access must be indicated. Students are not expected to show faultless expertise in referencing, but they are expected to demonstrate that all sources have been acknowledged. Students must be advised that audiovisual material, text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or in electronic sources that is not their own must also attribute the source. Again, an appropriate style of referencing/citation must be used.

## Learning diversity and learning support requirements

Schools must ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to students with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents *Access and inclusion policy* and *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning*.

The documents *Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom* and *The IB guide to inclusive education: A resource for whole school development* are available to support schools in the ongoing process of increasing access and engagement by removing barriers to learning.

# Nature of the subject

## Global politics

Global politics is a course for students who want to understand more about how the world they live in works, what makes it change, or what prevents it from changing. The course draws on a variety of disciplinary traditions in the study of politics and international relations, and more broadly in the social sciences and humanities. Students build their knowledge and understanding by critically engaging with contemporary political issues and challenges that interest them.

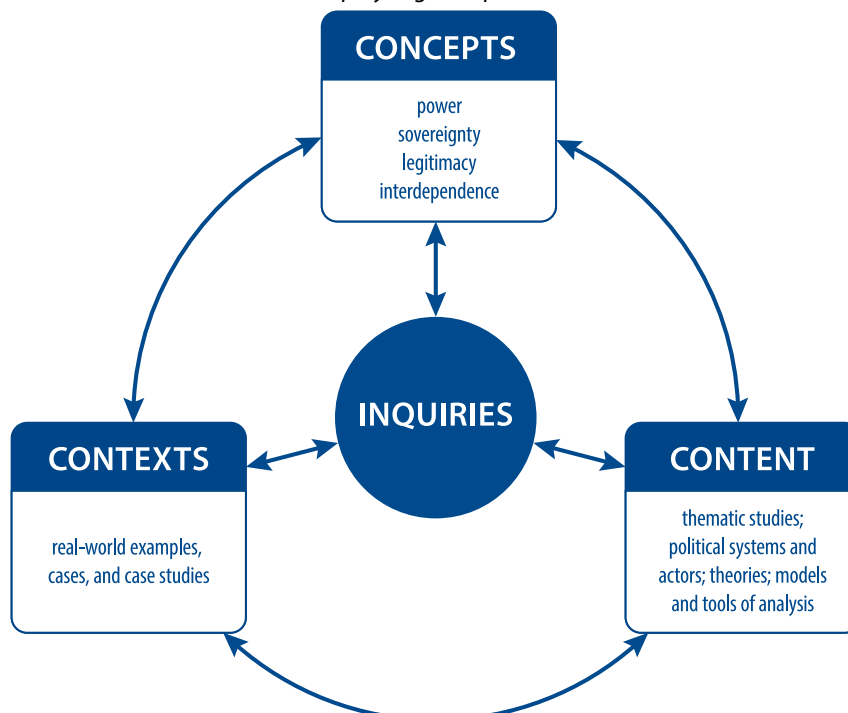
The scope of global politics extends over a wide range of topics and areas of study, many of which will find links with other subjects in the individuals and societies group. Students develop their understanding of political concepts and their knowledge of specific content by exploring and researching real-world case studies and examples.

Developing an understanding of power is critical for analysing how political systems work and how they change. Global politics students encounter the complexity and nuances of power from the beginning of the course. They build their understanding of how power works across multiple and interconnected dimensions, affecting the everyday lives of people around the world.

## Inquiry in global politics

The course integrates concepts, content and contexts through inquiries centred on power and political issues (see figure 2).

Figure 2  
Inquiry in global politics



- **Concepts** such as power, sovereignty, legitimacy and interdependence are explored and examined critically throughout the course.
- **Content** informs inquiries through a variety of global politics topics encompassing, among other areas, political systems, actors and stakeholders, power interactions, specific treaties and conventions, relevant terminology and analysis models.
- **Contexts** diversify, shape and channel inquiries through contemporary real-world examples and cases.

The teacher support material (TSM) includes an extended explanation about inquiry in the global politics course.

## Distinction between SL and HL

The global politics course includes a common syllabus with prescribed content that both standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) students are expected to cover. This comprises a set of core topics and three thematic studies: rights and justice, development and sustainability, and peace and conflict.

Both SL and HL students must also undertake an engagement project, which requires identifying and analysing a political issue in a community or local setting through research and active engagement.

HL students engage in extended inquiries focused on global political challenges. This is done through independent research in case studies selected by students. As part of their engagement project, HL students are additionally expected to conduct complementary research and formulate recommendations to address the identified political issue.

In terms of external assessment, paper 1 and paper 2 are common for both SL and HL students, while paper 3 is for HL students only.

## Engaging with sensitive topics

Studying global politics allows the opportunity for students to engage with exciting, stimulating and personally relevant topics and issues. However, it should be noted that such topics and issues can also often be sensitive and personally or culturally challenging. Teachers should be aware of this and provide guidance to students on how to approach and engage with such topics in a responsible manner, providing due guidance on questions and issues such as identity. Teachers should also carefully read and consider the ethical guidelines for the engagement project provided in the “[Engagement project—SL and HL](#)” section.

## Global politics and international-mindedness

Developing students’ awareness of multiple partial perspectives and approaches—including their own—is at the heart of the global politics course. The course encourages dialogue, discussion and debate. Nurturing students’ capacity to listen to themselves and others is important:

- to understand divergent opinions
- to interpret competing and contestable claims
- to appreciate that political beliefs and positions can be deeply held by individuals, and that these are contextual.

By engaging in respectful and attentive dialogue, discussion and debate, it is hoped that students will progress towards forming their own viewpoints, these being both well-informed and provisional. They will be better equipped to understand the obstacles to and opportunities for political progress in the real world. They should also be better prepared to build relationships with others and to resolve conflicts they may encounter in a peaceful way.

The global politics course aims to develop international-mindedness in students through an examination of fundamental political concepts and debates that have global significance. The course considers and encourages the use of contemporary examples and case studies at a variety of levels, from local to global,

while facilitating comparison between the levels. Throughout the course, teachers can choose relevant examples and case studies to ensure that the course appropriately meets their students' needs and interests, regardless of their location or cultural context.

The course also enables students to reach an awareness and appreciation of both their own civic responsibility at a local level, and their shared responsibility as citizens of an increasingly interconnected world. The inclusion of an engagement project in the course reflects the importance given not only to appreciating and understanding the complex issues facing the world today but also to engaging with them in an active and personal way.

A complementary examination of the implications of international-mindedness for the global politics course is available in the TSM.

## Connections to subjects and programmes

### Global politics and the DP core

#### Global politics and theory of knowledge

As with other areas of knowledge, in the social sciences there is a variety of ways of gaining knowledge. For example, experimentation and observation, inductive and deductive reasoning, data and evidence collection, and discussion, can all be used to help understand and explain patterns of human behaviour. Students in individuals and societies subjects are required to evaluate the resulting claims by exploring questions about their validity, reliability, credibility and certainty, as well as individual and cultural perspectives on them. Having followed a course of study in an individuals and societies subject, students should be able to reflect critically on the various methods used in the social sciences for building and transmitting knowledge, and in so doing become inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people, as described in the IB learner profile.

The study of global politics makes use of the social scientific methods of gaining knowledge described above. Political issues emerge and unfold in a variety of ways and contexts and tend to concern matters about which people may care deeply. Consequently, a critical study of such issues requires students to examine and reason about the observable, but also to investigate what lies behind political deliberations and decisions. What are the motivations of the various actors? On which assumptions do these actors base their beliefs, policies and behaviours? How do the power dynamics of a situation influence motivations, assumptions and outcomes?

Studying political issues in this analytical, in-depth and engaged way, students also come to consider the role, nature and origin of their own political beliefs and positions. They also consider claims about politics in their own cultures, in the cultures of others, and around the world. In this way, students are encouraged to become more aware of themselves as thinkers, to appreciate the complexity of knowledge in the human spheres, and to recognize the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected and unpredictable world.

Elements of the TOK course	Links to global politics
TOK concepts	The 12 TOK concepts strongly resonate with the nature and study of global politics. Power, perspective, responsibility, truth, values, culture—these are central concepts to discussions in the global politics course. Evidence, certainty, interpretation, justification, explanation, objectivity—these are essential elements for skills and assessment in global politics.
The core theme	“Knowledge and the knower”: As political actors themselves, students are encouraged to examine critically the underlying assumptions of their own knowledge, beliefs and opinions, as well as those of others.
Optional themes	Links to the theme of “knowledge and politics” can be extensively explored throughout the course and serve as a critical perspective when analysing political issues in the course.
Areas of knowledge	Human sciences: Critical examination of how knowledge is constructed and acquired in human sciences in general and in global politics in particular.



Examples of questions related to theory of knowledge (TOK) that global politics students might consider include the following.

- How does knowledge in the social sciences differ from knowledge in other areas?
- How does knowledge in global politics differ from knowledge in some other social science disciplines, such as history, economics and geography?
- How does the often deeply held nature of political beliefs and biases affect the acquisition of knowledge in global politics?
- What are the benefits and difficulties of examining political issues against the backdrop of a certain theoretical foundation or ideology?
- Why might the value of case studies as a method of acquiring knowledge be considered questionable?
- Can we have political beliefs or knowledge that are independent of our cultures?
- Why might some individuals or groups believe that they know what is right for others?
- How do we decide between the opinions of experts when they disagree? Who are the experts in global politics?
- What is the role of communication and media in shaping people's perceptions of issues in global politics?
- Is it ever justifiable to make political decisions based on knowledge that is not fully supported?

An extended development of these links can be found in the TSM, including suggested activities for integrating TOK into the global politics course.

## Global politics and creativity, activity, service

An important characteristic of the global politics course is that students examine the complex political issues of our time in a contextual way. Due to the interconnectedness of the 21st-century world, many global challenges manifest themselves in students' local or otherwise significant communities as powerfully as at national and international levels. The ethos of creativity, activity, service (CAS) is to engage students in experiential learning in a similarly contextual way.

CAS and global politics can complement each other in several ways. Learning about significant local and global issues in the global politics course may give students new ideas for CAS experiences and/or CAS projects. As a result of the knowledge and understanding students develop about an issue and its potential solutions in the global politics course, they might be able to investigate, plan, act, reflect on and demonstrate CAS experiences in a richer way. Similarly, CAS experiences can ignite students' passion for addressing a particular issue in global politics. Students may decide to examine the political dimension of an issue and its potential solutions in their global politics class, or build an engagement project on it, or utilize it as a case study in their HL extension work. This cross-pollination of ideas between CAS and global politics may improve students' grasp of an issue and its political dimensions, and may also stimulate further CAS experiences.

While CAS activities can both be informed by academic subjects and inspire further learning in them, they must be distinct from activities undertaken in the global politics course as part of Diploma Programme (DP) assessment requirements. This is particularly important with respect to the potential overlap between CAS experiences and the engagement project undertaken for global politics. Where an activity is extensive and multifaceted, it may be that there is one element that could constitute an appropriate engagement project for global politics, and other elements that could be appropriate as an activity for CAS. However, the same elements may not be counted for both global politics and CAS. For example, a student participating in a Model United Nations (MUN) simulation could nominate one particular element, such as researching various political debating techniques, as their global politics engagement, and nominate other elements of the MUN participation, such as leading their school delegation, for CAS. Similarly, a student involved in a youth initiative in the local community could count examining the role of the community council in such initiatives and canvassing the council's support for this particular project as their global politics engagement, while documenting the participation in actual activities with youth could count for CAS.

An extended discussion of the links between global politics and CAS around community engagement is available in the TSM.

## Global politics and the extended essay

An extended essay (EE) in global politics provides students with an opportunity to undertake an in-depth analysis of a significant, contemporary, global political issue. Students should choose a topic that will allow them to demonstrate their knowledge, research skills and critical-thinking skills, leading to a substantial essay that utilizes relevant key concepts, theoretical foundations and approaches of global politics. The outcome of the research should be a coherent and structured essay that effectively answers a specific research question.

Given the complexity of contemporary political issues, EEs in global politics are likely to draw on the knowledge and methodologies of a range of social science subjects. Students must use relevant secondary sources to substantiate their arguments and may supplement this with appropriate primary sources. Various approaches to the research are possible—such as case studies, comparative studies, analyses of discourse—with relevant techniques chosen for gathering and interpreting evidence, such as interviews, literature or media reviews, and quantitative data analysis.

As is the case in their engagement project and their HL extended inquiries, students examine political issues in their EEs. While this examination is primarily based on experiential learning in the engagement project, the EE in global politics is a formal research essay. For example, students interested in a more theoretical approach to political issues will find the EE an excellent opportunity to examine the key concepts of global politics in a way that is more anchored in academic debates. Students with an interest in how quantitative data is used to underpin decision-making or shape perceptions in global politics can undertake comprehensive data analysis for their EE.

An extended discussion of the possible ways for students to explore independent inquiries in global politics, including their EE, is available in the TSM.

## Global politics and the Middle Years Programme

The individuals and societies subject group in the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) involves inquiry into historical, contemporary, geographical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural contexts that influence and impact on people's and communities' lives and environments. The MYP individuals and societies courses therefore provide a very useful foundation for students who go on to study the DP global politics course.

Key concepts encountered in MYP social sciences and humanities, such as time, place and change, are also encountered within the global politics course but treated in more specific ways, as described in this subject guide. Thus, studying global politics naturally extends the skills developed in MYP individuals and societies subjects. Equally, students' organization, collaboration, research and communication strategies that began in MYP humanities and social sciences will become more sophisticated while undertaking the DP global politics course.

## Global politics and the Career-related Programme

In the IB Career-related Programme (CP), students study at least two DP subjects, a core consisting of four components and a career-related study. The subject of global politics can assist CP students planning careers in, for example, the hospitality industry, the technology industry or international business. Global politics helps students to understand the underlying mechanisms of the 21st-century world and to engage with current affairs. Students explore different political, social and economic structures and practices, leading to a greater understanding of the world around them. Global politics encourages the development of strong communication skills, critical thinking and ethical approaches that will assist students in the global workplace.

## Global politics and IB programme standards and practices

Programme standards and practices (PSP) are the foundational set of principles for schools and the IB to ensure quality and fidelity in the implementation of IB programmes. Learning and teaching are the most important markers of quality and effective practice in schools; therefore, the expectations teachers and learners share across all IB programmes can be found in PSP.

The PSP have been designed as a framework to help teachers understand their rights and responsibilities in IB World Schools as they develop learning environments and experiences for their students. The IB recognizes that for effective teaching to take place, teachers must be supported in their understanding, well-being, environment and resources. Teachers in turn use core tenets of IB philosophy and pedagogy (such as approaches to learning and approaches to teaching and the learner profile) to design learning experiences and prepare learners to fulfil the aims and objectives outlined in this guide. This is explored in detail in the [“Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in global politics”](#) section.

To learn more about teachers’ rights and responsibilities, please see the Programme Resource Centre and the publication [Programme standards and practices](#).

## Aims

### Individuals and societies aims

Individuals and societies subjects help young people develop a connection to our shared planet, exploring how to live sustainably and promoting the well-being of all people in our pursuit of a more peaceful world.

The aims of all the individuals and societies subjects are to equip students to:

- explore and critically engage with multiple perspectives and ways of thinking
- investigate and evaluate the interactions between individuals and societies
- think and act as informed and principled individuals in societies
- understand and value the variety and diversity of the human experience across time and place.

### Global politics aims

In addition to the group aims, the course aims to equip students to:

- explore and evaluate power in contemporary global politics
- examine how state and non-state actors operate and interact within political systems
- investigate and analyse contemporary political issues and challenges from multiple perspectives
- develop a lifelong commitment to active global citizenship through collaboration and agency.

## Assessment in global politics

### Global politics assessment objectives

By the end of the global politics course, students are expected to achieve the following assessment objectives (AOs).

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- power relationships
- political concepts
- relevant source material
- political issues and challenges.

#### **Application and analysis**

- Apply relevant concepts and tools to analyse contemporary political issues and challenges in a variety of contexts.
- Identify and analyse information, claims and perspectives in source material.
- Identify and analyse relevant evidence to formulate, present and sustain an argument.

#### **Synthesis and evaluation**

- Synthesize and evaluate evidence (including source material) about global politics.
- Synthesize and evaluate perspectives and approaches to global politics.
- Examine and synthesize perspectives on political beliefs, positions and biases.

#### **Use and application of appropriate skills**

- Research and investigate political issues and challenges.
- Communicate analysis of political issues and challenges.
- Reflect on the process and results of research and investigation.

### Assessment objectives in practice

#### **Paper 1 (SL and HL)**

Source-based paper that addresses the core topics and source analysis skills in an integrated way. Sources may include text, images, diagrams and infographics.

#### **Paper 2 (SL and HL)**

Essay response paper based on prescribed content from the thematic studies. Students answer two questions: one focused on a particular thematic study, and one integrating question that draws links across the thematic studies as well as the core topics.

### Paper 3 (HL only)

Stimulus-based paper based on the HL extension on global political challenges. The questions relate to a particular item or topic presented through the stimulus; students support their responses with evidence from their previously researched case studies.

### Engagement project (internal assessment)

Students select a political issue and explore it through research and engagement with diverse stakeholders. The experiential learning process includes exploration, planning, research, engagement activities, analysis and reflection. The final outcome is a written report.

Additionally, HL students conduct further research to inform and formulate a recommendation for addressing the identified political issue.

## Assessment alignment

Assessment objectives are aligned with assessment components as indicated in the table below.

Assessment objective	Paper 1 (SL/HL)	Paper 2 (SL/HL)	Paper 3 (HL)	Engagement project
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>power relationships</li> <li>political concepts</li> <li>relevant source material</li> <li>political issues and challenges.</li> </ul>	√	√	√	√
Apply relevant concepts and tools to analyse contemporary political issues and challenges in a variety of contexts.	√	√	√	√
Identify and analyse information, claims and perspectives in source material.	√			√
Identify and analyse relevant evidence to formulate, present and sustain an argument.	√	√	√	√
Synthesize and evaluate evidence (including source material) about global politics.	√	√	√	√
Synthesize and evaluate perspectives and approaches to global politics.		√	√	√
Examine and synthesize perspectives on political beliefs, positions and biases.	√	√	√	√
Research and investigate political issues and challenges.			√	√
Communicate analysis of political issues and challenges.		√	√	√
Reflect on the process and results of research and investigation.			√	√

# Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in global politics

The approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in the global politics course offer innumerable opportunities to help develop students' learner profile attributes. The table below outlines some examples of these as they relate to each attribute.

Attribute	Descriptor	Opportunities for developing the attribute in global politics
<b>Inquirers</b>	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.	<p>Exploration of and inquiry into the complex, continuously changing world that we inhabit and share with others is at the very core of global politics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Throughout the course, students research and debate a variety of perspectives on significant global political issues and on issues they personally care about.</li> <li>The engagement project gives students the opportunity to explore actively a political issue of their own choice in a non-classroom context.</li> <li>The flexible syllabus and engagement project allow students to choose and research cases of particular interest to them. Students will be better equipped to become active citizens by going through such processes of inquiry.</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.	<p>The global politics course focuses on key concepts and themes, like power, legitimacy, interdependence, sovereignty. These underpin the subject and help students to build a holistic, nuanced understanding of global politics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course gives students the opportunity to explore ideas and issues that are of both local and global significance. For example, at HL there is an opportunity to study two major global political challenges.</li> <li>The course is grounded in contemporary, real-life examples and case studies.</li> <li>The course also draws on a variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, reflecting the complex nature of many political issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Thinkers</b>	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.	<p>The DP emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking skills. In the global politics course, the combination of key concepts and related themes helps develop students' understanding of wider phenomena in human societies, and how these relate to political issues. They are encouraged to recognize the complexity of real-world political problems and to consider a variety of perspectives on, and solutions to, these issues.</p> <p>The global politics course helps to develop thinking skills that enable students to be flexible and adaptive in their thought</p>

Attribute	Descriptor	Opportunities for developing the attribute in global politics
		processes, and to continue to learn throughout their lives, preparing them for the dynamic world they will need to navigate and co-construct in their adult lives.
<b>Communicators</b>	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.	Developing students' awareness of multiple perspectives and approaches, including their own, is at the heart of the global politics course. Listening carefully to themselves and to each other, and engaging in respectful dialogue, discussion and debate, are central to the evolution of a rich and balanced understanding of the course's key concepts and specific political issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course assessment tasks require that students express their ideas and arguments clearly and coherently.</li> <li>• As part of the engagement project, students communicate with people outside of the classroom, which often requires them to explain what they are doing and why they are doing it.</li> <li>• The source-based paper 1 always contains one non-textual source; students must interpret both textual and non-textual stimuli.</li> <li>• The essay-based paper 2 requires students to demonstrate their writing skills—an essential form of communication in all social science subjects.</li> <li>• The stimulus-based paper 3 requires HL students to answer specific questions, synthesizing and effectively communicating their findings in the case studies they have researched.</li> </ul> While the summative assessment is individual, the course provides many opportunities for collaborative work in both classroom and formative assessment tasks.
<b>Principled</b>	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.	The global politics course explicitly explores concepts such as justice, equality and sustainability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a dedicated unit on human rights, and issues of human and planetary well-being are discussed in the development unit.</li> <li>• The engagement project requires students to consider the ethical dimension of engaging with people, with ethical guidelines provided in this guide.</li> <li>• In their HL work, students may encounter ethical issues if they work with case studies in areas such as the environment, poverty and health.</li> </ul> By its nature, the course content invites students to look at some of their deeply held beliefs and compels them to justify their positions. This can help orient students in advocating for these principles in their adult lives, translating beliefs into principled action.
<b>Open-minded</b>	We critically appreciate our own cultures and	Appreciation and exploration of multiple perspectives and approaches is at the heart of the global politics course.



Attribute	Descriptor	Opportunities for developing the attribute in global politics
	personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.	Evaluation of a range of points of view is a key skill developed in the course.  Many political issues are contentious and inspire a variety of opinions. Even within their classroom, students are likely to be exposed to many different opinions on issues. Meanwhile, their research will reveal further perspectives. The course, therefore, helps students to be open-minded enough to accept that their own opinions and political beliefs may change over time, even within the relatively short time frame of the programme.
<b>Caring</b>	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.	The nature of the course content means that students explore sensitive topics, such as human rights abuses or poverty. This encourages the development of compassion and an understanding that people have different circumstantial starting points, challenges and opportunities in their lives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HL students explore global political challenges with a strong human, cultural or environmental element.</li> <li>• Most engagement activities involve interaction with others, often in students' own communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk-takers</b>	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.	Studying global politics requires students to express their opinions and to be articulate in defending their beliefs, some of which are deeply held and others of which are only forming. This requires courage.  Students are regularly exposed to new ideas and controversial topics in the course. In the engagement project, they are exposed to an unfamiliar situation. Therefore, both students and teachers are required to take risks and explore contentious ideas and issues, often in a freer form than may be customary for them.
<b>Balanced</b>	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.	The interdependence of actors and their interactions in global politics is a key theme of the course. This also extends to the essential relationship between humankind and the natural world. The course helps students to appreciate the importance of leading balanced and healthy lives, including in the context of their future roles in local and global communities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When studying emotive and controversial topics, students practise how to express emotions in appropriate and balanced ways.</li> <li>• The engagement project introduces students to experiential learning that can have meaningful social and emotional aspects.</li> <li>• Activities such as simulations and gaming applied elsewhere in the course help students to reach outside purely intellectual and theoretical discussion of political issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Reflective</b>	We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and	The global politics course gives students a unique opportunity to reflect on the world around them and their place in it. Reflection is often informal, but it is also a natural part of

Attribute	Descriptor	Opportunities for developing the attribute in global politics
	experiences. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses to support our learning and personal development.	inquiry-based learning activities. It is an explicit element of the engagement project and of the extended inquiries in the HL extension.

## Approaches to teaching in practice

### Teaching based on inquiry

Inquiry-based teaching in IB programmes helps to develop students’ natural curiosity, along with the skills of self-management, thinking, research and collaborative learning, so that they can become motivated and autonomous lifelong learners.

The most significant aspect of inquiry-based teaching is that students are actively engaged in their own learning, constructing their own understandings of interesting issues and phenomena. In an inquiry-based classroom, there is repeated interaction between students, and between students and teacher. The teacher’s primary role is to promote opportunities for inquiry and to facilitate the learning process. Students have a degree of freedom to make decisions about how to proceed in their learning process, which can often progress from the tangible (observable politics in the real world) towards the abstract (the political concepts explored in this course). Examples of inquiry-based teaching include structured inquiry, open inquiry, experiential learning, problem-based learning and case-based learning.

In this global politics course, teachers now have a greater opportunity to make room for inquiry-based teaching, given that content is less prescribed and more open-ended than previously. This is intentional: the course aims to encourage students to examine significant global political issues—and matters they personally care about—in an in-depth and meaningful way. As such, inquiry-based teaching suits global politics particularly well.

Through their inquiries, students can learn about the factual aspects of political issues and also delve into the background, motivation, assumptions and implications of political beliefs, reasoning and decisions. While doing so, they come to appreciate that inquiries can often lead to multiple—even differing—possibilities. In reality, political issues are contentious: different answers will have different strengths and weaknesses, depending on the perspectives and approaches chosen.

Examples of inquiry-based teaching approaches and activities in global politics include:

- individual and group research tasks, case studies and presentations, based on students’ own questions and areas of interest
- shorter inquiries stimulated by news and current events
- games in which students pursue various strategies to make progress with respect to a political issue, but where the outcomes of the game are dependent on other players’ moves
- role-plays in which students act as political decision-makers, advisers or commentators, perhaps over a period of time, treating different yet interdependent political issues
- TOK-style thinking with students that helps to develop their collective curiosity
- readings and videos that emphasize the contested nature of knowledge, thereby encouraging questioning
- engagement with real political actors, e.g. visits from guest speakers and visits to political organizations.

## Focusing on conceptual understanding

An important motivation for conceptually focused teaching in IB programmes is to help students build the ability to engage with significant ideas about humankind and how it relates to and shapes the world. Of equal value are discussions about the “big ideas” behind a topic, which can help students get to the heart of why they are learning what they are learning.

To appreciate the role of concepts in building lasting and significant understandings, it is helpful to think of concepts as the building blocks of students’ cognitive frameworks. When they are learning at a conceptual level, students are integrating new knowledge into their existing understandings. They see how seemingly discrete topics are connected and they are ready to transfer their learning to new contexts. A topic emerges for them in a holistic light. In a classroom where conceptually focused teaching is happening, there is continuous movement between facts and what they mean. Students become used to asking **why** the facts matter as a natural part of their learning process.

In global politics, concepts are the main organizing elements of the course. Selected key concepts to which learning and teaching regularly return can help students make sense of a rapidly changing, interconnected world. When teachers approach the various political issues examined in the course from the perspective of what they add to students’ understanding of, say, power, equality, sustainability or peace, students’ learning becomes more meaningful. Political issues are inherently of interest to students. Recognizing how these relate to wider and impactful phenomena allows for learning to deepen and become more connected and transferable.

Examples of conceptually focused teaching approaches and activities in global politics include:

- thematic, regional or case study pathways through the course, integrating relevant key concepts at appropriate points
- explicit discussions about distinct, conflicting and complementary understandings of the key concepts as a natural part of studying examples, case studies and students’ own experiences
- activities designed to engage students on the key concepts in implicit ways—such as activating pre-existing knowledge of the concepts, illustrating them with examples, and bringing them to life with the help of experiments
- building up students’ own understanding of the key concepts through, for example, a “concept diary”, where students record their evolving understanding of the concepts, along with examples that contribute to these understandings
- identifying the key concepts in readings and other materials studied
- integrating the key concepts into formative and summative assessment tasks.

## Using local and global contexts

As young individuals and as members of local and global communities, students make sense of the world through their life experiences and the world around them. IB programmes emphasize contextualized teaching because the more students can relate to their learning, the more likely they are to engage with it. Equally valuable is that contextualized teaching, like conceptually focused teaching, enables students to see the applications of their learning, helping them get to the heart of why they are learning what they are learning.

To appreciate the role of contexts to relevant learning, it is helpful to think of contexts as students’ frames of reference. When students are learning in a contextualized way, they are grounding abstract ideas and new information in familiar real-life situations. In a classroom where contextualized learning and teaching is the norm, concepts and theories are related to accessible and meaningful examples, illustrations and stories, which again inform further conceptual and theoretical understandings.

In the global politics course, contemporary examples, case studies and real-life engagement with political issues bring the course to life. Students learn that political issues are dynamic, varied and present at all levels of global social organization: global issues have local ramifications and local issues are often part of wider phenomena. The issues that are relevant to study will vary according to when the course is taught, and where and what the students’ particular interests are. Teachers’ free choice of examples to illustrate the content of the core topics and thematic studies, and students’ free choice of activities in the engagement

project and case studies in the HL extension, allow each global politics course and experience to be different, reflecting the contextual nature of politics.

Examples of contextualized teaching approaches and activities in global politics include:

- a weekly news briefing in class, where current local and/or global news is discussed and connected with the key concepts and theories being studied
- extensive, research-based analyses of contemporary political issues debated at various levels of global politics
- drawing on students' backgrounds, experiences and interests
- individual students becoming "experts" on a territory, issue or theme over time; teachers can then draw on this expertise in specific situations for the benefit of the whole class
- participating in a virtual student community where the same political issues are explored by students from different parts of the world
- real-life learning experiences, especially the engagement project.

## Promoting effective teamwork and collaboration

IB programmes acknowledge that learning is a social activity. Students and teachers come together, each with unique life experiences, beliefs, ideas, strengths and weaknesses. They then interact with the intention of making progress, ideally on shared objectives, and do so within a specific context. Learning is the result of these complex interactions.

Developing an awareness of multiple perspectives is at the heart of the global politics course. Though many perspectives on political issues can be discovered from literature and explored through individual thinking, an appreciation of the contextual and deeply held nature of political beliefs and positions may be most effectively developed through social learning. When students practise listening and responding to one another respectfully and critically, they discover a variety of perspectives other than their own. They may also start developing a collaborative spirit, experiencing the benefits that dialogue and negotiation bring in the guise of acceptable compromises and shared understandings. Teamwork and collaboration model how political issues are often solved in the real world and teach students to draw on each other's strengths. Students can gradually learn to appreciate that different perspectives and ways of being do not necessarily amount to an inability to work together: on the contrary, they are critical for human progress.

Examples of teaching approaches and activities focused on effective teamwork and collaboration in global politics include:

- establishing clear expectations of mindful behaviour from the start, and discussing this with students if expectations are not being met
- modelling listening and interaction skills
- working in teams (either changing or permanent) involving mixed languages and cultural groups
- establishing formalized peer support as part of teamwork
- taking collective responsibility for the team's final product
- games, simulations, role-plays, debates and other collaborative learning activities: possibly involving different interests, starting points and natural roles, but always with shared goals
- regular, specific and constructive feedback from students to their teachers about learning challenges, and on learning performance and progression from teachers to students
- collaborations with other teachers and political actors outside school, e.g. experts on specific topics in global politics.

## Removing barriers to learning

IB programmes promote equal access to the curriculum for all learners. Removing barriers to learning involves planning for student differences through a variety of teaching approaches, implementing a variety of learning activities, and making available to students a variety of formats and modes of exploring knowledge and understanding. It also involves identifying, with each student, the most effective strategies

for them to develop, pursue and achieve realistic and motivational learning goals. In the context of an IB education, special consideration often needs to be given to students' language backgrounds and skills. Affirming students' identity and valuing their prior knowledge are important aspects of treating students as unique individuals and helping them develop holistically as young adults.

In the global politics course, multiple perspectives can often be found most naturally in the classroom. Different students are interested in different political issues. Their beliefs and positions on the same political issue differ, and they are differently placed to help their classmates understand a certain key concept, theory, idea or example. Teachers should identify and draw on this richness in their planning and teaching. The activities in the engagement project and the case study research in the HL extended inquiries allow for differentiated learning and more individualized guidance.

A challenge of differentiation may be how best to help all students acquire a conceptual understanding of global politics—arguably the most challenging aspect of the course, especially for second-language learners and learners more oriented towards concrete examples rather than abstract thinking. Here, a variety of approaches to the key concepts throughout the course is likely to be most helpful. It will also be important to be alert from the beginning to students who are struggling with the conceptual layers, and look for ways to help them on a more individualized or small-group basis.

Examples of teaching approaches and activities differentiated to meet the needs of all learners in global politics include:

- a variety of teaching approaches, learning activities and examples intended to reach each student meaningfully several times over the course
- student choice in approaches and activities, such as the freedom to explain terms or key concepts in ways that resonate with students, the freedom to select sources in research, and the freedom to use preferred media and methods by which students can communicate their learning
- drawing on students' backgrounds, experiences and interests
- individual students becoming “experts” on a territory, issue or theme over time, with teaching drawing on these experts in specific situations, for the benefit of the whole class
- individualized support in research-based work.

## Teaching informed by assessment

Assessment plays a crucial role in IB programmes in supporting and measuring learning. Formal DP assessments are based on course aims and objectives. As such, effective teaching to the course requirements also ensures effective teaching to the summative assessment requirements. Meanwhile, formative assessment methods developed by teachers include tasks, tools and processes that will help improve student learning. Here, constructive feedback is most effective as a two-way channel. Students learn how they are doing. Teachers learn what students understand or struggle with, and what they find engaging or not worthwhile. Formative feedback can also be provided more informally: for example, through individual and group feedback sessions, surveys, polls or brief—even spontaneous—reflections.

Examples of approaches to teaching and activities informed by assessment in global politics include:

- assessments modelling the summative global politics assessments
- active use throughout the course of global politics assessment criteria, markbands, past papers and sample student answers
- student self-assessments, oral feedback from fellow students, and feedback to and from the teacher
- detailed feedback for individual students throughout the learning process, tracking the development of issues specific to each student
- identifying possible misunderstandings or gaps in learning and providing further support, such as:
  - returning briefly to topics that were not understood, doing so through a different approach
  - modelling answers
  - debriefing with students after assessments and activities.

## Approaches to learning in practice

### Thinking skills

IB programmes are designed to offer students ample opportunities to develop their thinking skills, and to gain an awareness of themselves as thinkers and learners. Being “thinkers” is a key attribute of the IB learner profile. It is defined in terms of exercising initiative in applying thinking skills, critically and creatively, in recognizing and approaching complex problems and making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Thinking skills consist of many related skills. In the DP, particular emphasis is placed on skills such as metacognition, reflection, critical thinking, creative thinking and transfer.

Metacognition—or control over one’s cognitive processes of learning—can be thought of as a foundation to developing other thinking skills. When practising metacognition, students think about the way they process information, find patterns, build conceptual understandings and remember key facts and ideas. Once they become aware that they are using a variety of techniques and strategies to perform even the most basic learning tasks, students can be encouraged to consider if there are more effective or efficient ways to achieve the same learning, try these new ways out, and evaluate them.

Similarly, reflection is a thinking skill that plays a critical role in improving learning. When practising reflection, students think about the success, value or otherwise of their learning. The DP course aims, AOs and assessment tasks place a premium on higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking, creative thinking and transfer.

In the global politics course, the thinking skills described above are practised continuously. In fact, one way to view the subject is as a space where students can learn to think about the world they inhabit in richer and deeper ways. While metacognition and reflection are skills that teachers consciously need to build into the learning routines of the course, critical thinking, creative thinking and transfer are emphasized in the set-up of the global politics curriculum and assessment. Working through the global politics course on a conceptual level and exploring political issues through a variety of perspectives and approaches exposes students to many ideas and thoughts. These require sorting and evaluation, which can spark further new ideas and thoughts. For example, while working with the same key concept or political issue on a global, national or community level, students can connect related ideas, recognize that the “story” may look different from another perspective (depending on which actors are the focus), and develop a more nuanced response. While thinking through such matters, they engage in critical thinking, creative thinking and thought transfer from one area of global politics to another.

Example approaches and activities that develop students’ thinking skills in global politics include:

- starting learning sequences with activities that engage students’ minds, such as activating their pre-existing views on contentious issues, visual thinking, thinking through analogies, think–pair–share activities
- taking similar approaches to closing learning sequences, such as mapping learning to key concepts, writing newspaper-type headlines to capture the essence of an idea, engaging in the routine “I used to think ... now I think”
- establishing connections between global politics and news, current events and life outside the classroom
- ensuring a variety of perspectives is available in learning materials
- establishing rigorous expectations regarding students’ written and oral reactions to class discussions or text and audiovisual materials, and helping students construct arguments
- using active learning—such as simulations, games, role-plays and debates—where students need to “think on the go”, followed by debriefing and reflection.

### Research skills

Research skills are a central element of the inquiry-based pedagogy of IB programmes. While good research skills have always been at the centre of academic endeavour, the availability of digital resources and the explosion in the amount of information easily accessible to students mean that developing these skills is

particularly pertinent to today's education. Also, learning to work in a way that demonstrates academic integrity and respects others' intellectual contributions is an important aspect of learning in all IB programmes.

Fundamental research skills include formulating focused and precise research questions, appraising sources, recording, analysing, evaluating and synthesizing information, and presenting and evaluating results. These skills are as critical in the age of digital research as they have been in the past. Indeed, research today requires even greater validation, comparison and contrasting of available information: narrowing down increasing volumes of data into manageable quantities that are relevant to the research question.

Modern students are confident in browsing and communicating online but often lack the information literacy skills needed for the kind of effective and self-directed research they are expected to do as part of their inquiries. In the global politics course, they have ample opportunities to develop their research skills. As a course intrinsically about current affairs, the key concepts, theories and ideas are grounded in local and global examples. As such, students need to engage in varied research, depending on the type and geography of the political issue they examine for any given task. They are exposed to various types of media and encounter sources with varying degrees of reliability.

There is no stationary body of global politics knowledge that could be studied from a single textbook. Instead, the course's summative assessment tasks, and the types of activities that lend themselves to learning about continuously evolving political issues, require engagement with the world through wide, continuous and up-to-date research. The self-selected case studies of the HL extension are one of the best opportunities in the DP to do in-depth research, as are EEs in global politics.

Example approaches and activities that develop students' research skills in the global politics course include:

- modelling by the teacher of effective research skills and solid academic practices that also demonstrate academic integrity
- individual research-based essays, papers, reports and presentations, with adequate guidance from teachers on aspects such as finding, using and referencing appropriate sources
- group research tasks, where each student studies one aspect of a full phenomenon and the group compiles this as a resource booklet for other students at the end of the exercise
- preparatory and ongoing research for simulations, games, debates, role-plays and the IA engagement project.

## Communication skills

Communication skills are important in IB programmes for success in school disciplines and they are an essential part of a wider positive dynamic in the learning community: they help to form and maintain good relationships between students, and between students and adults. Furthermore, good communication contributes to the development of students' self-confidence and enhances their future prospects because communication skills are a critical ingredient of success in working life. They help students reach outside themselves and connect to others.

Communication skills consist of a cluster of different skills and forms of communication, including the ability to:

- listen to and understand a range of spoken messages
- read and understand diverse written texts and other forms of media
- respond clearly and convincingly in spoken, written and digital form.

Some of these forms of communication are independent of era and culture. In this century, interacting with and within the digital space is a significant part of communication and social interaction for most students. Online activities present ample and stimulating opportunities to develop students' communication skills: they are often collaborative in nature and have much creative potential via new previously inconceivable tasks.

In the global politics course, all these communication skills are practised and developed. Examining complex political issues invites dialogue, discussion and debate but also requires reflective engagement with arguments and views expressed in academic literature, popular opinion and news media. When students write and present on political issues, ideas and concepts, their own arguments and beliefs are clarified. Essays, reports, shorter writing tasks and oral presentations are often the assessable end outcome of a learning sequence, and make up students' summative assessment in global politics.

Examples of approaches and activities that develop students' communication skills in global politics include:

- practising various oral communication techniques, such as: Socratic discussions, seminars, student-led discussions, formal debates, classroom practice where students are required to respond to a point just made, group and individual presentations, using a variety of presentation formats
- purposeful use of digital tools in enriching understanding of global politics and improving communication and feedback in the class community, such as virtual learning environments, polls, data tools, expert talks, student-created videos
- workshop-style writing classes for various writing styles, with an emphasis on conceptual essays
- enabling students to practise taking on roles through, for example, role-plays and games, followed by reflection on the reality, benefits and drawbacks of roles in global politics and in social life in general.

## Social skills

Closely related to communication skills are social skills. Their importance in IB programmes relates to the development of the learner as an individual and as part of a larger group, and the value of communities to learning within a complex and changing society. As a fundamental community in young people's lives, school can play a significant role in the development of their social and emotional skills. The inherent social nature of school helps students appreciate their contributions to humankind and connect these with others' contributions. This is one of the most valuable life skills an educational community can help to develop.

The ability to understand the perspectives of others, to form good relationships and to regulate one's own emotions and behaviour are essential to the IB learner profile and the IB's aspiration to develop internationally minded students. From the perspective of learning, the ability to collaborate is a particularly important social skill. The role of and potential for collaboration in global politics is addressed in the section "[Promoting effective teamwork and collaboration](#)".

A starting point for developing students' social skills is to acknowledge that people differ greatly in their degree of introversion and extroversion, and that these differences should be respected. Similarly, different cultures have different expectations of appropriate behaviours in social situations.

## Self-management skills

In addition to developing life skills in their interactions with others, IB learners also need to learn to persevere and be emotionally stable as individuals. Often these two processes go hand in hand, as membership and support of a community is critical for individual well-being. For students, learning to manage themselves is essential in a demanding educational programme like the DP. This will also serve them in their later adult lives, with all the additional complexities and responsibilities this brings.

Self-management skills consist of organization skills, such as setting goals and managing time and tasks effectively, and affective skills, such as managing one's state of mind, motivation and resilience. Like other learning skills, these can be modelled and practised.

For DP students, time management is a particularly pertinent organization skill. Strategies for improving time management include breaking down assignments into achievable steps and timelining each step, planning revision and study sessions for tests and examinations, and building study timetables. A positive aspect of such strategies is not only what they factually achieve with students' use of time, but that they also give students greater control over their time.

Affective self-management skills enable students to gain some control over their mood, their motivation and their ability to deal with setbacks and difficulties. A school environment where students feel they have



a degree of autonomy and self-direction, and where they do not need to get everything right the first time, will support the development of students' affective skills. Setting challenging but not overly difficult objectives, and promoting psychological techniques such as mindfulness training, can also be helpful in this regard. Note, too, that the course can teach students much about affective skills when they study inspirational individuals at all levels of global politics.

In DP global politics, students have a more open-ended course than in many other DP subjects and they need to come to terms with this open-endedness. On the one hand, they have the opportunity to focus on issues of particular interest to them, which can be highly motivating. On the other hand, they must conduct their inquiries in the context of the course framework, always returning to the key concepts but also being sure to move on and cover all course requirements. Teachers, of course, will guide them in this process.

Examples of approaches and activities that develop students' self-management skills in global politics include:

- establishing clear deadlines, managing expectations and specifying consequences if these are not met
- consistent attention to study techniques, such as time management, note-taking, mind mapping, digital behaviour
- student choice on when to seek teacher or peer support
- self-reflection on progress, such as start–stop–continue, use of tracking tools for longer term assignments, written reflections.

# Syllabus outline

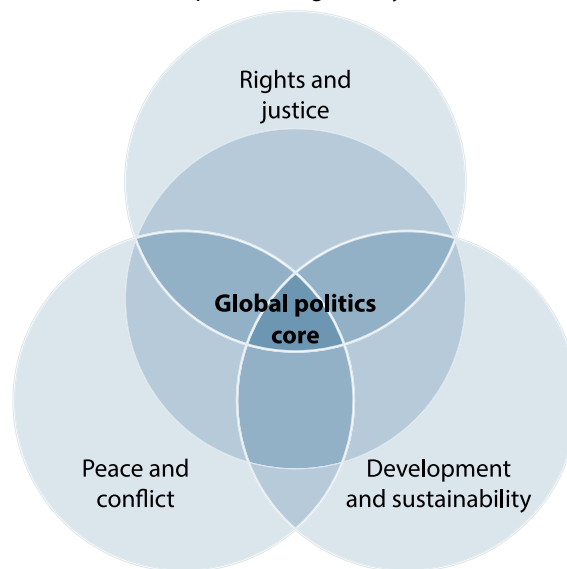
Syllabus component	Teaching hours	
	SL	HL
<p><b>Global politics core topics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding power and global politics</li> </ul> <p><b>Thematic studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rights and justice</li> <li>Development and sustainability</li> <li>Peace and conflict</li> </ul> <p>Prescribed content is specified for each theme, with a common framework. Teachers and students have the flexibility to study the core topics separately or integrate them with the thematic studies. They can also examine extended case studies encompassing more than one theme.</p>	125	125
<p><b>Internal assessment engagement project</b></p> <p>A project focused on the analysis of power and agency at a local or community level, integrating research and experiential learning.</p> <p>HL students conduct additional research to inform their formulation of a recommendation to address the identified political issue.</p>	25	35
<p><b>HL extension: Global political challenges</b></p> <p>Extended inquiries focused on global political challenges.</p> <p>Students conduct independent research on case studies that connect to the following HL topic areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Borders</li> <li>Environment</li> <li>Equality</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Identity</li> <li>Poverty</li> <li>Security</li> <li>Technology</li> </ul>	–	80
<b>Total teaching hours</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>240</b>

The recommended teaching time is 150 hours to complete standard level (SL) courses and 240 hours to complete higher level (HL) courses, as stated in the publication *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures*.

# Syllabus structure

The SL and HL syllabus comprises four interconnected components, each with specific prescribed content: the global politics core topics and three thematic studies.

Figure 3  
Global politics integrated syllabus



The core topics encompass wide overarching elements that are central to the study of the subject. Meanwhile each of the thematic studies presents a particular focus and provides additional conceptual and analytical tools. As figure 3 shows, rather than thinking of each component as an independent unit, educators and students are invited to take an integrated approach in engaging with the syllabus. Establishing connections across the syllabus will contribute to a deeper understanding of global politics.

The content of the guide is necessarily organized and ordered into discrete sections, aligning with the four components. Nevertheless, there is no prescribed order in which the syllabus sections must be studied, nor is there any expectation for the topics to be covered in specific units in a linear manner. The flexible syllabus structure allows—and aims to encourage—educators to build the course around their students' contexts and interests, and contemporary events and developments in global politics. Teachers and students can select specific political issues and cases, within which they explore and develop their understanding of topics and prescribed content.

## Planning the course

Teachers can therefore choose to plan the course in multiple ways. The following are just some examples.

- Structuring the course around the three thematic studies and integrating the core topics within these.
- Presenting the core topics as an introductory or foundational unit and following them with the thematic studies sequentially.

- Building the course around targeted global issues, selected case studies or particular contexts that are of interest to their students, and integrating the prescribed content from both the core topics and thematic studies that is most relevant in each case.

The teacher support material (TSM) includes further guidance on the possibilities for structuring the course.

The purpose of the core topics is to articulate some of the overarching elements of the subject in an integrated way. When exploring each thematic study, it is important to consider the specific ways the core topics and the key concepts can be linked with the prescribed content. For instance:

- sovereignty will have different implications for rights and justice than for development and sustainability
- legitimacy in peace and conflict might be considered differently than when it is studied in the context of development and sustainability.

Likewise, each of the types of actors and stakeholders listed in the core topics may take different roles depending on the theme being studied.

*Figure 4*  
**Example syllabus extract**

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
Power in global politics	Classifications of power Types of power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hard, soft and smart power</li> <li>• structural and relational power</li> <li>• economic, political, social and cultural power</li> <li>• power to, power over, power with</li> </ul>	The specific characterizations of power included in the prescribed content should be addressed explicitly.  Rather than merely listing these classifications or defining them abstractly, students should familiarize themselves with the classifications and try to use them when they are relevant in analysing real-world examples and cases. They might evaluate their advantages and limitations as analysis tools, or examine their similarities or links. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard power (coercion)—e.g. military interventions, economic sanctions</li> <li>• Soft power (persuasion)—e.g. cultural influence, ideology, economic aid</li> <li>• Smart power (an eclectic combination of hard and soft power, depending on aims)—e.g. approaches to climate change, negotiations</li> <li>• Structural power—e.g. United Nations Security Council membership, heads of state</li> <li>• Relational power—e.g. alliances, collective civil movements</li> </ul>

In the syllabus extract shown in figure 4, the first column details the prescribed topics. The second details prescribed content, indicating specific subtopics, items or aspects expected to be covered. For example, when covering the United Nations (UN), it is particularly important to examine the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Note that:

- all content included as prescribed topics or prescribed content may be addressed directly in examination questions
- any other topics or elements not mentioned explicitly in the prescribed content can be covered and addressed throughout the course, e.g. alternative classifications of power, or different types of stakeholders. These allow global politics students to explore areas of personal interest or areas that may be more relevant to their context.

The prescribed topics and prescribed content are accompanied by a third column of supporting details. In addition to possible examples, this will include further guidance and clarifications that may help teachers gain a better understanding of what is expected to be covered in some topics or some important conceptual or content considerations. For example, “institutions” and “institutional factors” might be understood as having a wider meaning than “formal organizations”.

The list of examples included in the guide is complemented with a more extensive list in the TSM, as well as planners that list the examples and case studies used by educators in their structure of the course.

## Political issues and inquiry-based learning

The flexible and open design of the syllabus intends to promote greater opportunities for learner agency. Students are not expected to learn about the subject passively through the review of content. Instead, they are invited to explore and engage critically with the complexities of global politics, from abstract concepts to the real manifestations present in contexts that are familiar to them, or that they discover as part of the course. Ideally, as part of their progression through the course, students will be able to understand how they—as individuals or as part of a group—can contribute to the development of global politics, both as learners and as global citizens.

Over recent decades, wide transformations in global social organization and trends in scholarship have contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of real-world politics. Phenomena such as population growth, climate change, developments in technology and changes in economic patterns all transcend the state and have facilitated the entry of new actors at various levels of social organization. Research on the roles of social movements, multinational corporations (MNCs) and international organizations, to name just three, has emphasized the profoundly political intent and impact of their actions. Alongside nation states, communities and international bodies compete for resources and take political positions. States are therefore often confronted with new forms of power and influence from within and outside their boundaries. The world has evolved and academic scholarship has evolved with it, providing us with ever more modern approaches to understanding how politics is part of our everyday lives.

In DP global politics, a political issue is any situation or matter that deals with how power is distributed and how it operates within social organization. This can be extended to the different ways people think about and engage with matters that affect their lives, their communities and the wider world. Political issues are researched in university social science departments and think tanks. They fill the agendas of politicians and policymakers. They occupy the minds of executives in global corporations and local social entrepreneurs. They affect how people participate in and resist change. They are discussed in social media, mass media and over coffee. They inspire oratory and art. They are deeply rooted in history and culture. In short, political issues are an ongoing, ever-present part of our daily lives.

Political issues can be explored at various levels. Take climate change as an example.

- At the global level, student inquiry could focus on the degree to which the UN’s limited ability to enforce legally binding agreements on its member states inhibits progress towards climate action.
- At the regional level, inquiry could centre on the fact that many developing countries have already experienced the impact of climate change, and explore how this affects their positions in international climate negotiations.
- At the national level, the focus could be on the impact of a typhoon on disaster prevention decisions and policies, as taken by the central government of a multi-island nation state.
- At the local level, students could delve into the typhoon’s effect on a small island (part of the same nation state) and how this increased local people’s dependency on outside assistance, and the local society’s resulting power dynamics.
- At the group or individual level, students could investigate the mechanisms and the degree to which migrant workers and emigrants are able to help support their families and relatives in a post-disaster community.

So, for students, defining an interesting contemporary political issue in the wider, real-world situation they are studying is often an early and key step in making progress with their understanding of global politics. This is particularly important to facilitate the connections between the core topics and thematic studies, to determine an appropriate reflective focus for the internal assessment (IA) engagement project, and for HL students to conduct their extended inquiries into the global political challenges.

## Concepts

Integrating political content and topics revolves around a set of key concepts that are central to the study of global politics: **power, sovereignty, legitimacy** and **interdependence**. These weave a conceptual thread through the course and facilitate connections between topics and also with other subjects. Even when not explicitly addressed, these key concepts are related to most of the prescribed content of the course and are central to the analysis of political issues.

The table briefly explains the key concepts and their importance to the course. The “Initial guidance” column should be taken as a starting point only. The definitions of each key concept and their relationship to the study of global politics are subject to debate and should be treated as contestable. A significant part of the learning in the course will come from discussions on how these concepts are understood, interpreted and prioritized in different contexts or by a diverse range of stakeholders.

Concept	Initial guidance
<b>Power</b>	Power is a central concept in the study of global politics and a key focus of the course. Power can be seen as an ability to effect change. Rather than being viewed as a unitary or independent force, it can also be seen as an aspect of relations among people functioning within a social organization. Contested relationships between people and groups of people dominate politics, particularly in this era of increased globalization. Understanding the dynamics of power therefore plays a central role in understanding global politics.
<b>Sovereignty</b>	Sovereignty characterizes a state’s independence, its control over territory and its ability to govern itself. How states use their sovereign power is at the centre of many important issues in global politics. Some theorists argue that sovereign power is increasingly being eroded by aspects of globalization such as borderless communication and trade, which states cannot fully control. Others argue that sovereign states exercise a great deal of power when acting in their national interest, and that this is unlikely to change.
<b>Legitimacy</b>	Legitimacy refers to an actor or an action that is commonly considered acceptable to a population. It provides the fundamental rationale for all forms of governance and other ways of exercising power.  The most accepted contemporary form of state legitimacy is some form of democracy or constitutionalism, whereby the governed have a defined and periodic opportunity to choose who governs and exercises power. In states where this is not the norm, other sources of legitimacy might be expressed, such as hereditary or traditional leadership.  Within any proposed framework of legitimacy, individual actions by a state can be considered legitimate to a greater or lesser extent. Other actors in global politics, and their behaviour, can also be evaluated from the perspective of legitimacy. Evaluation can be based on the acceptance or recognition these actors are given by others in exercising certain roles or taking specific decisions.
<b>Interdependence</b>	In global politics, the concept of interdependence most often refers to the mutual reliance between and among groups, organizations, geographic areas and/or states on access to resources that sustain living arrangements. Often, this mutual reliance is economic (e.g. trade), but it can also have a security dimension (e.g. defence

Concept	Initial guidance
	arrangements) and, increasingly, a sustainability dimension (e.g. environmental treaties). Globalization has increased interdependence, while often changing the power relationships among and between global political actors.

Many other political concepts merit consideration and are examined as part of the course. Some of these are presented in the “Contested meanings” within each table the “Thematic studies” area of the syllabus.

An extended exploration of conceptual understanding in the global politics course can be found in the TSM.

## Prescribed topics and content

In this global politics syllabus, prescribed content is specified for the core topics and the thematic studies. Everything shown in the syllabus as “prescribed topics” and “prescribed content” must be covered explicitly as part of the course. Most of the topics are defined open-endedly: specifically to give teachers and students the opportunity to build their course and inquiries based on particular interests, contexts, topical events and discussions. Within and beyond the prescribed topics and content, educators and students can explore a variety of related topics, even if these topics are not explicitly mentioned.

Note that examination questions are set on the prescribed topics and prescribed content, so students must be familiar with these. Examination questions do not require the use of particular content or cases: they can be answered with the help of any relevant examples.

An extended list of possible examples to illustrate the prescribed content can be found in the TSM.

## Contexts: Examples, cases and case studies

When addressing contexts in the global politics course, two guiding parameters should be considered.

- **Scale**—This refers to the level or scope to which political issues, concepts and topics are studied or addressed. Scale includes global, international, regional, national, subnational, local and community. Scale helps students to appreciate that what may initially appear to be a global issue may in reality have many local implications, and vice versa. Similarly, decision-making on the same phenomenon may be quite different, depending on whether it is analysed at a systemic or sub-systemic level. The appropriateness of the level of analysis depends on the issue being studied and students’ objectives in their task.
- **Diversity**—This refers to the range of contexts and real-world examples considered. Diverse cultural, geographical, economic and institutional contexts should be studied to promote a critical examination of political issues and challenges.

Examples, cases and case studies are at the heart of the course and should drive learning and teaching in global politics. They are particularly useful in helping students to apply abstract concepts and ideas and to appreciate that political issues and challenges are contextual.

### Supporting details

In the “Supporting details” column of the syllabus, an initial list of possible examples is presented for each part of the core topics and thematic studies, along with further guidance. Note the following in particular.

- **These examples are intended purely as a starting point: as support and inspiration for teachers and students. For many topics, local and/or current examples will be more appropriate than those suggested in this guide.**
- **For most topics, more possible examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course.**

Many of the possible examples are formulated as subtopics through which the prescribed content might be approached, and some examples additionally refer to specific models, actors and events. The listed examples illustrate a breadth of possibilities and are intended to point towards some possible directions in which to guide inquiries. It is emphasized that any examples that bring to life the prescribed content and key concepts can be explored.

### **Choosing examples, cases and case studies**

In their choice of examples and case studies, teachers should consider that the course should be grounded in contemporary examples. **In the context of the global politics course, “contemporary” is understood to refer to events occurring approximately over the past two decades.** Historical examples can be used:

- if they provide useful background context
- if they are necessary for gaining a better understanding of a topic
- when they have clear implications for the present.

However, the emphasis of the course on current affairs and recent examples and case studies must be the primary driver in choosing examples, cases and case studies. Where historical examples are used, they should only be mentioned in a supporting role: the focus of the learning should then move to contemporary issues.

Two further factors are also worthy of note.

- Teachers should exercise their judgement on when enough examples have been examined for students to have gained a rich and balanced understanding of the relevant prescribed content.
- It is also important to consider that examples, cases and case studies may prove useful in illustrating multiple topics or elements of prescribed content rather than just one topic.

An extended exploration of how to engage with diverse contexts can be found in the TSM.



## Syllabus content

## Core topics: Understanding power and global politics

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
<b>Framing global politics</b> <b>Systems and interactions in global politics</b>	Stakeholders and actors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States</li> <li>• Subnational and local governments</li> <li>• Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs)</li> <li>• Organized civil society (including non-governmental organizations (NGOs))</li> <li>• Private actors/ companies</li> <li>• Social movements</li> <li>• Resistance movements</li> <li>• Political parties</li> <li>• Interest and pressure groups</li> <li>• Political leaders</li> <li>• Formal and informal political forums</li> <li>• The media</li> <li>• Other individual and collective actors</li> </ul> Systems—structures and dynamics Legal frameworks, norms and institutions	<p>The inclusion of “stakeholders” alongside “actors” suggests that, in many cases, political issues affect individuals and groups that may not possess the agency or means to act—i.e. exercise power—in a particular situation. As such, they might not be analysed as “actors” per se. Nevertheless, all affected stakeholders should be considered when studying political issues.</p> <p>When addressing political issues, the structure and dynamics of political systems should be considered, and how these regulate the interactions and possible courses of action of political actors. Similar types of actors in diverse contexts or systems may have drastically different power and legitimacy. For example, private companies in North America and Asia might be perceived differently, as might organized civil society in Latin America and in Europe.</p> <p>Particular rules, norms and institutions that regulate interactions between political actors are also considered because they ultimately shape or limit possible approaches to political issues; or may in some cases be the source of these.</p> <p>Institutions encompass formalized organizations or agencies and also any social structures of rules and norms that shape—and constrain—individual and collective behaviour.</p>
<b>Power in global politics</b>	Definitions and ways of understanding power	<p>Students should engage critically with a variety of definitions and approaches to the concept of power. It is important that any definitions considered are discussed and evaluated throughout the course.</p> <p>Some authors and thinkers whose views on power might be useful to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Bell Hooks, Eric Liu, Steven Lukes, John</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
	Classifications of power Types of power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard, soft and smart power</li> <li>• Structural and relational power</li> <li>• Economic, political, social and cultural power</li> <li>• Power to, power over, power with</li> </ul>	Mearsheimer, Walter Mignolo, Joseph Nye, Hanna Pitkin, Yaqing Qin.  The specific characterizations of power included in the prescribed content should be addressed explicitly. Rather than merely listing these classifications or defining them abstractly, students should familiarize themselves with the classifications and try to use them when they are relevant in analysing real-world examples and cases. They might evaluate their advantages and limitations as analysis tools or examine their similarities or links. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard power (coercion)—e.g. military interventions, economic sanctions</li> <li>• Soft power (persuasion)—e.g. cultural influence, ideology, economic aid</li> <li>• Smart power (an eclectic combination of hard and soft power, depending on aims)—e.g. approaches to climate change, negotiations</li> <li>• Structural power—e.g. UN Security Council membership, heads of state</li> <li>• Relational power—e.g. alliances, collective civil movements</li> </ul>
<b>Sovereignty in global politics</b>	Nature of state sovereignty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional and modern notions of state sovereignty</li> <li>• Sources of sovereignty</li> <li>• Internal and external dimensions of sovereignty</li> </ul>	The nature of state sovereignty should be examined in the light of the three thematic studies. Areas to consider could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Westphalian conception of state sovereignty</li> <li>• possession and use of force</li> <li>• international law and norms</li> <li>• recognition by other states due to considerations of economics and balance of power</li> <li>• consent (or lack thereof) of the governed through political participation.</li> </ul>
	Challenges to state sovereignty	Assessing what constitutes a challenge to state sovereignty may depend on which notions of sovereignty are examined. Areas to consider could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increased global interdependence, influence or interference from other states, supranationality, humanitarian intervention</li> <li>• indigenous national claims and alternative notions of sovereignty, transnational cultural groups, nationalist movements, violent non-state actors, influence of transnational companies (TNCs).</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
<b>Legitimacy in global politics</b>	Sources of state legitimacy, including government legitimacy	<p>The complex distinction between state legitimacy and the legitimacy of a particular government should be considered when analysing political issues.</p> <p>The links and distinctions between sovereignty and legitimacy are of particular importance as well.</p> <p>Sources of state and government legitimacy to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• history</li> <li>• ideology</li> <li>• national identity</li> <li>• leadership recognition</li> <li>• government performance</li> <li>• free and fair elections</li> <li>• representation</li> <li>• consent of governed people</li> <li>• transparency</li> <li>• citizen welfare</li> <li>• order and stability</li> <li>• economic, political, and social development</li> <li>• sustained development</li> <li>• international recognition</li> <li>• quality of governance.</li> </ul>
	Challenges to state and government legitimacy	<p>When addressing challenges to state legitimacy, students should consider both challenges from within the state and from external stakeholders. Areas to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• political, economic, and social instability</li> <li>• inability to govern effectively</li> <li>• inability to ensure well-being of citizens</li> <li>• excessive use of force and threats</li> <li>• violence, oppression, human rights violations.</li> </ul>
	Sources of legitimacy of non-state actors	<p>Strong emphasis should be placed on the legitimacy of non-state actors, not only from and towards governments but also in connection to other actors.</p> <p>Areas to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• representation—how representative they are of the interests of groups in society</li> <li>• interaction—how they relate to other state and non-state actors</li> <li>• ability—what means they may have of exerting influence</li> <li>• efficacy—to what extent they can achieve goals or intended outcomes.</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
	Legitimation processes and loss of legitimacy of political actors	<p>Legitimacy is not a fixed condition for political actors. It can be gained, strengthened, reduced or lost, depending on actions, interactions and outcomes among and between different political actors and stakeholders. Areas to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formal recognition processes established by an actor in an authority role (“top down”)</li> <li>• self-legitimation strategies by political actors</li> <li>• organic recognition gained from stakeholders or audiences</li> <li>• (de)legitimation strategies by opposing or alternative political actors.</li> </ul>
<b>Interdependence in global politics</b>	Global governance and international law	<p>The distinction between “government” and “governance” should be examined, as well as the difference between the scope, nature and dynamic of national and international law.</p> <p>Examples—UN Security Council resolutions, climate change agenda, Basel Accords on financial regulation, World Trade Organization (WTO) trade agreements, regional decision-making mechanisms.</p> <p>Sources of international law—treaties, international custom, general widely recognized principles of law, decisions of international, national and regional courts, scholarly writings.</p>
	<p>The UN</p> <p>Achievements and limitations of the UN</p> <p>General structure, roles and functions of the UN, including the UN Charter, General Assembly and Security Council</p>	<p>Particular examples of other UN committees, agencies and programmes, as well as their roles, achievements and limitations, should be examined in the light of each of the thematic studies. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)</li> <li>• United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)</li> <li>• International Court of Justice (ICJ).</li> </ul>
	<p>Participation of IGOs and non-state actors in global governance</p> <p>Cooperation and competition between political actors</p> <p>Treaties, collective security, strategic alliances, economic cooperation</p> <p>Global interactions and networks</p>	<p>The role of multiple diverse actors and stakeholders in global governance should be examined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional organizations, e.g. African Union (AU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), European Union (EU), Mercosur</li> <li>• Organizations with specific scope and functions, e.g. Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Digital Nations (DN), International Energy Agency (IEA), Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)</li> <li>• Treaties, e.g. Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Montreal Protocol</li> <li>• Collective security, e.g. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of American States (OAS)</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic alliances, e.g. China's alliances in Africa and Latin America, USA and Taiwan, USA and Israel, India and Afghanistan</li> <li>Economic cooperation, e.g. bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, economic integration, facilitation and regulation of international production</li> <li>Informal cooperation, e.g. extraordinary rendition, technology harmonization, cultural exchange</li> </ul>
<b>Theoretical perspectives in global politics</b>	<p>Theories, models and analytical frameworks in global politics</p> <p>Use and applicability of theories and models to political issues</p> <p>Bias and limitations of theories and models</p>	<p>No specific political theories are included as prescribed content. However, educators are strongly encouraged to review diverse theories, e.g. critical theories such as feminism, postcolonialism or social constructivism, along with realism and liberalism. Approaches to consider could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>uses of theories, models and analytical frameworks</li> <li>organizing, evaluating, critically reviewing, simplifying, explaining (causes, consequences and motives), predicting and prescribing</li> <li>successes and limitations of theoretical models when studying real-world cases.</li> </ul>

## Thematic studies: Summary outline

The table below summarizes the integrated nature of the thematic studies. Specific details of the three themes then follow in the three subsequent tables.

	Rights and justice	Development and sustainability	Peace and conflict
<b>Contested meanings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rights</li> <li>Justice</li> <li>Liberty</li> <li>Equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>Poverty</li> <li>Inequality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace</li> <li>Conflict</li> <li>Violence</li> <li>Non-violence</li> </ul>
<b>Interactions of political stakeholders and actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil society organizations, including advocacy</li> <li>National and regional governmental commissions and courts</li> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable and most affected groups and individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civil society, including grassroots initiatives</li> <li>National and regional governmental commissions and courts</li> <li>IGOs—including international financial institutions</li> <li>Private companies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parties to conflict</li> <li>Third-party intervention, i.e. mediation, negotiations, interventions</li> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable and most affected groups and individuals; non-combatants</li> </ul>

	Rights and justice	Development and sustainability	Peace and conflict
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private companies and labour unions</li> <li>Resistance and social movements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable and most affected groups and individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-violent and violent protest movements, including terrorism</li> </ul>
<b>Nature, practice and study of ...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International and regional rights frameworks, including the UN system, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</li> <li>Development of world norms in rights and justice, including "Responsibility to protect" (R2P)</li> <li>Codification, protection and monitoring</li> <li>Responses to violations of rights and perceived injustices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dimensions and assessment of development and sustainability</li> <li>Economic, environmental, political, social and institutional factors</li> <li>Links between development and sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict dynamics</li> <li>Causes of conflict</li> <li>Types of conflict</li> <li>Peacemaking, including negotiations and treaties</li> <li>Peacekeeping</li> <li>Peacebuilding, including reconciliation processes and justice institutions, e.g. the International Criminal Court (ICC)</li> </ul>
<b>Debates on ...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Politicization of rights and justice</li> <li>Claims on individual and collective rights</li> <li>Universal and relative rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globalization and development</li> <li>Sustainable development</li> <li>Alternative views on development and sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justifications of violence in conflict</li> <li>Legitimacy of non-violent and violent protests</li> <li>Effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts</li> </ul>

## Thematic studies: Rights and justice

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
<b>Contested meanings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rights</li> <li>Justice, including political and social</li> <li>Liberty</li> <li>Equality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human rights</li> <li>Egalitarian, cosmopolitan, ecological justice</li> <li>Individual freedom</li> <li>Legal equality; conceptualization of equality and equity</li> </ul>
<b>Interactions of political stakeholders and actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state and national governments</li> <li>IGOs, including ICJ, United Nations High Commissioner for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICJ, UNHRC, UNHCR, ICC</li> <li>Inter-American Court of Human Rights, European Court of Human Rights, African Court of Human and People's Rights</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refugees (UNHCR), UNHRC, ICC</li> <li>Regional human rights tribunals</li> <li>Civil society organizations, including advocacy</li> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable or most affected groups and individuals</li> <li>Private companies and unions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Child Rights International Network</li> <li>Migrants and refugees, children</li> <li>Violations of workers' rights by TNCs</li> </ul>
<b>Nature, practice and study of rights and justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Codification, protection and monitoring</li> <li>International and regional rights frameworks, including UN system and 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights</li> <li>Development of world norms in rights and justice, including R2P</li> <li>Responses to violations of rights and perceived injustices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different conceptions of justice may lead to different codifications and hierarchies of rights</li> <li>Even when rights are codified, political actors may lack the means or will to protect or enforce them</li> <li>Internationalization of human rights, e.g. universal jurisdiction, international humanitarian law</li> <li>Child soldiers, human trafficking, forced labour, forced relocation, denial of rights of prisoners of war, violations of freedom of speech, violations in the name of prevention of terrorism, gender discrimination</li> </ul>
<b>Debates on rights and justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse standards and understandings of rights</li> <li>Politicization of rights and justice</li> <li>Claims on individual and collective rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of human rights for political gain, humanitarian arguments, R2P, use of sanctions</li> <li>Labour rights, indigenous land claims, movements for gender equality, debates about rights related to sexual identity, orientation and behaviour</li> <li>Sharia law, honour killings, hate crime laws</li> </ul>

## Thematic studies: Development and sustainability

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
<b>Contested meanings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development</li> <li>Sustainability</li> <li>Poverty</li> <li>Inequality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political, social, institutional, economic development</li> <li>Environmental, social, economic sustainability</li> <li>Sustainability (and unsustainability) as a possible condition of systems and practices</li> <li>Poverty as lack of opportunities, lack of resources</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic, political and social inequality, power asymmetries</li> </ul>
<b>Interactions of political stakeholders and actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State, national and local governments and agencies</li> <li>Civil society</li> <li>International governmental organizations, including international financial institutions</li> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable or most affected groups and individuals</li> <li>Transnational and multinational companies (TNCs and MNCs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Committee of the Red Cross</li> <li>World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Trade Organization (WTO)</li> <li>Groups affected by extreme poverty or structural arrangements</li> <li>Global trade networks</li> </ul>
<b>Nature, practice and study of development and sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dimensions and assessment of development and sustainability</li> <li>Pathways towards development and sustainability</li> <li>Economic, environmental, political, social and institutional factors</li> <li>Links between development and sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple dimensions and meanings of development and sustainability should be examined in the study of global politics. For example, development should be considered far beyond “economic growth” alone, and the exploration of sustainability should not be limited to environmental factors and natural resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of development and sustainability should include: Human Development Index (HDI), Human Poverty Index (HPI), Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Happy Planet Index, Gini index, corruption indices, trust indices, Environmental Sustainability Index (ESI), Sustainable Society Index, Sustainable Governance Indicators</li> <li>Political factors: ideologies, history and persistence of conflict, stability, accountability, transparency, legal frameworks, political consequences of different development paths, decisions about the allocation of aid, political culture, culture of bureaucracy, vested interests</li> <li>Economic factors: access to resources, increasing resource constraints, infrastructure, debt, access to capital and credit, aid, trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), income distribution, informal economy, vested interests</li> <li>Social factors: values, cultures, traditions, gender relations, migration</li> <li>Institutional factors: the UN, IMF, World Bank, WTO, partnerships between developing countries, efficacy of national and local institutions</li> </ul>



Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental factors: geography, resource endowment, consequences of climate change on people's and communities' lives</li> </ul>
<b>Debates on development and sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globalization and development and sustainability</li> <li>Sustainable development</li> <li>Alternative views on development and sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>Impacts of globalization on development and sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critical views on sustainable development and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</li> <li>De-growth, regenerative approaches</li> </ul>

## Thematic studies: Peace and conflict

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
<b>Contested meanings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace, including positive and negative</li> <li>Conflict, including latent and overt</li> <li>Violence, including direct, structural and cultural</li> <li>Non-violence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peace as balance of power, peace in different political traditions and religions, feminist peace</li> <li>Alternatives beyond non-violence, e.g. pacifism</li> </ul>
<b>Interactions of political stakeholders and actors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parties to conflict</li> <li>Violent and non-violent state and non-state actors</li> <li>Third parties, including mediation processes, negotiation processes and interventions</li> <li>Marginalized, vulnerable and most affected groups and individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States, intrastate groups, protest groups, individuals</li> <li>Weapon embargoes, financial freezes, trade limitations, NATO involvement, UN peace enforcement, election observers</li> <li>Non-combatants</li> </ul>
<b>Nature, practice and study of peace and conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict dynamics</li> <li>Causes of conflict: identity, ideology, interests, resources, socio-economic divisions, institutional arrangements</li> <li>Types of conflict: inter-, intra-, non- and extra-state conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful models and tools for analysis could include: Galtung's conflict triangles; positions, interests, needs (PIN); conflict cycles</li> <li>Greed vs grievance, territorial control, material interest, resource scarcity, ideology, threatened identity, perception</li> <li>Military victory, imposed settlement, ceasefires, truces, arbitration, mediation, peace treaties</li> </ul>

Prescribed topic	Prescribed content	Supporting details (further explanation, possible examples)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peacemaking, including negotiations and treaties</li> <li>• Peacekeeping</li> <li>• Peacebuilding, including reconciliation processes and justice institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truth and reconciliation commissions (e.g. Gambia, Canada, Tunisia), courts (e.g. Cambodia, ICC), forgiveness, empathy</li> </ul>
<b>Debates on peace and conflict</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justifications of violence in conflict, including cultural, legal and religious justifications</li> <li>• Legitimacy of non-violent and violent protests</li> <li>• Effectiveness of peacebuilding efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrations, civil disobedience, violent protests, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, genocide, arms proliferation, nuclear deterrence</li> </ul>

An extended list of examples can be found in the TSM.

## Engagement project—SL and HL

The engagement project provides students with an opportunity to explore power and agency in practice and outside the classroom. As part of their engagement project, students may, for example:

- learn about the local manifestations of a global issue
- engage with primary and secondary sources
- explore the dynamics and consequences of decision-making on individuals and communities.

Although the emphasis of the task is on active engagement, it is expected that students undertake exploratory and complementary research to inform their planning and actions, and their discussion of the political issue identified in their project.

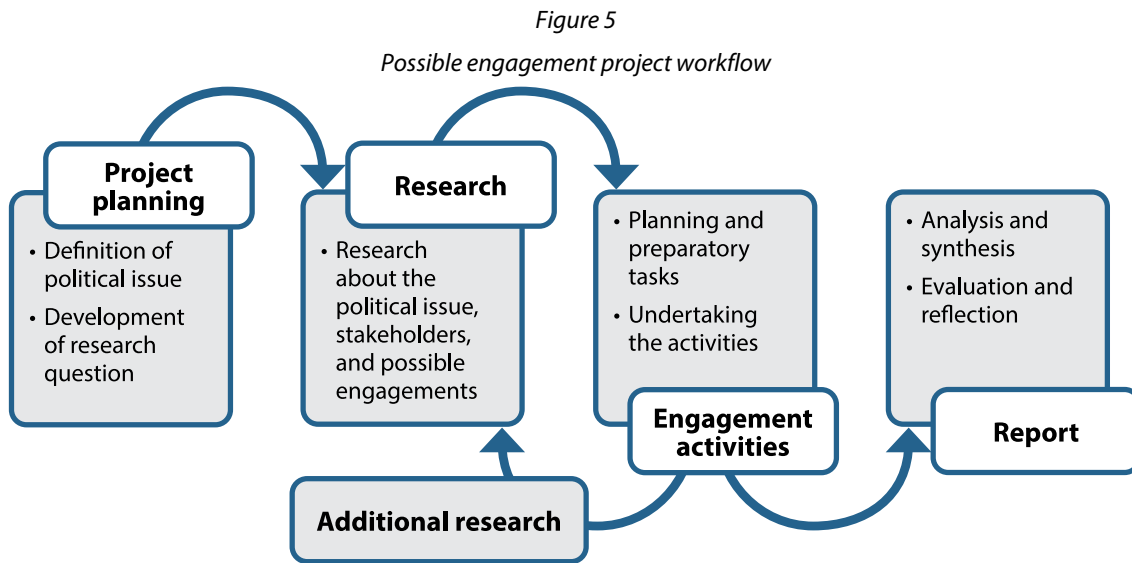
There are multiple tasks that make up the engagement project.

- Exploratory research
- Identification of a political issue
- Planning and undertaking engagement activities
- Doing complementary research
- Writing the report

Although the written report is the assessed component, students' planning, research, discussions and interactions with stakeholders are interconnected, and all of these are required for a good result.

**The project aims to give students the opportunity for active and reflective engagement. Teachers should be especially mindful in helping students understand this focus of the task: “active engagement” in this project—about engaging with and exploring a political issue—is not the same as the type of extensive research students conduct for, say, their extended essay (EE).**

Students can therefore expect to go back and forth between the different project tasks. For example, they should do preliminary research on the context of the political issue identified before engaging with stakeholders and while writing their report. Similarly, they may discover areas for which additional research is needed to balance the perspectives acquired throughout the engagement. In many cases, students might not be able to complete the activities originally planned and so may have to explore alternative or additional options (see figure 5).



## Selecting appropriate engagements

When selecting their engagements, it is crucial that students identify a concrete political issue of interest to them that can be analysed adequately. The political issue should be at the centre of their project planning. Similarly, the engagement activities should allow the student to truly develop a deeper understanding of the political issue.

For example, if a student suggests engaging in a beach clean-up, what they do would be largely apolitical: any political issues are likely to be artificially or remotely connected to the activity. However, if a student proposes to organize an awareness-raising campaign for beach clean-ups, including cleaning up a beach, many political issues are authentically embedded in this engagement: for example, a comparison of the opportunities for and limitations of citizen activism versus governmental responsibility for such tasks. Furthermore, in selecting campaign means, discussing these with the local council, executing the campaign and organizing activities on the ground, the student discovers multifaceted aspects and challenges of their selected political issue, first hand.

Students should therefore choose an engagement that helps them gain an experiential perspective on a political issue that genuinely interests them. Often, this is likely to happen if:

- the engagement allows students to experience the dynamics of real-world politics, and to do so in a participatory way
- the chosen political issue affects a community or a society in which the student has some personal stake and experiences, e.g. the beach clean-up is a collective effort around a real problem in the student's own locality
- the engagement involves contact with others who are also interested in, or have a stake in, the political issue.

Other quite different kinds of engagements can also be the basis of a meaningful and successful engagement project: such as political simulations or activities centred on the lives of other communities and societies, even in other parts of the world. Issues encountered by students in their everyday activities can make for wholly viable projects: as long as a significant experiential element is involved, and as long as this allows students to explore diverse perspectives on a political issue that interests them.

For example, a student interested in the negotiating techniques that can be employed by parties with less power in a negotiation situation where other parties have greater power, can initially learn about this through a simulation. They can then complement their experience with research into specific cases. Similarly, a student interested in the political issue of women's rights in a different part of the world can

learn about this meaningfully through activities, such as becoming involved with a human rights NGO working with immigrant women from that part of the world.

During their engagement project, students should consider a wide collection of perspectives, from their research sources to the stakeholders and actors they plan to engage with in their activities. The table below outlines further examples of the kinds of engagements, and the political issues embedded in them, that are likely to lend themselves to meaningful and successful engagement activities in global politics. **Teachers and students are free to choose their own topics: the topics listed here only serve as examples.**

Possible line of inquiry	Engagement activities
How does the nature of democracy impact the representation of women in politics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance at the full meeting of a city council, followed by interviews with two of its female councillors</li> <li>Campaigning with a city councillor in support of a female candidate running for the national parliament</li> <li>Attendance at a conference to hear a speech by a female member of parliament opposed to quotas for women in politics</li> <li>Participation in a group discussion with a female government minister</li> </ul>
How legitimate and effective are the strategies employed by NGOs in improving women's rights in country A, compared with the legitimacy and effectiveness of an outside military intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation and performance of street theatre on the theme of women's rights in country A for NGO B</li> <li>Interviews with women from country A involved in NGO B's work</li> </ul>
What are the impacts of "voluntarism" on the local and national development of country C?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three-week stay and work at a "voluntarism" school in country C</li> <li>Interviews with the school's representatives and other local stakeholders</li> <li>Discussions with students and parents</li> </ul>
What are the strengths and weaknesses of international law when applied to the concept of personal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in a question-and-answer session at international criminal courts D and E</li> <li>Observation of a trial against a war criminal at court D</li> <li>Preparation and participation in a mock war crimes trial, in the role of a prosecutor</li> </ul>
How do processes of global politics influence where the products we need in daily life come from and how they are made?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigation into the value chain of three products selected from a local store: a locally sourced vegetable, a nationally sourced drink, and an internationally sourced toy</li> <li>Interviews with the store purchasing manager, the local farmer selling the vegetable, the drinks company, and an NGO working on consumer-awareness issues</li> </ul>

In the normal course of their global politics studies, students may be involved with several activities that could qualify as engagements. They could potentially choose the most interesting and suitable of these to develop further as the foundation for their engagement project. However, teachers should actively guide students and advise them on their time commitments so that other elements of their DP do not suffer.

It is not a requirement that students link their engagement project to any specific section of the course syllabus, but their analysis of the selected political issue should show evidence of knowledge and understanding of relevant course content, with an emphasis on the key concepts. When selecting an appropriate project, some students might find it useful to select one of the thematic studies or one of the

HL extension topic areas as a starting point. Others might first identify a specific situation they are interested in, and then establish links with course content.

## Preliminary and complementary research

The role of research in the engagement project is to complement what students learn through their engagement activities, including their own evolving beliefs and perspectives. A helpful way of thinking about research is to ask the following question.

- In addition to the **experiential** learning students gain through their engagement project, and on which they critically reflect, what else do they need to know and understand to be able to write a quality evaluative analysis of their selected political issue?

Often, background information on actors, organizations, events and so on is required for understanding the context in which the engagement takes place. Some additional reading to establish links between students' activities, their chosen political issue, and the key concepts and topics studied in the course is also called for. Note too that the perspectives students gain through their engagement are partial and limited. Research is needed to establish which other perspectives on the political issue and the stakeholders students have been engaging with are possible, and what the strengths and limitations of various perspectives are.

Considering again the example of organizing an awareness-raising campaign for beach clean-ups, the role of research in this engagement project could be to:

- compare the results of the student's campaign with other similar clean-up campaigns
- read up on what political factors might explain the success of citizenship activism in the culture and society in question
- study the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of citizen activism versus governmental measures in achieving collective "goods" like clean beaches.

Students' preparatory and complementary research can be based on primary and secondary material, although the emphasis is likely to be on secondary sources as any primary research will probably be a part of the engagement itself. During their experiential learning, students may collect items such as photos, responses to questionnaires and extracts of interviews. Newspaper, magazine and journal articles, textbooks, carefully selected websites, images and audiovisual material are all legitimate secondary sources. Students must provide in-text citations and references detailing the supporting documents, and a bibliography structured in a recognized academic format. Any primary sources significant to the students' discussion should be included in an appendix, where appropriate. For further guidance, educators and students can refer to the IB publication *Effective citing and referencing*.

Teachers should be mindful that the main focus of the task is **active engagement**, rather than the type of extensive research students conduct for, say, their EE. Again, the role of the research is to enhance students' understanding of the political issue raised by their engagement, and help them answer questions that emerge as a result of their planning, actions and discussion. Additionally, exploratory research might prove useful for identifying possible political issues of interest or stakeholders that students could engage with. Before carrying out formal engagement activities, students are advised to conduct preliminary research to prepare and improve their learning experience.

## Written report

The written report is an opportunity for students to bring together the lessons they have learned about their chosen political issue through their engagement activities and complementary research. As for other large writing projects, it is likely to be helpful for students to formulate an initial question, tightly linked to the political issue, that they attempt to answer through their experiences and research. They can refine this question and how they plan to address it throughout the engagement project process.

In their reports, students must identify a political issue they decided to explore through the engagement activities and explain the reasons why they wanted to get involved with this specific engagement and issue. If the engagement is large and multifaceted—perhaps consisting of several tasks, or with the student having several roles in the course of the engagement—students need to focus their report on aspects of

the engagement that are most relevant for their treatment of the political issue. **Instead of describing at length what they did, the key sense in which students outline their engagement in the written report is to analyse what it contributed to their understanding of the selected political issue.** The lessons from experiential learning, combined with insights from research, inform students' analysis of the political issue. They are expected to synthesize their insights and evaluate the political issue from multiple perspectives.

There is no specific format required of the written report, but it is expected that the report is a structured piece of well-presented writing.

## Word count

The written report must not exceed 2,000 words for SL and 2,400 words for HL. Work that falls significantly below these word counts is unlikely to meet fully the stated requirements of the task, and is likely to receive lower marks.

A word count must be included as part of the report. If the word limit is exceeded, the teacher's assessment must be based on the first 2,000 words (SL) or 2,400 words (HL) only.

The following are not included in the word count.

- Acknowledgements
- Contents page
- Tables of statistical data
- Diagrams or figures
- Equations, formulas and calculations
- Citations (which, if used, must be in the body of the written report\*)
- References (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes\*\*)
- Bibliography
- Appendices

\*A citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the report, which is then linked to the full reference in the bibliography.

\*\*Footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of terms and quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count.

## Teacher guidance

- With the teacher's support, students must choose appropriate engagement activities for their project.
- Before any formalized contact with external stakeholders takes place, the teacher should approve the student's proposed political issue and its corresponding engagement activities. This will ensure that the issue and activities are suitable, affording the student full access to all levels of the assessment criteria. (It is also highly advisable that every student is supplied with a copy of the assessment criteria.)
- It is particularly important for teachers to take an active role in guiding students' choice of engagement project, to ensure that:
  - a political issue is identified that can be **actively** explored through what students suggest they can **do**
  - the political issue is of genuine interest to the student.
- The teacher should also guide students regarding the relevance and sufficiency of their research, both in preparation for the engagement activities and in complementing their experiential learning.
- Throughout the engagement project process, student and teacher should engage in dialogue that is supportive of the student's work, i.e. formative feedback. For example, as part of the learning process, the teacher may comment on students' plans, including the scope of their research and the first draft of the written report.

## Ethical guidelines for the engagement project

Students must adhere to the following ethical guidelines when undertaking their engagement project in the global politics course. They must show tact and sensitivity, respect confidentiality and acknowledge all sources used. Teachers are responsible for discussing these guidelines as part of their teaching and for ensuring students understand them and adhere to them.

- Students and teachers must exercise judgement on which engagements may be suitable. This will vary from one location to another.
- Under no circumstances must the safety of the student or any other participants in the activities be compromised. As a general standard, if there are any doubts or concerns about a student undertaking a particular activity, it is probably not a suitable engagement. Schools may also develop their own risk assessment protocol, reflective of their own context.
- Any data collected must be kept in a confidential and responsible manner and not divulged to any other person.
- Any activity that involves deception, involuntary participation or invasion of privacy, including the inappropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT), email and the internet, must be avoided.
- Young children (under 12 years) must not be involved as participants. Any interviews involving older students (12–16 years) need the written consent of parent(s) or guardian(s), who must also be fully informed about the nature of the activity. Where an activity is conducted with children in a school, the written consent of the teachers concerned must also be obtained.
- Students must avoid conducting research with any adult who is not able to respond freely and independently.
- Any activity that creates anxiety, stress, pain or discomfort for participants must not be permitted.
- Participants and interviewees must be debriefed and given the right to withdraw their own personal data and responses. Anonymity for each participant must be guaranteed, unless participants have given explicit permission to the contrary. For interviewees in an elected or appointed government role, or in a formal role in a non-state organization, any relevant information can be included without personal details.
- Acknowledging that some interviewees may not be in a position to, or may choose not to, respond to questions freely and independently, students should, when suspecting this to be the case, complement their primary research with other resources, such as alternative or complementing engagements.
- Using family members or relatives as a source in the engagement project is not advisable. If students should choose to do so, this must be declared.
- Teachers and students should exercise sensitivity to local and international cultures.
- Students must not falsify or invent data.

Activities that are conducted online are subject to the same guidelines. Any data collected online must be deleted once the research is complete. Such data must not be used for any purpose other than the completion of the engagement project.

Students found to have carried out unethical work will be awarded zero marks for the engagement project component.

## Links to creativity, activity, service

It is possible that there may be links between the engagement activities chosen by students and an activity undertaken by them for CAS, considering the experiential nature of both. However, it should be noted that although CAS activities can be both inspired by and informed by components of other DP academic subjects, CAS activities must still be distinct from activities undertaken as part of DP assessment requirements.

Where an activity is extensive and multifaceted, it may be that there is one element that could constitute an appropriate engagement for global politics, and other elements that could be appropriate as activities for CAS. Nonetheless, the same elements may not be counted for both global politics and CAS. For example:

- A student participating in a Model United Nations (MUN) simulation could identify one specific element—such as discussing various political discourse techniques—as one of their global politics engagement activities
- The student could then identify other elements of their MUN participation—such as leading their school delegation—for CAS.

Similarly, a student involved in a youth initiative in the local community could:

- as part of their global politics engagement project, examine the role of the community council in empowering youth, and canvassing youth support for this specific project
- for CAS, document their participation in actual activities with youth.

## HL engagement project: Additional details

The HL engagement project shares all the elements and requirements as outlined for the SL engagement project. Additionally, it also requires students to conduct further research in order to formulate a recommendation for addressing the identified political issue. The recommendation can be focused on a specific stakeholder, for example, how a local NGO could increase its influence. Or, it could target structural elements that contribute to the political issue, for example, reforms to the local electoral system to make it more representative or accessible.

The recommendation should present an advisable course of action with appropriate supporting evidence. The evidence could come from statistical information, similar initiatives implemented in other contexts, and political theory and models.

## HL extension: Global political challenges

Students taking the HL course conduct extended inquiries around global political challenges, with an emphasis on:

- the interconnected nature of these challenges
- the complexities and tensions involved in addressing these challenges
- a solution-oriented focus that highlights possible courses of action.

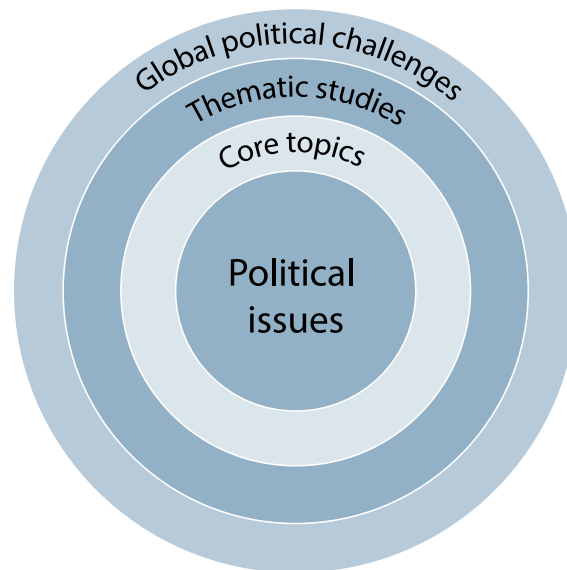
While there is no additional content prescribed for the HL extension, the students' explorations of global political challenges should build on the core topics and thematic studies. The concepts, content and contexts explored as part of the common syllabus serve as a foundation for the HL extension. Ideally, links to global political challenges will be identified as the common syllabus is covered, rather than making their exploration a separate part of the course (see figure 6).

There are many explicit and implicit links to the suggested HL themes throughout the core topics and thematic studies. Some ways of making effective connections could include:

- explicit mention in prescribed content, e.g. identity as a cause of conflict, environmental factors of development, conceptions of poverty
- possible expansion of prescribed topics and content, e.g. environmental rights as part of human rights
- integration of elements from thematic studies into HL topic areas, e.g. identity as an individual and collective right, as a sign of political development, and as a possible cause of conflict.



Figure 6  
Integration of the HL extension with the common SL/HL syllabus



### Structuring the HL extension inquiries

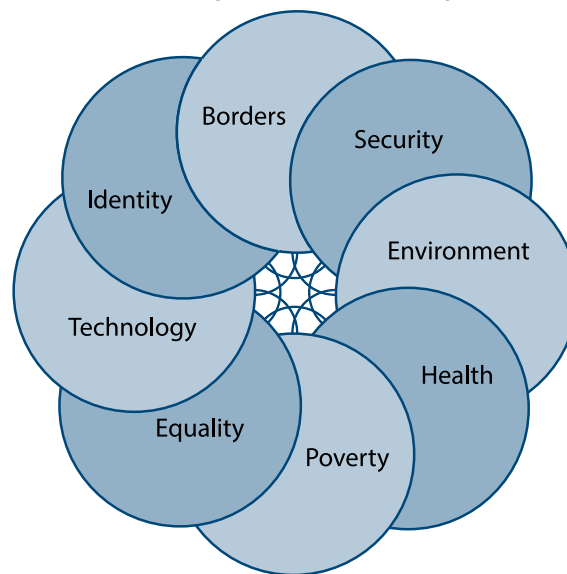
As part of their extended inquiry, it is expected that students consider the following **guiding lines of inquiry** in analysing global political challenges and how they can be addressed.

- What connections can be established between the global political challenge(s) and the core topics?
- What connections can be established between the global political challenge(s) and the thematic studies?
- To what extent are the global political challenges interconnected? What are some of the links in how they are studied and/or addressed?
- How are the global political challenges perceived and addressed in different contexts?
- What are some of the frameworks, systems, organizations and mechanisms put in place for addressing global political challenges?
- How can looking at specific cases from different topic areas change the way global political challenges are perceived or addressed?

### HL extension topic areas: Global political challenges

A set of topic areas is presented for the study of global political challenges to facilitate students' explorations. These should not be seen as fully discrete or disconnected topics, but rather as overlapping areas of study that can contribute to understanding and addressing global challenges. Students can conduct an in-depth study of two of the topic areas—for example, security and health—or they might choose to explore the interconnections of multiple topic areas based on a selected case study.

Figure 7  
Interconnected nature of the global political challenges and HL topic areas



In a similar way to the thematic studies, the HL topic areas can be seen as areas of study in global politics that provide additional tools for analysis, models, frameworks and terminology, to delve deeper into political issues. Additionally, exploring the links between multiple topic areas will most likely evidence the complexities of global political challenges but also the tools available to address them. For example, some students might look into the links between poverty and health, and research their impacts in vulnerable populations. Other students might explore how technology is used to address security concerns or reduce environmental risks.

Two main approaches to conducting the HL extended inquiries are suggested.

- **Using HL topic areas as entry points:** If a student is interested in one of the HL topic areas, they may begin an in-depth study of this, then select an appropriate case through which to investigate it further.
- **Using cases as entry points:** If a particular case or topic is of special interest to the student, they may explore the case and make links to multiple topic areas that they consider relevant.

Regardless of the approach taken, as part of their extended inquiries HL students must ensure that they conduct **research on at least two different case studies** and on **at least two different topic areas**.

This section includes initial orientation for each of the HL topic areas, as well as some possible examples of appropriate case studies. However, as figure 7 illustrates, emphasis should be placed on the interconnected nature of these topic areas, rather than on what sets them apart.

HL topic area	Initial guidance and possible links with course content	Suggested examples
<b>Environment</b>	<p>Many environmental problems transcend national boundaries, and the activities of one country can have a direct impact on multiple countries.</p> <p>Mitigation of and responses to climate change and other such global environmental challenges involve and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melting ice caps in the Arctic—opportunities of and threats to regional political cooperation between Russia and northern European states</li> <li>• The 2016–2018 drought in Cape Town, South Africa—government control in an environmental crisis</li> </ul>

HL topic area	Initial guidance and possible links with course content	Suggested examples
	<p>require international political cooperation and action.</p> <p>The depletion of natural resources in the face of growing populations and increasingly resource-heavy lifestyles across the globe raises many political issues. This is also a source of increasing political tensions.</p> <p>The compatibility of economic growth and sustainable development is debated at all levels of politics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deforestation in the Gadchiroli district of India—constraints on correcting for an environmental failure in a developing country</li> <li>• Shale gas production in the USA—the influence of environmental NGOs on congressional decision-making</li> <li>• The carbon offsetting policy of airline “A”—the role of political decisions at different levels of global politics in bringing about such a policy</li> </ul>
<b>Poverty</b>	<p>The impact of globalization and economic integration on poverty, or cooperation between states and non-state actors in initiatives to address poverty.</p> <p>There are particularly strong links to the thematic area “Development and sustainability”, with its emphasis on the concept of inequality.</p> <p>Experience of poverty can also be approached from a human rights perspective, and poverty plays a significant role in some conflicts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child labour in the “Smokey Mountain” rubbish dump in Manila, the Philippines—the effectiveness of a local vs a national political approach</li> <li>• Poverty within the Aboriginal community in Queensland, Australia—why do the state’s policies continually fail?</li> <li>• “Relative poverty” in the UK—at which governmental level of politics is this most effectively tackled?</li> <li>• The Global Poverty Project and the campaign “Live Below the Line”—the role of empathy in the fight against poverty</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b>	<p>The function and impact of local and national initiatives to improve public health, compared with the role of global actors such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or international NGOs.</p> <p>Epidemics travel across borders and require international cooperation.</p> <p>Health is an important determinant of quality of life, and the health issues from which people suffer in different parts of the world are indicative of wider socio-economic contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syrian refugees in Jordan—the role of different political actors in arranging health care provision in refugee camps</li> <li>• HIV/AIDS in rural South Africa—to what extent are poverty and the spread/contamination of the epidemic linked?</li> <li>• Drug addiction and access to health care in Florida, USA—how are “quiet voices” heard in US politics?</li> <li>• Leprosy in Nepal—the efficacy of international NGOs vs governmental health care</li> <li>• The 2014/2015 Ebola outbreak in Liberia—the state’s consideration (or lack thereof) of civil liberties</li> </ul>
<b>Identity</b>	<p>In a more interconnected, complex world, people may become more conscious of and interested in their own identities, including in ways that have political implications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religion in Bhutan—the role of identity politics in the peaceful evolution from absolutist monarchy to democracy</li> <li>• Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, other (LGBTQ+) marches in Eastern Europe, from Belgrade in 2010 to</li> </ul>

HL topic area	Initial guidance and possible links with course content	Suggested examples
	<p>For example, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA (2001), increasing attention has been given to the significance of cultural and religious identity in global politics.</p> <p>The identities of women and ethnic minorities can be similarly political, with debates in many societies about the appropriate line between the private and public spheres of life.</p> <p>Media coverage of how cases of genocide and ethnic violence are treated in international justice institutions point to the role identity can play in some of the most horrific conflicts of recent times.</p> <p>There are particularly strong links between this topic and the thematic area “Rights and justice”, i.e. human rights.</p>	<p>present day—are attitudes changing? If so, how and why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class identity in South Africa—how is the role of the working class changing in labour-related politics?</li> <li>• Race and incarceration in the USA—what are the reasons for and the effects of racial profiling in US policing?</li> <li>• National identity in Hungary—the Fidesz-led government’s use of national identity as a method to rally public support for its policies</li> </ul>
<b>Borders</b>	<p>“Borders” may be physical borders between countries but also less obvious but equally influential borders of, for example, social class, ethnicity, gender.</p> <p>Sometimes it is not the existence of borders that may be regarded as a political challenge but rather a lack thereof: an example might be the cross-border movement of capital or treatment of labour.</p> <p>Migration is closely linked to the concept of globalization as physical borders between nations are increasingly reduced.</p> <p>Immigration is a controversial and topical issue in many countries, and political backlashes to immigration are widespread in the face of changing and unstable economic conditions.</p> <p>Many conflicts have a dimension related to borders of various kinds; often, human rights are violated in crossing borders, e.g. human trafficking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2014 Scottish referendum on independence—the role of different borders between England and Scotland in strengthening the “Yes” campaign</li> <li>• The USA–Mexico border fence/wall—the effect of new migration legislation in the USA on the principles and practice of operations on this border</li> <li>• Forced relocation and conflict over ancestral land between the national government and Bushmen in Botswana—do claims emphasizing the right to a different way of life have authority in modern land conflicts?</li> <li>• Migration in Europe—the role of national vs regional (e.g. EU) policies in facilitating youth migration from the south to the north</li> <li>• Gender borders—the role of Islam in shaping women’s rights in Egypt</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<p>Many of the topics, political issues and key concepts encountered in the core topics and the thematic studies are central to discussions of security.</p> <p>For example, discussions of sovereignty, military power, wars between and within states, arms proliferation, and the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2012 case of Joseph Kony in Uganda—to what extent can social media be a catalyst for social change?</li> <li>• Disputed claims over the South China Sea—implications for regional maritime security</li> </ul>

HL topic area	Initial guidance and possible links with course content	Suggested examples
	<p>activities of non-state actors all have clear links to security.</p> <p>There are particularly strong links between this topic and the theme “Peace and conflict”. However, security also has cultural, social and economic dimensions. Issues such as food, water and energy security have increasingly material ramifications in global politics.</p> <p>Human rights violations can be viewed as attacks on individuals’ fundamental sense of security. Furthermore, in an uncertain world, political actors may sometimes try to benefit from people’s sense of insecurity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securitization as a response to ISIS/ISIL—changes in security policies in France in 2015</li> <li>• The Syrian refugee crisis and its impact on German security</li> <li>• Security vs human rights?—implications of the “Mano dura” security strategy used to combat gangs in El Salvador</li> </ul>
<b>Equality</b>	<p>The topic of equality is highly relevant to the study of global politics. It affects the ways states, groups and individuals interact with each other, and how they approach issues such as trade, development and security.</p> <p>In political systems, inequality can create power imbalances, which can result in conflict or the exploitation of vulnerable stakeholders.</p> <p>For example, economic inequality can lead to social and political instability, which can have far-reaching consequences beyond national borders.</p> <p>Moreover, equality is central to rights and social justice, as well as development. In relation to cultural and national identities, equality might be promoted along with diversity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rohingya Crisis—implications of institutionalized inequalities in Myanmar</li> <li>• Black Lives Matter—evolution of grassroots movements, from local to global</li> <li>• Zero flags—art as political activism to promote equality and the decriminalization of homosexuality</li> <li>• Racial discrimination in Mexico—an invisible and undisclosed evil</li> </ul>
<b>Technology</b>	<p>Technology has transformed the way political actors interact. One of the most evident changes has been in communication and information dissemination.</p> <p>The internet and social media have revolutionized the way people connect and communicate, making it easier for individuals and groups to organize and mobilize across national borders.</p> <p>This has led to new forms of political activism, such as online protests and social media campaigns, which can have significant impacts on global politics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rise of cyberattacks—confrontations between the USA and China</li> <li>• “Legitimate” attacks—the use of drone technology in Pakistan</li> <li>• ICT and political movements—the Honduran National Front against the 2009 coup</li> <li>• Big Tech in the USA—the dilemma between privacy and security</li> <li>• Green technology as a pathway to development in India—collaboration between the national government, IGOs and private companies</li> </ul>

HL topic area	Initial guidance and possible links with course content	Suggested examples
	<p>Technological advances have also given rise to new forms of power and influence. For example, states with advanced cyber capabilities can use these to engage in espionage, disrupt critical infrastructure and conduct propaganda campaigns.</p> <p>This has led to concerns about cyberwarfare and the need for international norms and regulations to govern behaviour in cyberspace.</p>	

## Additional questions for research in the HL extension inquiries

The following list indicates questions students should explore during their research. While researching, they should already be thinking about connections between the discrete pieces of information and how these could be useful as evidence for an examination.

### 1. Background, data and political issues

- What data exist on the case, how valid are the data analysed, and to what extent are the data contestable?
- Who are the principal actors and stakeholders?
- What is happening?
- Which terms are central to understanding the case?
- What are the indicators that this case can be understood as part of global political challenges?
- Which other similar cases are relevant to understanding this case?
- Which political issues manifest themselves in the case?

### 2. Causes of, impact of and responses to the political issue

- What factors are causing this situation?
- What are the political, social and economic impacts of the issue at various levels of global politics on various actors and stakeholders?
- What are the responses to the issue at various levels of global politics by various actors and stakeholders?
- How do interpretations of the issue vary by actor and stakeholder?
- What considerations influence how the issue will play out?

### 3. Reflection

- How can I use the key concepts, theories, ideas and examples I have learned in the course to analyse this case and political issue?
- Which wider issues or developments in global politics are relevant in understanding this case?
- What is the particular significance of this case?
- What other interpretations of or points of view on the case are possible?

Students' research can be based on primary and secondary material, although the emphasis is likely to be on secondary sources. Newspaper, magazine and journal articles, books, carefully selected websites, images and audiovisual materials are all valid secondary sources. Good research practice requires that the sources represent a balance of views.

# Assessment in the Diploma Programme and Career-related Programme

## General

Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. The most important aims of assessment are that it should support curricular goals and encourage appropriate student learning. Both external and internal assessments are used in the Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). IB examiners mark work produced for external assessment, while work produced for internal assessment (IA) is marked by teachers and externally moderated by the IB.

There are two main types of assessment identified by the IB.

- Formative assessment informs both learning and teaching. It is concerned with providing accurate and helpful feedback to candidates and teachers on the kind of learning taking place and the nature of candidates' strengths and weaknesses in order to help develop candidates' understanding and capabilities. Formative assessment can also help to improve teaching quality as it can provide information to monitor progress towards meeting the course aims and objectives.
- Summative assessment gives an overview of previous learning and is concerned with measuring candidate achievement at, or towards, the end of the course of study.

A comprehensive assessment plan is viewed as being integral to learning, teaching and course organization. For further information, see the IB *Programme standards and practices* publication.

The approach to assessment used by the IB is criterion-related, not norm-referenced. This approach to assessment judges candidates' work by their performance in relation to identified levels of attainment, and not in relation to the work of other candidates. For further information on assessment within the DP, please refer to the publication *Assessment: principles and practice—Quality assessments in a digital age*.

To support teachers in the planning, delivery and assessment of the DP or CP courses, a variety of resources can be found on the Programme Resource Centre or purchased from the IB store ([store.ibo.org](https://store.ibo.org)). Additional publications such as specimen papers and markschemes, teacher support materials (TSM), subject reports and grade descriptors can also be found on the Programme Resource Centre. Past examination papers as well as markschemes can be purchased from the IB store.

## Assessment-related resources

For more information about assessment in the IB, please refer to the following resources.

### Assessment

- *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (updated annually)
- *Assessment principles and practice—Quality assessments in a digital age*
- *Conduct of examinations booklet* (updated annually)
- *Programme standards and practices*

### Assessment access and inclusion

- *Access and inclusion policy*
- *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning*
- "B1 General regulations: Diploma Programme" in *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (updated annually)

## Assessment integrity

- [Academic integrity policy](#)
- [Effective citing and referencing](#)
- [Diploma Programme: From principles into practice](#) (For use from August 2015)
- “B1 General regulations: Diploma Programme” in [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#) (updated annually)
- “C5 Academic honesty” in [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#) (updated annually)

## Methods of assessment

The IB uses several methods to assess work produced by candidates.

### Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are used when the assessment task is open-ended. Each criterion concentrates on a particular skill that candidates are expected to demonstrate. An assessment objective (AO) describes what candidates should be able to do, and assessment criteria describe how well they should be able to do it. Using assessment criteria allows discrimination between different answers and encourages a variety of responses. Each criterion comprises a set of hierarchically ordered level descriptors. Each level descriptor is worth one or more marks. Each criterion is applied independently using a best-fit model. The maximum marks for each criterion may differ according to the criterion’s importance. The marks awarded for each criterion are added together to give the total mark for the piece of work.

### Markbands

Markbands are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate candidate performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor.

### Analytical markschemes

Analytical markschemes are prepared for those examination questions that expect a particular kind of response and/or a given final answer from candidates. They give detailed instructions to examiners on how to break down the total marks for each question for different parts of the response.

### Marking notes

For some assessment components marked using assessment criteria, marking notes are provided. Marking notes give guidance on how to apply assessment criteria to the particular requirements of a question.

## Inclusive access arrangements

Inclusive access arrangements are available for candidates with access requirements. Standard assessment conditions may put candidates with assessment access requirements at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their attainment level. Inclusive access arrangements enable candidates to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible.

The IB publication [Access and inclusion policy](#) provides details on all the inclusive access arrangements available to candidates. The IB publication [Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning](#) outlines the position of the IB with regard to candidates with learning support requirements in the IB programmes. For candidates affected by adverse circumstances, the IB publication [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#) (updated annually), which includes the general regulations, provides details on access consideration.



## Responsibilities of the school

The school is required to ensure that equal access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are provided to candidates with learning support requirements that are in line with the IB documents *Access and inclusion policy* and *Learning diversity and inclusion in IB programmes: Removing barriers to learning*.

# Assessment outline—SL

## First assessment 2026

Assessment component	Weighting
<b>External assessment (3 hours)</b>	<b>70%</b>
<p><b>Paper 1 (1 hour 15 minutes)</b></p> <p>Source-based paper that draws from the common SL and HL core topics. Candidates answer four compulsory structured questions. (25 marks)</p>	30%
<p><b>Paper 2 (1 hour 45 minutes)</b></p> <p>Extended response paper based on the common SL and HL thematic studies. Candidates must answer <b>two</b> questions: <b>one</b> essay from section A (comprising questions from each of the thematic studies) and <b>one</b> essay from section B (comprising integrating questions). (30 marks)</p>	40%
<b>Internal assessment (25 hours)</b>	<b>30%</b>
<p><b>Engagement project (25 hours)</b></p> <p>This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p> <p>Engagement with a political issue chosen by the candidate—this requires preparatory research, planning, active engagement, and complementary research and reflection. Candidates must submit for assessment a written report that includes a justification, discussion of methodology, explanation of the links between the political issue and course content, discussion of the engagement activities carried out, and analysis and synthesis of the political issue and the perspectives of involved stakeholders. (24 marks)</p>	30%

# Assessment outline—HL

## First assessment 2026

Assessment component	Weighting
<b>External assessment (4 hours 30 minutes)</b>	<b>80%</b>
<p><b>Paper 1 (1 hour 15 minutes)</b></p> <p>Source-based paper that draws from the common SL and HL core topics. Candidates answer four compulsory structured questions. (25 marks)</p>	20%
<p><b>Paper 2 (1 hour 45 minutes)</b></p> <p>Extended response paper based on the common SL and HL thematic studies. Candidates must answer <b>two</b> questions: <b>one</b> essay from section A (comprising questions from each of the thematic studies) and <b>one</b> essay from section B (comprising integrating questions). (30 marks)</p>	30%
<p><b>Paper 3 (1 hour 30 minutes)</b></p> <p>Stimulus-based paper related to the HL extension syllabus (global political challenges). Candidates must respond to three questions drawing from their researched case studies. (28 marks)</p>	30%
<b>Internal assessment (35 hours)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<p><b>Engagement project (35 hours)</b></p> <p>This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.</p> <p>Engagement with a political issue chosen by the candidate—this requires background research, planning, active engagement, and complementary research and reflection.</p> <p>Candidates must submit for assessment a written report that includes a justification, discussion of methodology, explanation of the links between the political issue and course content, discussion of the engagement activities carried out, and analysis and synthesis of the political issue and the perspectives of involved stakeholders. Candidates also formulate a recommendation for addressing the political issue. (30 marks)</p>	20%

# External assessment

## About external assessment

External assessment in the course consists of two examination papers at standard level (SL) and three examination papers at higher level (HL) that are externally set and externally marked. Examination papers allow candidates to demonstrate learning aligned to the stated AOs and the global politics syllabus. All questions on examination papers will be based on the topics contained in this guide.

### Command terms

Command terms are used in examination questions to indicate the required depth of treatment for candidate responses. There is a progression in demand from AO 1 to 3. Examination questions may use any command term from the AO level specified in the paper descriptions found in this guide.

The command terms used in examinations are indicated below and defined in the glossary.

Candidates and teachers must be familiar with command terms used in the course.

Global politics command terms		
Assessment objective (AO) and level	Command terms	Description
AO1: Knowledge and understanding	Define Describe Identify List Outline	Command terms that require candidates to demonstrate comprehension.
AO2: Application and analysis	Analyse Distinguish Explain Suggest	Command terms that require candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding to demonstrate analysis.
AO3: Evaluation and synthesis	Compare Compare and contrast Contrast Discuss Evaluate Examine Justify Recommend To what extent	Command terms that require candidates to demonstrate evaluation and synthesis.

### Relevant and accurate knowledge

Candidates are expected to support claims and responses with relevant and accurate knowledge, which can include real-world examples and cases studied as part of the course or as independent research.

When real-world examples and cases are used, candidates should not just state an example (as this is too limited) but also offer a proper explanation or contextualization, depending on the question asked.

Candidates are expected to use and apply global politics terminology consistent with relevant and accurate knowledge.

## External assessment details—SL

### Paper 1

**Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Maximum mark: 25**

**Weighting: 30%**

Paper 1 is the same for SL and HL.

This is a source-based paper focused on analysis skills and whose content is the global politics core topics, and it is composed of four sources and four structured questions. The sources may be text, images, diagrams and infographics. Candidates must answer all questions, referring to the sources and their own knowledge.

Paper 1 question structure		
Question	Assessment objective (AO)	Description
<b>Question 1</b> (3 marks)	AO1	Question 1 tests understanding of a source. This can be demonstrated, for example, by identifying specific elements present in a source or by describing or summarizing information included in a diagram or table.
<b>Question 2</b> (4 marks)	AO2	Question 2 tests the application of knowledge for the analysis of a source. This can be demonstrated, for example, by explaining a term used in a source or by explaining a claim expressed by the source.
<b>Question 3</b> (6 marks)	AO3	Question 3 tests the comparison and/or contrast of the views, ideas, claims and information presented in two of the sources.  Candidates should focus on comparing and/or contrasting specific points in the sources but may make use of their wider study of global politics to provide context, if relevant.  Candidates should organize the material into a clear, logical and coherent response. For the highest marks, a detailed running comparison and/or contrast is expected.
<b>Question 4</b> (12 marks)	AO3	Question 4 tests the evaluation of sources and synthesis of source material and previous knowledge.  Candidates should evaluate the sources and synthesize relevant evidence from them with their own knowledge about the prescribed content of the course.  Candidates should organize the material into a clear, logical and coherent response.

### Paper 2

**Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Maximum mark: 30**

**Weighting: 40%**

Paper 2 is the same for SL and HL and is an extended response paper.

The paper has two sections, and candidates answer one question from each. Section A includes questions from each of the thematic studies. Section B includes integrating questions, which allows and requires candidates to make connections across the three thematic studies as well as the core topics.

The ability to synthesize elements from the course prescribed content, key concepts and diverse contexts in an integrated way is particularly important in this paper. Even where the key concepts are not explicitly mentioned in a question, candidates should demonstrate a conceptual understanding of global politics. In their responses, candidates are invited to draw on the complexities of any relevant political concepts, depending on the arguments they put forward.

Marks are awarded for demonstrating relevant knowledge and understanding of political concepts and prescribed content, sustaining arguments, and referring to specific relevant examples and cases. Candidates are expected to examine diverse perspectives through: consideration of different views on the question; consideration of claims and counterclaims; or evaluation of the arguments they propose and the examples they use to support them.

## External assessment markbands—SL

### Paper 1

**Questions 1–3** will be marked according to an analytical markscheme developed for the specific question presented in the paper in each session.

In addition to paper-specific analytical markschemes used for all questions, the marks for **question 4** are also allocated using markbands. Within these bands, level descriptors are written as individual bullet points, and markbands are applied holistically using a best-fit approach.

#### Paper 1, question 4

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	<p>The response shows a limited understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little relevant knowledge is demonstrated.</li> <li>References to the sources are made, but they are mostly descriptive or no clear evidence is integrated in the response.</li> <li>Different perspectives are not identified.</li> </ul>
4–6	<p>The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some knowledge is demonstrated, but this is not always relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Evidence from the sources is partially integrated into the response.</li> <li>Different perspectives are identified, but not explored.</li> </ul>
7–9	<p>The response shows adequate understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated.</li> <li>There is synthesis of own knowledge and source material.</li> <li>Different perspectives are explored.</li> </ul>
10–12	<p>The response shows an in-depth understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant and accurate knowledge is used effectively throughout.</li> <li>There is effective synthesis of own knowledge and source material, with appropriate examples integrated in the response.</li> <li>Different perspectives are explored and evaluated.</li> </ul>

## Paper 2

In addition to paper-specific analytical markschemes used for all questions, the marks for paper 2 are also allocated using markbands. Within these bands, level descriptors are written as individual bullet points, and markbands are applied holistically using a best-fit approach.

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	<p>The response shows limited understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arguments are poorly structured and unclear.</li> <li>• There is little relevant knowledge present.</li> <li>• The response is descriptive or is based on unsupported generalizations.</li> </ul>
4–6	<p>The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is structured to an extent, but the organization lacks clarity or coherence.</li> <li>• There is limited justification of the claims presented.</li> <li>• Some relevant knowledge is present.</li> <li>• Some examples are mentioned, but they are not developed, or their relevance is unclear.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are not identified.</li> </ul>
7–9	<p>The response indicates an understanding of the demands of the question, but these demands are only partially addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response presents an adequate structure and organization. Arguments are clear and coherent.</li> <li>• Most of the main claims are justified.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is present.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are partly developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are identified, but not explored.</li> </ul>
10–12	<p>The response indicates that the demands of the question are understood and addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured and organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and well supported.</li> <li>• All of the main claims are justified.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated throughout the response.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are adequately developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are explored.</li> </ul>
13–15	<p>The response indicates that the demands of the question are understood and addressed, and that possible implications are considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured, balanced and effectively organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and compelling.</li> <li>• All of the main claims are justified and evaluated.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is used effectively throughout the response.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are effectively developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are explored and evaluated.</li> </ul>

## External assessment details—HL

### Paper 1

**Duration: 1 hour 15 minutes**

**Maximum mark: 25**

**Weighting: 20%**

Paper 1 is the same for SL and HL.

Please refer to the section “[External assessment details—SL](#)” for further details.

### Paper 2

**Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes**

**Maximum mark: 30**

**Weighting: 30%**

Paper 2 is the same for SL and HL and is an extended response paper.

Please refer to the section “[External assessment details—SL](#)” for further details.

### Paper 3 (HL only)

**Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes**

**Maximum mark: 28**

**Weighting: 30%**

Paper 3 is a stimulus-based paper and is focused on the HL extension global political challenges. Knowledge of course concepts, content and contexts, as well as additional research of multiple case studies, is required to address the questions properly. The stimulus may include text, data, diagrams and infographics.

In a source-based paper, candidates must identify, analyse or explain information or claims from the source. However, the main purpose of the stimulus in paper 3 is to focus candidates on a particular topic or item for analysis or promote discussion. The relevant evidence for the responses will mostly draw from the case studies candidates have researched.

HL paper 3 question structure		
Question	Assessment objective (AO)	Description
<b>Question 1</b> (3 marks)	AO2	Question 1 requires understanding and analysis of the presented stimulus, as well as knowledge on global political challenges.
<b>Question 2a</b> (4 marks)	AO2	Question 2a requires demonstration of knowledge, understanding and analysis of an identified political issue.
<b>Question 2b</b> (6 marks)	AO3	Question 2b requires a recommendation of a possible course of action or solution to the identified political issue.
<b>Question 3</b> (15 marks)	AO3	Question 3 requires synthesis and evaluation of researched case studies and global political challenges.  The question will be based on the guiding lines of inquiry for the HL extension.



# External assessment markbands—HL

## Paper 1

Paper 1 markbands are the same for SL and HL.

Please refer to the section “[External assessment markbands—SL](#)” for further details.

## Paper 2

Paper 2 markbands are the same for SL and HL.

Please refer to the section “[External assessment markbands—SL](#)” for further details.

## Paper 3

**Question 1** will be marked according to an analytical markscheme developed for the specific question presented in the paper in each session.

In addition to paper-specific analytical markschemes used for all questions, the marks for **question 2** and **question 3** are also allocated using markbands. Within these bands, level descriptors are written as individual bullet points, and markbands are applied holistically using a best-fit approach.

### Paper 3, question 2, part a

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The demands of the question are partially addressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response is mostly descriptive.</li> <li>Some knowledge of the political issue is demonstrated, but it is not all relevant or accurate.</li> </ul>
3–4	The demands of the question are addressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The response provides a clear analysis of a political issue.</li> <li>Relevant and accurate knowledge of the context is demonstrated.</li> </ul>

### Paper 3, question 2, part b

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	A recommendation is presented, but it is vague or unclear. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation does not clearly address the identified political issue.</li> </ul>
3–4	An adequate recommendation is presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation addresses the identified political issue.</li> <li>Possible challenges or implications are not considered.</li> </ul>
5–6	A clear and well-supported recommendation is presented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The recommendation addresses the identified political issue effectively.</li> <li>Possible challenges, implications or unintended consequences are considered.</li> </ul>

**Paper 3, question 3**

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–3	<p>The response shows limited understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arguments are poorly structured and unclear.</li> <li>• There is little relevant knowledge present.</li> <li>• The response is descriptive or is based on unsupported generalizations.</li> </ul>
4–6	<p>The response shows some understanding of the demands of the question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is structured to an extent, but the arguments lack clarity or coherence.</li> <li>• There is limited justification of the claims presented.</li> <li>• Some relevant knowledge is present.</li> <li>• Some examples are mentioned, but they are not developed, or their relevance is unclear.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are not identified.</li> </ul>
7–9	<p>The response indicates an understanding of the demands of the question, but these demands are only partially addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response presents an adequate structure and organization. Arguments are clear and coherent.</li> <li>• Most of the main claims are justified.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is present.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are partly developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are identified, but not explored.</li> </ul>
10–12	<p>The response indicates that the demands of the question are understood and addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured and organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and well supported.</li> <li>• All of the main claims are justified.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is demonstrated throughout the response.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are adequately developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are explored.</li> </ul>
13–15	<p>The response indicates that demands of the question are understood and addressed, and that possible implications are considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response is well structured, balanced and effectively organized. Arguments are clear, coherent and compelling.</li> <li>• All of the main claims are justified and evaluated.</li> <li>• Relevant and accurate knowledge is used effectively throughout the response.</li> <li>• Supporting examples are effectively developed.</li> <li>• Diverse perspectives are explored and evaluated.</li> </ul>

# Internal assessment

## Purpose of internal assessment

IA is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both CP candidates and DP candidates at SL and HL. It enables candidates to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. The IA should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

The IA for global politics comprises an engagement project. At both SL and HL, candidates conduct an inquiry into a political issue of their choice at a local or community level. They then produce a written report in which they: outline their research and engagement process; analyse the identified political issue; reflect on the limitations and the experiential learning as a result of undertaking the project.

Additionally, HL candidates conduct further research and produce a recommendation to address the political issue.

## Guidance and authenticity

The engagement project (SL and HL) submitted for IA must be the candidate's own work. However, it is not the intention that candidates should decide on a title or topic and be left to work on the IA component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the candidate is working on the internally assessed work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that candidates are familiar with:

- the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed
- the global politics course ethical guidelines
- the assessment criteria—candidates must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and candidates must discuss the internally assessed work. Candidates should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and candidates must not be penalized for seeking guidance. As part of the learning process, teachers should read and give advice to candidates on one draft of the work. The teacher should provide oral or written advice on how the work could be improved, but they should not edit the draft. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all candidates understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic integrity, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all candidate work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and they must explain clearly to candidates that the internally assessed work must be entirely their own. Where collaboration between candidates is permitted, it must be clear to all candidates what the difference is between collaboration and collusion.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed malpractice. Each candidate must confirm that the work is their authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a candidate has officially submitted the final version of the work, it cannot be retracted. The requirement to confirm the authenticity of work applies to the work of all candidates, not just the sample work that will be submitted to the IB for the purpose of moderation. For further details, refer to the IB publications *Academic integrity policy*, *Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and the relevant articles in the “B1 General

regulations: Diploma Programme" section in *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (updated annually).

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the candidate on the content of the work and scrutiny of one or more of the following.

- The candidate's initial proposal
- The first draft of the written work
- The references cited
- The style of writing compared with work known to be that of the candidate
- The analysis of the work by a web-based plagiarism detection service such as turnitin.com

The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the IA and the extended essay (EE).

## Group work and collaboration

Collaborative work may be undertaken in some portions of the engagement project. Particularly in settings where candidates' active engagement with the local or community context might be limited, it might be appropriate for candidates to put together collective efforts, so as not to exhaust community resources. For instance, if multiple candidates are interested in working with a particular civil society organization, it might be more effective to conduct some of the engagement activities in conjunction. This might be helpful during initial stages where candidates are exploring possible political issues to analyse or stakeholders to engage with.

However, even where collaboration might be present, it is important that the individual contributions are clearly identified and that the candidates provide a particular focus. It could be that even if they participate in a common activity as part of their respective projects, they each analyse a different political issue or they differentiate their participation. The written report should be completely individual and the candidates' own work, including any generated primary sources.

Additional guidance on collaboration while conducting the engagement project can be found in the TSM.

## Time allocation

IA is an integral part of the global politics course, contributing 30% to the final SL assessment and 20% to the final HL assessment. This weighting should be reflected in the time allocated to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required, as well as the time allocated to carry out the work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately 25 hours (SL) and 35 hours (HL) of teaching time should be allocated to the engagement project. This should include time for:

- the teacher to explain to candidates the requirements of the project and the ethical guidelines for any engagement activities
- consultation between the teacher and each candidate, e.g. to discuss initial ideas about the focus of the project, review planned engagement activities
- candidates to conduct preparatory research, plan and undertake their engagement activities, conduct complementary research, and write their report
- the teacher to review and monitor progress throughout the process (especially when candidates carry out their engagement activities), and check authenticity.

Since the engagement project requires interactions with external stakeholders, it is advised that appropriate time is reserved throughout the course for candidates to become familiar with the requirements, plan carefully and carry out their engagement activities successfully.

## Using assessment criteria for internal assessment

Assessment criteria and associated level descriptors have been identified for the IA. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although for the lower levels, failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work at SL and at HL against the criteria using the level descriptors.

- Different assessment criteria are provided for SL and HL.
- The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the work, using a best-fit approach. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.
- When assessing work, the level descriptors for each criterion should be read until a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed is reached. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the work should be chosen.
- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, the upper marks should be awarded if the work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level above. The lower marks should be awarded if the work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level below.
- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks (fractions and decimals) are not acceptable.
- Instead of pass or fail boundaries, focus should be on identifying the appropriate level descriptor for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable. The extremes should be used without hesitation if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.
- Work that attains a high level in one criterion will not necessarily attain high levels in the other criteria. Similarly, work that attains a low level in one criterion will not necessarily attain low levels in the other criteria. The overall assessment of the work should not be assumed to produce any particular distribution of marks.
- **It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to candidates.**

## Internal assessment details—SL

### Engagement project

**Duration: 25 hours**

**Maximum mark: 24**

**Weighting: 30%**

For their engagement project, candidates engage with a political issue of their choice at a local or community level through research and experiential learning. As the final deliverable, candidates are required to write a report of **maximum 2,000 words**. The report includes:

- an explanation of the project, outlining the research and engagement process
- an analysis of the political issue identified
- a justification of the engagement activities carried out
- evaluation and synthesis of the perspectives presented
- a critical reflection on the project as a learning experience.

The following are not included in the word count.

- Acknowledgments
- Contents page
- Tables of statistical data
- Diagrams or figures
- Equations, formulas and calculations
- Citations (which, if used, must be in the body of the written report\*)
- References (which, if used, must be in the footnotes/endnotes\*\*)
- Bibliography
- Appendices

\* Note that citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of the report, which is then linked to the full reference in the bibliography.

\*\* Note that footnotes/endnotes may be used for references only. Definitions of terms and quotations, if used, must be in the body of the work and are included in the word count.

## Internal assessment criteria—SL

### Overview

Criterion	Description	Marks
A	Explanation and justification	4
B	Process	3
C	Analysis and synthesis	8
D	Evaluation and reflection	6
E	Communication	3

### Criterion A: Explanation and justification

- Does the report clearly identify and explain a political issue?
- Does the report explain why the candidate decided to conduct particular engagement activities?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The report includes a limited explanation and justification of the engagement project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A political issue is identified, but not clearly explained.</li> <li>• There is a limited explanation of the importance and suitability of the project.</li> <li>• The engagement activities are described, but their relevance is not justified.</li> </ul>
3–4	The report includes an appropriate explanation and justification of the engagement project. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A political issue is identified and clearly explained.</li> <li>• There is a clear explanation of the importance and suitability of the project.</li> <li>• The engagement activities are explained, and their relevance is justified.</li> </ul>

### Criterion B: Process

- Does the report evidence a well-developed process of research and engagement?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The report evidences a limited research and engagement process.
2	The report evidences an adequate research and engagement process.
3	The report evidences a well-planned and integrated research and engagement process.

### Criterion C: Analysis and synthesis

- To what extent is the political issue analysed, with reference to the specific context of the engagement?
- To what extent does the report capture and synthesize diverse perspectives of sources and engaged stakeholders?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The report is mostly descriptive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a vague reference to relevant course concepts and content.</li> <li>• The political issue is identified, but not analysed.</li> <li>• There is no synthesis of perspectives.</li> </ul>
3–4	The report presents limited analysis and synthesis of the political issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis demonstrates a limited understanding of relevant course concepts and content.</li> <li>• Analysis of the political issue is limited.</li> <li>• There is limited synthesis of the perspectives of stakeholders and sources.</li> </ul>
5–6	The report presents an adequate analysis and synthesis of the political issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis demonstrates an adequate understanding of relevant course concepts and content.</li> <li>• The political issue is partially analysed.</li> <li>• Perspectives of stakeholders and sources are partially synthesized, but not always clear.</li> </ul>
7–8	The report presents an effective analysis and synthesis of the political issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis demonstrates a good understanding and application of relevant course concepts and content.</li> <li>• The political issue is clearly analysed.</li> <li>• There is an effective synthesis of the perspectives of involved stakeholders and sources.</li> </ul>

### Criterion D: Evaluation and reflection

- Is there an evaluation of the selected sources and the conducted engagement activities?
- Does the report evidence the candidate's critical reflection about the project as a learning experience?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	The report demonstrates limited evaluation and reflection.

Marks	Level descriptor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research and engagement activities are not evaluated.</li> <li>Personal positions and biases related to the political issue are not identified.</li> <li>There is limited reflection on the engagement project as a learning experience.</li> </ul>
3–4	<p>The report demonstrates an adequate evaluation and reflection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research and engagement activities are partially evaluated.</li> <li>Some personal positions and biases related to the political issue are identified.</li> <li>There is adequate reflection on the engagement project as a learning experience.</li> </ul>
5–6	<p>The report evidences a critical evaluation and reflection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The research and engagement activities are critically evaluated.</li> <li>Personal positions and biases related to the political issue are explained.</li> <li>There is an in-depth reflection on the engagement project as a learning experience.</li> </ul>

### Criterion E: Communication

- Are the information and points presented in the report communicated clearly?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	<p>Communication is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The organization and clarity of the report are limited and do not support understanding.</li> </ul>
2	<p>Communication is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report is adequately organized and supports understanding.</li> </ul>
3	<p>Communication is effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report is well organized and coherently supports understanding.</li> </ul>

## Internal assessment details—HL

### Engagement project

**Duration: 35 hours**

**Maximum mark: 30**

**Weighting: 20%**

For their engagement project, candidates engage with a political issue of their choice at a local or community level through research and experiential learning.

In common with the SL engagement project, candidates are required to write a report of **maximum 2,000 words** as the final deliverable. Please refer to the section “[Internal assessment details—SL](#)” for further details.

**As an extension, HL candidates carry out further research to formulate and present a separate recommendation, additional to the report, to address the political issue.**

- The recommendation must be made in response to the specific political issue identified in the report.
- The recommendation **must** also:
  - be presented as a **separate** section, in **addition** to the 2,000 words (maximum) of the report total **400 words** or less.



# Internal assessment criteria—HL

## Overview

Criterion	Description	Marks
A	Explanation and justification	4
B	Process	3
C	Analysis and synthesis	8
D	Evaluation and reflection	6
E	Communication	3
F	Recommendation	6

Assessment criteria A to E are the same for SL and HL.

Please refer to the section “[Internal assessment criteria—SL](#)” for further details.

## Criterion F: Recommendation

- Does the report include a well-supported recommendation?
- Is the recommendation presented appropriate for the analysed context?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1–2	<p>A limited recommendation is presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendation is partially supported, with limited reference to specific evidence.</li> <li>• The recommendation partly addresses the political issue with some considerations of the context studied.</li> <li>• Possible implications or challenges are not identified.</li> </ul>
3–4	<p>An adequate recommendation is presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendation is supported by relevant evidence.</li> <li>• The recommendation adequately addresses the political issue within the context studied.</li> <li>• Possible implications or challenges are identified.</li> </ul>
5–6	<p>An effective recommendation is presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendation is well supported by relevant and specific evidence.</li> <li>• The recommendation effectively addresses the political issue within the context studied.</li> <li>• Possible implications or challenges are explained.</li> </ul>

## Glossary of command terms

### Command terms for global politics

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms will be used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an argument in a specific way.

Command term	Assessment objective (AO) level	Definition
<b>Analyse</b>	AO2	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
<b>Compare</b>	AO3	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Compare and contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Contrast</b>	AO3	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
<b>Define</b>	AO1	Give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or physical quantity.
<b>Describe</b>	AO1	Give a detailed account.
<b>Discuss</b>	AO3	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
<b>Distinguish</b>	AO2	Make clear the differences between two or more concepts or items.
<b>Evaluate</b>	AO3	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
<b>Examine</b>	AO3	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
<b>Explain</b>	AO2	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
<b>Identify</b>	AO1	Provide an answer from a number of possibilities.
<b>Justify</b>	AO3	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
<b>List</b>	AO1	Give a sequence of brief answers with no explanation.
<b>Outline</b>	AO1	Give a brief account or summary.
<b>Recommend</b>	AO3	Present an advisable course of action with appropriate supporting evidence/reason in relation to a given situation, problem or issue.
<b>Suggest</b>	AO2	Propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer.

Command term	Assessment objective (AO) level	Definition
<b>To what extent</b>	AO3	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.

# Bibliography

The principal works used to inform the curriculum review are listed below. It is not an exhaustive list and does not include all the literature available: judicious selection was made in order to better advise and guide teachers. This bibliography is not a list of recommended textbooks.

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