



THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AT SALEM

Approach and Course Overview





Building character

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The IB at Salem

Salem has offered the IB Diploma Programme since 1992 and has been a pioneer in the German educational landscape. Over the years, continuity and growth have shaped a unique educational experience, integrating the IB with the German Abitur. This interaction has fostered an authentically bilingual environment, for both students and teachers, with many of our staff proficient in both systems. The holistic nature of the IB, particularly through CAS, aligns closely with Salem's educational philosophy—unsurprising given that Kurt Hahn played a role in the IB's development. The shared commitment to cultivating responsible, civic-minded learners unites Salem and the IB.

From an initial cohort of just five students, the Salem IB family has grown to an average of 50 students per year group, supported by an IB staffroom with over 30 members. The teaching infrastructure is fully integrated with the German Abitur, with classrooms and equipment shared between both systems for significant mutual benefit. The school year is structured to accommodate the IB's particularly intense phases, while also encouraging students to develop effective time management skills amid the wealth of opportunities Salem offers.

Salem's IB results consistently exceed the global average, with many students achieving outstanding outcomes each year. Graduates progress to prestigious universities, colleges, and gap year programs that are highly competitive, unique, or both. This success stems from students discovering and embracing their potential through the combined impact of Salem's boarding school environment and the IB programme—ultimately, however, it is their own dedication and hard work that drive achievement.



IB Diploma Programme Overview



IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

IB I + II = Grades 11 + 12



Undertaking the IB Diploma Programme

The IB Learner Profile defines the attributes of IB Diploma candidates: they are young people prepared to embark on a multifaceted journey of personal and intellectual growth. They develop into thinkers, communicators, and risk-takers—becoming knowledgeable, principled, and open-minded individuals. These qualities align closely with Salem’s traditional educational aims. Both the IB and Salem emphasize students actively ‘opting in,’ committing to the values of the school and the programme, and forging their own path toward a self-determined vision of success.

A desire to experience boarding school life, earn top grades for a future career, or improve English proficiency alone is not enough to sustain the commitment required for the demanding two years of the IB Diploma.

Even students who have excelled at the top of their class in middle school may find themselves in a more competitive academic environment. The full diploma follows a pre-university, analytical approach, where the highest grades can only be attained through authentic ability, self-discipline, and independent hard work—not merely through mechanical preparation, step-by-step instruction, or intensive tutoring.

Furthermore, the IB is a rigorous academic system that maintains strict grading standards, as it is criteria-based rather than subject to grade inflation. The global IB pass rate is approximately 80%, and parents and students should carefully consider whether the full Diploma Programme or the IB Certificates route is the most suitable option.

Success in the IB requires a self-driven passion for learning and personal development. Key passing conditions include achieving at least 24 points overall, with a minimum of 12 points in Higher Level subjects and at least 9 points in Standard Level subjects. These criteria serve as checkpoints throughout IB1 to assess whether a student is adequately prepared for the challenges of IB2.

Additional indicators that a student may need to repeat a year include falling behind in CAS, struggling with the Extended Essay, or showing a general lack of readiness for IB2—such as failing to meet internal deadlines for assignments or missing lessons without valid excuses.

Your children are not your children.
They are sons and daughters of life’s longing for itself.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

Kahlil Gibran



Diploma Programme

Extended Essay (EE)

The assignment

The Extended Essay is a huge and often very rewarding step towards academic proficiency for our students and they are accompanied throughout. In line with IB requirements, we follow an internal calendar from the first introduction in February of Year 1 through the choice of subject, supervisor and topic to the pre-summer draft deadline and the final submission in the autumn of Year 2. While cooperation between student and supervisor is at the core of EE success, we also offer workshops on how to organize data and how to properly reference one's research at appropriate stages of the process.

The method

After defining a research question in a chosen subject, the student develops a response based on well supported argument and analysis. The essay follows academic convention, comprising Introduction, Main Body, Conclusion, Bibliography and if appropriate an Appendix. The essay also follows academic standards in its rigour regarding authentic individual scholarship and the absolute negation of collusion (including parental involvement) and plagiarism. Assessment is external and based on the criteria – both general and subject-specific – in the Extended Essay Guide that is issued to the students.

To what extent did the Corona virus affect the service industry in Überlingen from December 2019 to mid-2020?

ECONOMICS

To what extent are different mathematical pendulum motion and period approximations applicable to real-world situations?

PHYSICS

How did the encounter with the Mongol armies shape the development of early Russian weaponry and tactics?

HISTORY

What different perceptions of death can be identified in the poetry of John Donne?

ENGLISH

Extended Essay topics by recent Salem graduates.

Overall, the EE process is guided by the EE Coordinator, by experienced members of staff acting as individual supervisors and by our school librarian, who specifically introduces the students to referencing methods and styles and helps with the sourcing of specific requests. The IB Coordinator also becomes involved if students struggle so that their EE might become a failing condition.

The final school deadline is set just prior to most of the university application deadlines, as it is our policy not to process university applications unless this most demanding of all Diploma assignments, a true test of self-organization and intellectual curiosity, has been brought to the requisite conclusion.



Diploma Programme

Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

The content

In this technological age we are constantly bombarded by knowledge from different sources - from school to Instagram. It is often stated that this is a **'post-truth'** age where people have **'had enough of experts'** but we need somehow to **separate fact from 'fake news'**. Plato argued that knowledge is **'justified, true belief'** - but how can we believe anything today, let alone successfully justify our beliefs to others?

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is designed to help navigate this brave new world. It is at the core of the IB Diploma and explores the conceptual frameworks of the subjects studied in the Diploma, asking **reflective and critical** questions about the value of the knowledge gained. Put simply, it asks, ***"What does this subject help us understand? How much should we trust what it tells us? How can the knowledge within help us progress?"***

The TOK course helps students develop **analytical and evaluative skills** essential for successful completion of university qualifications. The concepts introduced and insights gained will also be necessary for successful completion of compulsory assignments like the Extended Essay and subject Internal Assessments. Becoming aware of, and capable of, analysing *how* and *why* we think is a demanding process, but it is also greatly rewarding!

In the course of IB Year 1, we cover key aspects of TOK, looking at various ways we interact with knowledge. We explore the role of language, observation, reason and emotion in the context of the themes **Knowledge and the Knower, Knowledge and Technology** and **Knowledge and Politics**. We look at how these relate to **Areas of Knowledge** like **Mathematics, History and the Sciences**. The first year is completed by the internal assessment, the TOK exhibition where each student analyses how three chosen objects illustrate a prompt.

In the second year, the focus is the successful completion of the externally assessed essay assignment. The internal assessment contributes one third of the final grade, external assessment two thirds.

The method

The course is taught in normal classes with an assigned teacher, in group activities with your peers and in plenary sessions that are team-taught by all TOK teachers together. The group activities allow exploration of the huge range of different experiences and world views the student population represents, the plenary sessions enable the year group to experience the different approaches and areas of expertise of the TOK teachers and occasionally other subject teachers as well, while the seminars enable teachers and students to get to know each other in in-depth discussions and closer scrutiny of an area of study. All should help to develop the skills necessary to tackle the assessments.

The TOK course is usually completed by the end of February in the second year and the assessments are marked or moderated externally. Theory of Knowledge is often especially valued in retrospect as it prepares an analytical mind-set prerequisite for any challenging degree course.

“Can there be knowledge
without proof?”

A typical TOK essay question.



Diploma Programme

Creativity, Activities, Service (CAS)

Students build their own Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) programme by participating in a minimum of one CAS Experience for each area for an 18 month period (September in IB1 - February in IB2).

- **Creativity:** artistic and other experiences that involve creative thinking, such as ceramics, sculpture, theatre workshop, debating, maths club, jazz band, orchestra etc.
- **Activity:** a wide variety of sports courses encouraging physical exertion which contribute to a healthy lifestyle and therefore complements our students' academic work.
- **Service:** unpaid, voluntary interaction with others, either at school or in the local community, that is of learning benefit to the student whilst respecting the rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved. A wide range are offered including Salem's traditional 'Dienste': fire brigade, technical assistance, nautical service and Red Cross, as well as sustainability, social services, music service etc.

Using ManageBac, an on-line data base, students develop their own CAS portfolio detailing their involvement in their CAS Experiences. Here they are expected to reflect on and evaluate their participation and development within each of their chosen CAS Experiences on a fortnightly basis, taking into account the 7 CAS Learning Outcomes, all of which must be covered at least once across the breadth of the activities over the 18 months.

- **LO 1:** Identify their own strengths and develop areas for growth.
- **LO 2:** Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process.
- **LO 3:** Demonstrate how to initiate and plan a CAS Experience.

- **LO 4:** Show commitment and perseverance in CAS Experiences.
- **LO 5:** Demonstrate the skills and recognise the benefits of working collaboratively.
- **LO 6:** Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance.
- **LO 7:** Recognise and consider the ethics and choices of action.

CAS Project

All students also plan and participate in a personal CAS Project for a minimum of six weeks. This must have a service element at its core and also include creativity or activity, or both. The project should be a real, purposeful activity, with significant outcomes and must be personally challenging to the student. The planning of the project must show thoughtful consideration and personal goal setting as well as planned outcomes. The final evaluation should be a reflection against the CAS Learning Outcomes. The CAS Project must be completed by 30 April in IB2.

Students are supported through their CAS programme by the CAS Advisor / CAS Coordinator. Students must fulfil all CAS requirements in order to pass the IB Diploma.

“Pursuing the IB is not simply about academic learning. It is about learning from experiences and rising to a challenge within an holistic education.”

CAS Illustrated, Global interpretations of CAS, 2012



Group 1: Language A

English

English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature aims to develop skills in textual analysis. The course draws on a mixture of both literary and non-literary texts. It encourages students to reflect on the role context plays in shaping meaning in a text and in the audience's response to a text. Teachers are given flexibility to construct the course in a manner which reflects the students' and the teachers' interests. Non-literary texts can include works such as advertising campaigns, newspaper articles and opinion pieces, speeches and a range of mass media. The analysis students undertake of these texts is informed by ideas such as the relationship language has to power or gender or race. It looks at issues such as societal taboos or how language develops over both time and place. The literary texts chosen for study reflect a range of genres and historical periods and are examined in the form of close critical study, attention to literary devices and the contexts of both production and reception.

English Literature

The English Literature course introduces students to the foundations of literary study through a variety of texts in English from different periods, styles, and genres. The course aims for students to develop an ability to reflect critically on their reading through the study of a wide range of literature. Works are studied in their literary and cultural contexts, through close study of individual texts and passages, and by considering a range of critical approaches. In view of the international nature of the IB and its commitment to intercultural understanding, the Literature course does not limit the study of works to the products of one culture or the cultures covered by any one language. The study of works in translation is also important in introducing students to other cultural perspectives through the study of literature. The response to the study of literature is through oral and written communication, thus enabling students to develop and refine their command of the English language.



Group 1: Language A

German A Language and Literature

The content

What do poems and advertising have in common? Is the television news coverage really objective? Does the word 'love' in a play written 2,000 years ago have the same meaning as in a play of our time? Do dictators and democratic politicians work with the same strategies of persuasion?

In this course completely different texts are looked at. Approximately one half of the time is taken up with literature. In Standard Level, students read four Literary works (Higher Level: six), whereby the selection also depends on the requirements and interests of the course. The other half of the lesson time is spent analysing non-literary texts such as newspaper articles, advertising, speeches. The relationship between reader, author and text and the reader's active role in creating meaning are pivotal.

Current topics, such as the reporting on the climate crisis, or the discussions about the impact of digital media are also included in the course. The students' own individual interests can also be taken into consideration here. Apart from texts, the analysis of pictures and films also plays an important role.

The method

The course is suitable for students with German as a first or second language. The ability to read fluently and express oneself is a prerequisite, and the participants should have at least already had experience in German as a school subject. Being able to speak and write without making mistakes is not necessary, so students with German as a second language can also pass the course, if they are prepared to work at their language abilities. It is crucial that students have a strong interest in reading, the readiness to do research and written work independently and enjoy taking part in critical discussions on literary and topical texts.

In addition to the teacher's input, discussions and presentations play an important role during the course. Going on outings together to the theatre or cinema complement our work. Homework consists of preparatory reading, online research, independent work on the respective topics and writing essays and analyses. The results are obtained by assessing the homework, oral presentations and tests in the format of the examination papers. Participating in two group 2 courses in different languages constitutes the basis for acquiring the bilingual diploma.



Group 1: Language A

Self-taught mother tongue

The content

Salem International College has supported the IB policy of mother-tongue entitlement since the IB programme was established at the school. Over the past few years we have offered Italian, Korean, Chinese, Greek, Lithuanian and Persian, just to name a few.

Following the IB philosophy, we believe that it is important to promote “respect for the literary heritage of a student’s home language” and to provide “an opportunity for students to continue to develop oral and writing skills in their mother tongue while studying in a different language of instruction”.

(Adapted from the Guidance for the support of other tongue in the Diploma Programme)

This course is offered only at standard level.

The method

Students are expected to read a selection of texts in their self-taught language as well as some works in translation. In total, students are expected to read 7 works over the two years chosen from a list of authors that the IB has created, called the Prescribed reading list.

- a minimum of two works studied linked to each of the areas of exploration of the course
- coverage of at least three of the four literary forms (poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction)
- coverage of at least three periods
- a minimum of four works originally written in the language A being studied
- a minimum of three works translated
- works from a minimum of three places as defined by the Prescribed reading list in relation to the language A being studied, covering at least two different continents.

Role of the school/supervisor

Students receive the Literature Guides from the school, as well as additional support material published by the IB. There is a coordinator who meets and supports the students on a regular basis and monitors their progress, gives advice on the nature of all assessments and supervises the individual oral assignment.

Role of the student

Students are expected to attend regular meetings with the coordinator and meet school deadlines. They must find a tutor who will support them throughout the course. The tutor should be familiar with the new IB programme and should be in contact with the student on a regular basis (skype, email, telephone...).



Group 2: Language B

German B

The target group

The German B course should be chosen by students who are not beginners in German (not on levels A1, A2) and who are not confident enough to choose one of the German A courses which are suited for native speakers and learners with very good language skills (C1, C2). Students with B1 should take German B as a Standard Level course, B2 students could, C1 students should choose the Higher Level course.

The content

SL and HL largely follow the same syllabus but differ in teaching hours (4 and 6 hours per week respectively), in the depth of coverage, the level of differentiation, the demands of assessment and the assessment criteria. Both groups will improve their proficiency and gain some insight into cultural, political and social phenomena of today's German speaking world. The five topics studied in SL and HL courses are: Identities, Experiences, Human Ingenuity, Social Organisation and Sharing the Planet. Sources used are a German B textbook, as well as films and current media texts. In addition to these five topics, HL students will read two pieces of German literature as well as some short stories.

The method

Teaching methods and the choice of course material are focused on developing the following skills: receptive skills cover understanding authentic, spoken German (radio, film and internet) and reading a wide range of written texts such as newspaper articles, letters, brochures, blogs and literature. Productive skills cover speaking and writing on every-day matters, as well as on more sophisticated topics. Students will learn how to produce different text types by applying different registers, stylistic devices and structuring techniques. Interactive skills will be given special attention: students are expected to develop linguistic sensitivity in spontaneous communication as well as awareness of intercultural dos and don'ts.

The assessment (IB exam) consists of 3 reading and 3 listening comprehension texts (Paper 2, 50% of mark) as well as a written task (Paper 1, 25%). There also is an individual oral presentation followed by a discussion which is marked by the teacher and moderated externally (25%). For SL students, this is based on a visual stimulus, for HL students on literary extracts from texts covered in the course.



Group 2: Language B

German Ab Initio

The content

The ab initio course enables learners to express themselves adequately in German in everyday situations. This may include shopping (food, beverages, clothes), travelling, living in German surroundings, hobbies and leisure. The course is suited to beginners without prior knowledge, but who interested in learning a new language that is being spoken all around them.

Communicating in German will be an important aspect of the course, but short texts such as letters, e-mails, interviews and stories will also be read and produced. Listening comprehension is also practiced, especially the ability to filter accurate information from spoken German.

The method

The language of instruction is German. Grammar is conveyed visually, supported by explanations in English. Most tasks and command terms are given in both German and English in the first year, purely in German in the second year. Learning outcomes are recorded and consolidated, for example, through visual representation (posters) created by the students themselves.

Living in a German environment facilitates both the acquisition and the consolidation of new vocabulary. New terms and expressions can then be applied using structures acquired in the lessons. The boarding school context makes it possible to leave the classroom and instantly apply what has been learned.



Group 2: Language B

Spanish B

Both Standard and Higher Level are aimed at students with 3-5 years of language experience who wish to improve their proficiency and gain some insight into cultural, political and social phenomena of today's Hispanophone world. As a rule, Spanish courses are of a very privileged size; it is therefore expected that students play a creative part in class and are ready to communicate.

The content

SL and HL largely follow the same syllabus but differ in teaching hours (4 and 6 hours a week respectively), in the depth of coverage, the level of differentiation, the demands of assessment and the assessment criteria.

There are five prescribed themes to be explored:

- Identities
- Experiences
- Human ingenuity
- Social organization
- Sharing the planet

The themes allow students to compare the target language and cultures to other languages with which they are familiar. The themes also provide opportunities for students to make connections to other disciplinary areas in the DP. And all these prescribed themes must be addressed equally in the Language B courses.

In addition to these five themes, HL students will read two literary works originally written in the target language.

The method

This course aims to develop students' intercultural understanding of the Spanish speaking regions by looking at different aspects of everyday life as well as current issues. During the two years, students will develop the necessary skills to understand and use Spanish in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes.

Teaching methods and materials of the course are aimed at developing:

- *Receptive skills*: understanding of written and spoken personal and professional works on topics of interest.
- *Productive skills*: writing texts of a variety of purposes and making oral presentations on topics of interest. (Students will learn how to produce different types of texts using different registers, stylistic devices, etc.)
- *Interactive skills*: initiating and maintaining conversations and discussions.

The written exam consists of three papers and an individual oral examination by the student, followed by a conversation and/or discussion with the examiner.



Group 2: Language B

French B

The target group

The French B course is open to students who have several years of experience of the language (B1 or above), or who are not at the level required to study one of the French A courses which are suited for native speakers or students with advanced language skills (C1 or above). Students with the B1 qualification should take French B as a Standard Level course which is also possible for B2 qualified students. C1 students should pursue the Higher Level course.

The content

SL and HL largely follow the same syllabus but differ in teaching hours (4 and 6 hours a week respectively), in the depth of coverage, the level of differentiation, the demands of assessment and the assessment criteria. Both groups will improve their proficiency and gain some insight into cultural, political, and social phenomena of today's Francophone world. The five topics studied in SL and HL courses are:

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

The themes also provide opportunities for students to make connections to other areas of the Diploma Program. Our sources will be a French B textbook as well as films and current media texts. In addition to these five topics, HL students will read two pieces of literature originally written in the target language.

The method

Teaching methods and the choice of course material are focused on developing the following skills:

- *Receptive skills* cover understanding authentic, spoken French (radio, film and internet) and reading a wide range of written texts such as newspaper articles, letters, brochures, blogs and literature.
- *Productive skills* cover speaking and writing on everyday matters as well as on more sophisticated topics. Students will learn how to produce different text types by applying different registers, stylistic devices and structuring techniques.
- *Interactive skills* will be given special attention: students are expected to develop linguistic sensitivity in spontaneous communication as well as awareness of intercultural dos and don'ts.

The assessment (IB exam) consists of 3 reading and 3 listening comprehension texts (Paper 2, 50% of mark) as well as a written task (Paper 1, 25%). There also is an individual oral presentation followed by a discussion which is marked by the teacher and moderated externally (25%). For SL students, this is based on a visual stimulus, for HL students on literary extracts from texts covered in the course.



Group 2: Language B

English B

The target group

The English B course is offered at Higher Level only. It is open to students who have several years of experience of the language, however, are not native English speakers.

The content

English B HL classes meet for 6 lessons a week. Students will improve their proficiency and gain some insight into cultural, political, and social phenomena of today's Anglophone world. Like all Language B subjects, the five Themes studied in the English B HL course are:

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

The themes also provide opportunities for students to make connections to other areas of the Diploma Program. Our sources will be an online interactive textbook (Kognity), an English B textbook, as well as films and current media texts. In addition to these five themes, HL students will read two pieces of literature originally written in the target language.

The method

Teaching methods and the choice of course material are focused on developing the following skills:

- *Receptive skills* cover understanding authentic, spoken English (podcasts, radio, film and internet) and reading a wide range of written texts such as newspaper articles, letters, brochures, blogs and literature.
- *Productive skills* cover speaking and writing on everyday matters as well as on more sophisticated topics. Students will learn how to produce different text types by applying different registers, stylistic devices and structuring techniques.
- *Interactive skills* will be given special attention: students are expected to develop linguistic sensitivity in spontaneous communication as well as awareness of intercultural dos and don'ts.

The assessment consists of 3 externally assessed IB exams: 1 written task (25%), 1 exam containing 3 reading tasks (25%) and 1 listening comprehension containing 3 tasks (25%). The English B Internal Assessment task is an individual oral presentation followed by a question/answer discussion which is marked by the teacher and moderated externally (25%). For HL students this is based on literary extracts from texts covered in the course.



Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Business Management

The content

The Business Management syllabus consists of five core topics: introduction to business management, human resource management, finance and accounts, marketing and operations management. Each of the topics build upon each other and are linked with the four concepts underpinning this course (change, creativity, ethics and sustainability). Furthermore, these are related to business management contexts (case studies) in order to provide a holistic or 'big picture' overview of business management.

Students learn to analyse, discuss and evaluate business activities at local, national and international levels. Correspondingly, students learn tools and techniques as well as business management strategies in order to think critically about business organisations.

The business management course is designed to meet the current and future needs of students who want to develop their knowledge of business content, concepts and tools to assist with business decision-making. Future employees, business leaders, entrepreneurs or social entrepreneurs need to be confident, creative and compassionate as change agents for business in an increasingly interconnected global marketplace.

The method

The course does not require any previous knowledge of business or commerce but an awareness of business topics, current affairs, international relations and commercial trends is strongly desired. Students will work from approved textbooks, but further readings are also prescribed. Classes take the form of a seminar in which students are expected to have read pre-assigned material from the textbook and take notes. Students should be prepared to evaluate case studies and work on business management related exercises in class. Students are also expected to make formal presentations and actively participate in class discussions.

Class work and oral contributions are vital to the learning process and assist in the teacher's assessment of the student's progression. Students are expected and required to complete regular homework in order to consolidate learning. Furthermore, written work is supplemented by regular tests and exams, some of which take place under IB conditions.

Students who do not have any interest in business, who are not considering a career in business, who are not prepared to research business related to the syllabus or are not self-disciplined are not encouraged to take this course.



Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Economics

The content

The Economics syllabus consists of four parts: Introduction to Economics, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and the Global Economy. Each part is integrated into the course over 18 months so that students have a comprehensive understanding of the basic concepts and economic organization.

The course focuses on the global nature of economics with attention to current events. Economics is a dynamic subject with many interfaces to other disciplines such as history, politics, science, and psychology.

The course's emphasis is to ensure that students understand that economics both explains most world events - from pandemics to global warming - and offers many of the best solutions to the world's dilemmas. Economics will help to explain some of the powerful international forces that will shape our collective, global future.

The method

The course does not require any previous knowledge of economics, but does demand a high level of awareness of the world outside of school and a keen interest in current affairs, international relations and global political trends. We work from a standard text book but this alone is not enough for success on the course. The student will be required to read extensively using journals such as the Economist and Newsweek and a quality newspaper (New York Times, Financial Times) or web site (BBC, CNN).

Classes take the form of a seminar in which students are expected to make formal presentations, contribute to informal, spontaneous class discussion, participate in simulations and debates, and engage in lectures. The class work and oral contributions are as important as the written work in the learning process and are an important part of the assessment process. Students are expected to complete regular homework to a high standard - this may take the form of written work which is graded, or preparation for the next session of class work. The ongoing written and class work forms the basis of the teacher assessment and this is supplemented by regular tests and exams, some of which take place under IB conditions.

Students who have a broad interest in economics and the world around them, are prepared to challenge themselves with the material, work on their own to extend their understanding, and want a deeper awareness of the social and economic impacts that decisions have on others, are encouraged to take Economics.



Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Global Politics

The content

The Content

The DP Global Politics course is designed for students who seek to understand how the world they live in operates, what drives change, and what resists it. It draws from a wide range of disciplinary traditions within political science, international relations, the social sciences, and the humanities. Students critically engage with contemporary political issues and challenges that interest them, developing a deeper awareness of the complex world around them.

The course focuses on **power and sovereignty, rights and justice, development and sustainability, and peace and conflict**.

Developing an understanding of **power** is especially critical for analysing how political systems work and how they evolve. Students encounter the complexity and nuances of power from the outset, building their understanding of how it functions across interconnected dimensions.

Real-world case studies and examples form the backbone of the course, helping students ground abstract political concepts in practical, relatable contexts. Through these case studies, students compare local, national, and global political activities and explore the transnational nature of many political issues. This approach fosters connections with other subjects in the individuals and societies group, enriching students' interdisciplinary learning. Teachers explicitly develop students' thinking and research skills, including comprehension, text analysis, transfer, and the use of primary sources. The course encourages students to critically engage with new and diverse perspectives, understand complex global challenges, and reflect on their role as active global citizens.

The Method

Understand key political concepts—**power and sovereignty, rights and justice, development and sustainability, and peace and conflict**—and critically engage with contemporary political issues in a range of contexts.

- Develop an understanding of the local, national, international, and global dimensions of political activity and how they interact.
- Analyse the complexity and interconnectedness of political systems, especially the role and influence of power across multiple levels.
- Understand, appreciate, and critically evaluate a variety of perspectives and approaches in global politics.
- Interpret and analyse competing and contestable claims regarding political issues and debates, fostering independent and critical thought.

“Using at least three sources and your own knowledge, evaluate the claim that soft power is the preferred tool for states in 21st-century world politics.”

A typical Paper 1-style question .

“Evaluate the claim that humanitarian intervention is a justifiable intrusion into the sovereignty of a state?”

A typical Paper 2-style question .



Group 3: Individuals and Societies

Modern History

The content

This course approaches modern **world history** thematically, e.g. by comparing British and American industrialisation, by looking at causes, practices and effects of wars, origins and developments of authoritarian states (Paper 2).

We will specifically concentrate on moves to global war with the examples of Japanese, Italian and German expansionism in the 1930s (prescribed subject for Paper 1, sources).

In the **Higher Level** extension, we extensively study one hundred and fifty years of **European history** beginning with the formation of the nation-states Italy and Germany (Paper 3).

“Discuss the role of technological developments in the outcome of two twentieth century wars“

A typical Modern History exam question.

The method

In class we work with different text books for different units as we go through 19th century Europe and dominantly 20th century world history. Students prepare for every class by reading, researching, essays, diagrams, analysing sources and note taking. In the group we develop structures, reflect on terminology and put the topic into a wider context and compare different views of the same event. We draw conclusions and thus create a picture of the past. Students' work also includes presentations and a Historical Investigation of 2200 words in the second year.

For constant revision students write class tests and mock examinations practicing combining detailed knowledge with analytical abstraction under time pressure in their essays.

Students keep a binder with sections of all units including their notes, revision sheets and homework.

Students who choose this course need to like independent reading and thinking and, as history is individual and collective memory, they must remember and store details to be able to identify links or red threads, to develop categories that go beyond the unique case and are basis for a shared understanding of yesterday and today.



Group 3: Individuals and Societies / Group 4: Science (Interdisciplinary Subject)

Environmental Systems and Societies

- **An interdisciplinary course counting either as Individuals & Societies (Group 3) or Experimental Science (Group 4)**
- **Available at Standard Level and Higher Level**

- Conservation and Biodiversity
- Pollution Management
- Climate Change
- Environmental Value Systems

Course principles

Through studying environmental systems and societies (ESS) students are provided with a coherent perspective of the interrelationships between environmental systems and societies; one that enables them to adopt an informed personal response to the wide range of pressing environmental issues that they will inevitably come to face. Students are encouraged to develop skills of evaluation in respect of the scientific, ethical and socio-political aspects of these issues.

The course is intended to be accessible to students with no specific previous knowledge of science or geography. However, it aims to foster an international perspective, awareness of specific local and global environmental concerns and an understanding of scientific methods. This means that a preparatory curriculum that shares these aims would provide a useful context.

A further important aspect of the ESS course is hands-on work in the laboratory and/or in the field. In addition there is an emphasis on case studies in which the principles of the course are reflected. Case studies encourage students to develop skills of collating information, comparing different sources and weighing their relative reliability and significance.

Core topics

- Systems and Models
- The Ecosystem
- Human Population, Carrying Capacity and Resource Use

Assessment model

- External assessment consists of two written papers and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate an understanding through the application, use, synthesis, analysis and evaluation of environmental issues, information, concepts, methods, techniques and explanations.
- An Internal assessment task accounts for 25 % (SL) or 20% (HL) of the final grade. This involves the completion of an individual investigation of an ESS research question that has been designed and implemented by the student. The investigation is submitted as a written report.

Typical questions

1. Loss of biodiversity threatens human wellbeing*
 - a. Explain how human well-being is threatened by the loss of biodiversity.
 - b. Evaluate the role of local support, government agencies and research in the protection of a named protected area you have studied.
 - c. Evaluate species-based conservation as an approach for preserving biodiversity and suggest why trophy hunting (i.e. hunting animals for sport) may represent an acceptable method of achieving this goal.
2.
 - a. Suggest reasons for the distribution of acid precipitation.
 - b. Explain why the effect of acid deposition is regional rather than global.

* Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005



Group 4: Science

Physics

The content

Physics seeks to explain the universe, from the very smallest particles (quarks, leptons and bosons) to the vast distances between galaxies. This course allows students to both develop practical skills and techniques and increase their facility in the use of mathematics, which is the language of physics. It also allows students to develop interpersonal skills, and information and communication technology competence essential to modern scientific endeavour.

Core topics studied by all students include Mechanics, Thermal Physics, Waves, Fields as well as some Quantum Physics. Additional Higher Level material consists of Rotational Dynamics, more advanced Wave Phenomena, Gravitational and Electric Fields, Electromagnetic Induction, Relativity, and Quantum and Nuclear Physics.

The method

All students of Physics need to be familiar with a range of mathematical techniques, including graphing, algebra, trigonometry and geometry, especially in the form of vectors. Calculus is not compulsory but definitely aids understanding. It is also helpful if students have already undertaken Physics in Middle school. As with all Experimental Sciences, the use of current technology is expected. This not only includes standard commercial graphing, word-processing, database and spreadsheet software, but also data-logging and sensing technology. Approximately one fifth of the Experimental Sciences assessment is undertaken internally, and this is exclusively laboratory-based research and reporting. Higher level Physics is frequently a prerequisite to gain entry to engineering and physical science courses. The analytical skills developed by Physics students are highly respected by universities and useful in all occupations. Medicine, law and business schools frequently give extra credit to students who have completed Physics at this level.

“Education’s purpose is
to replace an empty mind with
an open one.”

Malcolm Forbes



Group 4: Science

Chemistry

The content

Chemistry is an essential prerequisite for degree courses such as medicine, biological science and environmental science. Both the Higher and Standard Level courses allow students to experience the wonder of the micro-world of atoms and molecules that makes up the fabric of the universe, while remaining true to the IB Learner Profile. The Chemistry programme allows students to further develop their problem-solving and analytical skills. It also provides opportunities for the students to become more aware of the moral, ethical, social, economic, and environmental implications of using science and technology. The syllabus covers physical chemistry, inorganic chemistry, and organic chemistry, and each major area is further subdivided into topics. There are links to other topics within the Chemistry programme, as well as overlap with the other Experimental Sciences. There is a core of material that is common to both levels, while Higher Level students will delve further and deeper into each of the topics.

The important thing is
not to stop questioning.

Albert Einstein

The method

As with the other Experimental Sciences, there is a significant practical programme worth 20% of the final grade. The practical programme is designed to develop skills and techniques which include the planning, performing, and evaluating of a self-designed experiment. Students will be required to work independently at times, and with other students at various times throughout the programme. The major collaborative project is called the Collaborative Science Project, and this involves students from all science disciplines working together for several days in smaller groups to investigate an aspect of a larger problem. This allows students to appreciate different approaches and helps to reinforce the idea that each science is linked to each other, and that no science is, in and of itself, an island.

Additionally, in the Experimental Sciences, there is a requirement for students to develop their information and communication technology skills, and to apply this in their practical work. Skills such as extracting information from a database, using spreadsheets, graphing data and analysing the graphs, computer simulations, and data logging are an integral part of a modern chemistry programme, and, thus, emphasized in our practical scheme of work. The final assessment, as in the other Experimental Science, consists of three examination papers, worth 80% of the final grade, and the internally assessed practical programme, worth 20%. This course is offered at both Standard and Higher Level. In the Higher Level, there are more mathematical problems to be solved. As a result, students who struggle with Mathematics and its concepts would likely be better suited to the Standard Level course.



Group 4: Science

Biology

The content

The syllabus in Biology reflects the major current areas of investigation in the subject including gene and biotechnology, biochemistry, human physiology, ecology and evolution. The course provides a comprehensive foundation for further studies in the biological and medical sciences at university. This is made possible both by the course content and also by the investigative practical approach to the subject encouraged by the IB Organisation.

The subject is offered at both standard (four lessons per week) and higher level (six lessons per week).

“What is the sequence of the amino Acids that is being translated from the following mRNA sequence 5’AUGGGUGCUUAUUGGUAA3’?”

A typical Biology exam question.

The method

The course does not require a great deal of previous experience in the subject but students must be motivated and have well developed abilities to think scientifically. They should be interested in the natural world and be interested in discovering how it functions. Students should enjoy analysing problems and be capable of applying existing knowledge to unique situations. They must also be well organised and able to learn independently.

Like all IB science subjects Biology contains a significant practical component. This encourages the development of experimental skills, planning and conducting investigations as well as collaboration with fellow students. The practical aspect of the course culminates in the interdisciplinary Collaborative Science Project and the Individual Investigation, the latter being worth 20% of the final grade. We are able to take advantage of technical expertise outside the classroom when we visit Novartis in Basel for a workshop in applied genetics.

Computer literacy is developed through the use of data-logging equipment, databases, simulations and spreadsheet analysis. Statistical methods are also taught and used throughout the course.

Assessment of progress is achieved through homework tasks and class tests. These, together with end of year and mock exams, are intended as preparation for the final exams in May.



Group 4: Science

Computer Science

The content

Once upon a time, joining a Computer Science course meant learning how to operate a computer. Nowadays, we know that children often have better computer skills than their parents. So, what are we doing in class these days?

During the course, we try to understand how a computer works; what happens behind the user interface – at different levels.

With regard to the Hardware, we start by setting up basic logic gates from single electronic components and move on to the different modules within a computer, including their interactions, to network architectures, and the considerations involved when designing a whole IT system for a client.

With regard to the Software, we initially learn to understand and apply simple algorithms. As we are acquiring sound programming skills in *Java*, we develop increasingly complex program structures. Finally, we go through the whole design and development process of an individual “customer tailored” software project, which forms the practical Internal Assessment component required by every IB Science subject. Using Java as an example, we are able to appreciate the advantages of programming strategies like *object-oriented programming*, which help in minimizing the risk of error when large teams are working together on an extended complex software project.

The Higher Level students learn how to efficiently organize information in abstract data structures, how the operating system of a computer manages the available resources, and how to develop small automated devices controlled by microcontroller-based systems.

The method

To a large extent, the course consists of *free individual work* – with all its advantages and challenges. Often, you are required to organize your tasks *individually* or in small teams. However, you can only enjoy this *freedom* successfully if you manage your work with the necessary responsibility and self discipline. Learning computer programming is time consuming *work*: you do not only learn a new language – Java – but also a new way of thinking in clearly structured procedures which includes developing algorithmic thinking. The required knowledge to carry this through is taught and practiced throughout the course.

Finally, the knowledge and skills acquired during the lessons and projects throughout the course are tested in three exam papers (SL: 2 papers) of 4 hours and 30 minutes in total (SL: 2hrs 30 min) which account for 80% of your subject grade (SL: 70%). The remaining 20% (SL: 30%) derive from the evaluation and assessment of your practical programming project. There is NO need of any previous Computer Science knowledge beyond the normal use of computers in daily life. HOWEVER, you must have a serious interest in exploring what happens behind the user interface. We are NOT doing a different form of mathematics, such as always solving a variety of equations. BUT, from experience, we can say that if you find mathematics particularly challenging you will quite possibly struggle in Computer Science.

Successful Computer Science students will include those individuals who are willing to develop the thinking skills required for problem-solving, who can organize themselves to work through complex problems as part of a team without necessarily being provided with answers, and who are able plan their Internal Assessment project in a timely fashion. Instead of grooming nerds, the need to create computational solutions that meet real human needs and aspirations will inspire Computer Science students and most certainly entail real personal growth.



Group 5: Mathematics

Mathematics

The content

Within the Diploma Programme the study of Mathematics is compulsory, as mathematical knowledge provides an important key to understanding the world in which we live.

The syllabus in Mathematics for the IB Diploma offers a wide range of different areas, including pure Mathematics –that characterizes the subject as an abstract system of ideas– and applied Mathematics as a useful tool. By studying the main topics Algebra, Functions, Trigonometry, Vectors, Calculus and Statistics and Probability, the aim is to enable students to develop logical, critical and creative thinking, to appreciate the multicultural and historical perspectives of Mathematics and to employ and refine their powers in abstraction and generalization. The two courses offered are Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches and Mathematics: Applications and Interpretations. Each course is offered at Standard Level (SL) (4 lessons per week) and Higher Level (HL) (6 lessons per week). Analysis and approaches streams are comprised of one non-calculator paper and one calculator paper (SL); in contrast, Applications and Interpretations exams are sat as two calculator papers (SL). Higher Level papers include an additional paper 3, focused on problem-solving and extended-response questions. The content emphasis for Analysis and Approaches is on algebra, calculus and proof; in contrast, Applications and Interpretations focuses on statistics, modelling and data analysis.

“It is not knowledge, but the act of learning,
not possession but the act of getting there
which grants the greatest enjoyment.”

Carl Fredrich Gauss

The method

The Higher Level courses address students with a good background in mathematics who are competent in a range of analytical and technical skills and enjoy meeting its challenges. Of the two courses, Mathematics: Analysis and Approaches concentrates more on "pure" Mathematics suited to abstract thinkers and problem solvers, as the focus lies more on theoretical, abstract, and pure mathematics. This course prepares students well for university studies such as Mathematics, Physics or Engineering and Technology. Mathematics: Applications and Interpretations, while still offering a demanding higher level course, concentrates more on "applied" Mathematics where the focus lies more in practical data-driven mathematics. This course is better suited for students interested in university studies in the Social Sciences, Business, Economics and Medicine.

The Standard Level courses offer the same topics but in less depth. They provide students with a solid mathematical foundation and skill set. It is advised to check individual universities to determine which course and level are required for specific degree programs.

Like all IB subjects the mathematical course contains a significant internal assessment - the mathematical exploration (HL /SL) that is worth 20% of the final exam grade. This internal assessment is an individual piece of written work that involves investigating an area of mathematics. Students will start in Year 1 searching for an interesting topic and finish their work in the first semester of Year 2. The mathematical exploration offers an opportunity to investigate the usefulness, relevance and occurrence of mathematics in the real world. It focuses on mathematical inquiry, mathematical modelling and application and the use of technology.



Group 6: The Arts

Visual Arts

The content

The visual arts are an integral part of everyday life, permeating all levels of human creativity, expression, communication and understanding. The IB Visual Arts course encourages students to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. It is a thought-provoking course in which students develop analytical skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, while working towards technical proficiency and confidence as art-makers. It is not essential that students have had prior experience in art at either level, although a competent use of drawing skills and creative thinking strategies is highly recommended at HL. Beyond technical accomplishment, a student should express an active interest in exploring the visual arts with a flexible approach in their creative choices. The aims of the course, therefore are to enable students to investigate past, present and emerging art forms while evaluating their contexts in connection with their own production. This is especially relevant in the written comparative study assignment which is one component in the final grade that reinforces analytical skills and art criticism. Secondly, we encourage each student to develop an understanding of art from a local, national and international perspective which strengthens confidence when visually responding to their own personal, cultural experiences. Therefore, maintaining a vibrant visual arts journal that captures the students' creative processes from the initial inspiration to the eventual refined art pieces is an integral part of the course and their assessment. The curriculum and teacher's approach are highly adaptable to the cultural background, interests and abilities of the students and, together with an awareness of curatorship practice, is ultimately celebrated in the culmination of their achievements in a final exhibition.

Areas of possible individual studio work and investigation:

- Two-dimensional forms: Drawing, painting, print-making, graphic design and illustration
- Three-dimensional forms: Ceramics, sculpture, media (including television, film and theatre) product design, installation and fashion
- Lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms: Analogue and digital photography, experimental imagery, computer-aided design, advertising, digital imaging, film, video and animation

The method

The student-centred approach enables development of their knowledge about visual arts and allows individual exploration and different approaches through both studio production and the process portfolio. This integrated relationship between studio work and investigation is essential throughout the course at both levels. Teacher-guided sessions, including gallery visits and specialised workshops, set standards and develops techniques. At least one, extended arts trip to a major cultural city, usually within Europe, is standard within the two-year duration of the course. Apart from exposing the students to a wealth of diverse practices, these excursions enable the study of curatorial practice to be observed more profoundly which will later be incorporated into their own final visual arts exhibition.

The HL students will need to produce more studio work and pages in the visual arts journal as well as being more reflective on their artistic practice than the SL students, but otherwise the general requirements are the same for both levels.



Group 6: The Arts

Theatre Arts

The content

The study of theatre will take you far beyond the scope of the creative industries; it is a wide-ranging examination of what it is to communicate, collaborate and create in the twenty-first century. You will work on your feet, exploring the ways in which we have shaped our collective conversations over thousands of years and across world cultures. You will hone a sense of where you fit within those conversations, and consider how you might most effectively bring about change in the modern world.

A key feature of the Theatre Arts course is how it allows you to pursue your own interests while developing the core skills. If you might study psychology later in life, we will look at writers influenced by Freud and Lacan. Really enjoying your maths? We'll take in Complicite's 'A Disappearing Number'. Do you speak French? We can cover Moliere. In this way, you can ensure that your applications and interviews for University are full of the interesting and creative ways you have drawn connections between your learning experiences. Theatre Arts teaches you essential skills – the content is guided by you.

The method


Your lessons will be practical and collaborative, with major projects which require you to produce a Director's Notebook, give a Research Presentation and contribute to solo and group performances across the two years. There is no final written examination so you will be taught how to plan for the long term and manage your projects over time. Furthermore, you do not need to be an accomplished performer in order to achieve at the highest level; you will learn and develop a range of directing, researching and presentation skills but you do not need previous experience.

You will complete the course not only with a firm grounding in the skills and techniques required for employment in the twenty-first century, but with a strong sense of how to express yourself, your beliefs and your vision in the complex and crowded world of mediated communication.



Careers Counselling

We try to stimulate the inherent curiosity of our students at Salem so that they enjoy the experience of learning for its own sake. But most students expect that the work they do with us will lead them on to a fulfilling university course where they can continue to develop intellectually and prepare for the world of work. The task of the careers counselling service is to assist and advise the student and their family in that endeavour. We do this via the following methods:

- Personal consultations- students have the opportunity to arrange one-to-one meetings with one of our two careers counsellors to discuss their spheres of interest and related course and university options around the world
- University fairs- students have the opportunity to attend a number of college university fairs for German and international universities
- Visiting speakers- visits from German and international colleges and universities are organised for students throughout the school year
-  - all Salem students are introduced to and then given free access to the *Unifrog* portal, a universal destinations platform with information on more English-speaking universities courses than any other website. *Unifrog* is a one-stop-shop where students can easily explore their interests, then find and successfully apply for their next best step after school

The first and most important decision is for the student to decide what it is they want to study at university - and why. This is very much a personal choice. Each student has their own ambitions and aspirations and the choice of courses available is huge – from the traditional professions such as law or medicine to the ‘sunrise’ industries of IT or global marketing. Students are encouraged to discuss their future carefully with family, close friends and teachers before making their choices. Having set their personal objective, the students can then turn to the Careers Counselling service and rely on the professional support which we offer to help them set realistic goals and then realise their plans.

Many IB students look to continue their education at English speaking universities either in the USA or UK. In this case we encourage students to start preparing for their university application in the Spring of Year 1. Students are encouraged to begin researching the Universities that catch their attention, possibly making a trip to visit them during the Easter or summer break. They should also ensure that they meet any of the course requirements beyond the IB: do they need to take the IELTS or TOEFL exams to demonstrate English language proficiency? When would they like to sit the SAT test needed for entry into a University in the USA? Would their CV be enhanced by relevant work experience over the summer holiday? All these things need to be thought about and planned for now!

When they return for the start of Year 2, students should be ready to continue and complete their applications. Registrations need to be made, and basic information entered on either of the web sites used collectively by Universities in the USA (Common App), the UK (UCAS) or by individual Universities in other countries. A personal statement is needed in which the student presents their profile and explains why they want to pursue their chosen area of study. Teachers need to be approached for references – with plenty of time so that they can do the student justice. The careers counsellor will assist in the co-ordination of applications, the presentation of academic transcripts and predicted grades. It is a busy time for the student and staff alike. For the process to run smoothly, with each application having its optimum chance of success, time is needed. Rushed applications made at the last minute are seldom successful. For this reason, we encourage students to liaise with the Careers Counsellor as early as possible in Year 2 and recommend that the application be completed before the Christmas break in December. There is plenty to do for everyone involved – students, staff and families alike. But, working together, we aim to ensure that every student has the best possible chance of getting the right place at a university of their choice on a course of their choice.



The list below provides a flavour of some of the universities around the world where *Alt-Salemer* have made successful recent applications for undergraduate study:

U.K. - Oxford, Durham, St. Andrews, Edinburgh, Warwick, University College London, King's College London, Imperial College London, Goldsmith College, Queen Mary University of London, London City University, London Metropolitan University, University of Westminster, School of Oriental & African Studies, Bath, Exeter, Manchester, Leeds, Nottingham

U.S. - Yale, Princeton, Georgetown, Stanford, Michigan, New York University, Babson, Case Western, Boston, Michigan State, University of North Carolina

Netherlands - Groningen, Leiden, Maastricht, Rotterdam Erasmus, Utrecht, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Other - University of Hong Kong (China), University of Toronto (Canada), Sciences Po (Paris Institute of Political Studies (France), ETH Zürich (Switzerland), Bocconi (Italy), Copenhagen Business School (Denmark), University of Melbourne (Australia)





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