

Diploma Programme Grade descriptors

Diploma Programme Grade descriptors



Diploma Programme

Diploma Programme Grade descriptors

Published December 2017

Updated September 2021

Published on behalf of the International Baccalaureate Organization, a not-for-profit educational foundation of 15 Route des Morillons, 1218 Le Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland by the

International Baccalaureate Organization (UK) Ltd
Peterson House, Malthouse Avenue, Cardiff Gate
Cardiff, Wales CF23 8GL
United Kingdom
Website: www.ibo.org

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2017

The International Baccalaureate Organization (known as the IB) offers four high-quality and challenging educational programmes for a worldwide community of schools, aiming to create a better, more peaceful world. This publication is one of a range of materials produced to support these programmes.

The IB may use a variety of sources in its work and checks information to verify accuracy and authenticity, particularly when using community-based knowledge sources such as Wikipedia. The IB respects the principles of intellectual property and makes strenuous efforts to identify and obtain permission before publication from rights holders of all copyright material used. The IB is grateful for permissions received for material used in this publication and will be pleased to correct any errors or omissions at the earliest opportunity.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the IB, or as expressly permitted by law or by the IB's own rules and policy. See <http://www.ibo.org/copyright>.

IB merchandise and publications can be purchased through the IB store at <http://store.ibo.org>.

Email: sales@ibo.org

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.

Contents

Introduction	1
Group 1 (studies in language and literature) grade descriptors	2
Group 2 (language acquisition) grade descriptors	4
Group 3 (individuals and societies) grade descriptors	10
Group 4 (sciences) grade descriptors	12
Group 5 (mathematics) grade descriptors	16
Group 6 (arts) grade descriptors	18
Interdisciplinary subjects grade descriptors	20
Extended essay grade descriptors	24
Theory of knowledge grade descriptors	26

Introduction

This document is a compilation of descriptions (grade descriptors) of each grade for each group of subjects in the IB Diploma Programme. Grade descriptors consist of characteristics of performance at each grade. The descriptors apply to groups of subjects but substantial similarity exists across sets of group grade descriptors.

Senior examiners use these grade descriptors when determining grade boundaries for examination papers and coursework components. For each grade, qualities of a typical performance are given. However, the work of few candidates will be consistently characterised by a single grade descriptor, most work will display some of the characteristics of more than one grade. Senior examiners therefore review the work of many candidates to determine a grade boundary—the lowest mark at which characteristics of a grade are consistently shown in candidate work—allowing for some compensation across the different aspects.

The grade descriptors are also intended to help teachers explain the academic requirements of the IB Diploma Programme to students, undertake formative assessment, report progress and predict candidates' grades.

Group 1 (studies in language and literature) grade descriptors

Studies in language and literature

Grade 7

Demonstrates: excellent understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that may be convincing, detailed, independent in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; highly developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; very good degree of accuracy and clarity; very good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; very effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s).

Grade 6

Demonstrates: very good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that are, mainly, convincing, as well as detailed and independent to some degree, in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; well-developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; good degree of accuracy and clarity; good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s).

Grade 5

Demonstrates: good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that offer generally considered and valid analysis, synthesis and/or evaluation; good levels of expression, both orally and in writing; adequate degree of accuracy and clarity; awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; clear structure with relevant textual detail to support an engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s).

Grade 4

Demonstrates: adequate knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are generally valid in analysis and/or synthesis; satisfactory powers of expression, both orally and in writing; few lapses in accuracy and clarity; some awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; a basic structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored.

Grade 3

Demonstrates: some knowledge and some understanding of the question or task; responses that are only sometimes valid and/or appropriately detailed; some appropriate powers of expression, both orally and in writing; lapses in accuracy and clarity; limited awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; some evidence of a structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored.

Grade 2

Demonstrates: superficial knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of generally limited validity; limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; significant lapses in

accuracy and clarity; little awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored.

Grade 1

Demonstrates: very rudimentary knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of very limited validity; very limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; widespread lapses in accuracy and clarity; no awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; very rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored.

Group 2 (language acquisition) grade descriptors

Language B (HL)

Grade 7

Students speak with clarity and fluency; use a richly varied and idiomatic range of language very accurately; handle ideas effectively and skillfully with active and complex interaction; demonstrate a thorough understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have little difficulty with the most difficult questions; recognize almost all the subtleties of specific language usage; write detailed and expressive texts demonstrating an excellent command of vocabulary and complex structures with a consistently high level of grammatical accuracy; demonstrate clarity of thought in the organization of their work and an ability to engage, convince and influence the audience.

Grade 6

Students speak clearly, fluently and naturally; use a varied and idiomatic range of language accurately; handle ideas effectively with active and full interaction; demonstrate a very good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have little difficulty with more difficult questions; recognize most of the subtleties of specific language usage; write detailed texts demonstrating a very good command of vocabulary and complex structures with a very good level of grammatical accuracy; adapt their writing appropriately to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work coherently and convincingly.

Grade 5

Students speak mostly clearly and fluently; use a varied range of language mostly accurately; handle ideas mostly effectively with generally full interaction; demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have some difficulties with more difficult questions; recognize some subtleties of specific language usage; write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy; show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work coherently.

Grade 4

Students speak generally clearly; use a basic range of language correctly; handle ideas adequately with full interaction at times; demonstrate an adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have some difficulties with almost all difficult questions and some average questions; recognize a few subtleties of specific language usage; write texts demonstrating an adequate command of vocabulary with an adequate level of grammatical accuracy; show some ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work appropriately.

Grade 3

Students speak hesitantly and at times unclearly; use a simple range of language correctly at times; handle ideas with some difficulty with fairly limited interaction; demonstrate some understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties with questions of average difficulty; write texts demonstrating a basic command of vocabulary and some awareness of grammatical structure; produce an identifiable text type; make some attempt at expressing their ideas and organizing their work.

Grade 2

Students speak hesitantly and generally unclearly; use a limited range of language often incorrectly; handle ideas with difficulty and with restricted interaction; demonstrate a fairly limited understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties with some easy questions; write texts demonstrating a fairly limited command of vocabulary and little awareness of grammatical structure; produce an identifiable text type with limited success; make some attempt at basic organization; content is rarely convincing.

Grade 1

Students speak hesitantly and unclearly; use a very limited range of language mostly incorrectly; handle ideas with great difficulty and with very restricted interaction; demonstrate a limited understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties even with easiest questions; write texts demonstrating a limited command of vocabulary and little awareness of grammatical structure; produce a barely identifiable text type; lack organization to an extent that content is unconvincing.

Language B (SL)

Grade 7

Students speak clearly, fluently and naturally; use a varied and idiomatic range of language accurately; handle ideas effectively with active and full interaction; demonstrate a very good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have little difficulty with more difficult questions; write detailed texts demonstrating a very good command of vocabulary and complex structures with a very good level of grammatical accuracy; adapt their writing effectively to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work coherently and convincingly.

Grade 6

Students speak mostly clearly and fluently; use a varied range of language mostly accurately; handle ideas mostly effectively, with generally full interaction; demonstrate a good understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have some difficulties with more difficult questions; write fairly detailed texts demonstrating a good command of vocabulary with a good level of grammatical accuracy; adapt their writing appropriately to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work coherently.

Grade 5

Students speak generally clearly; use a basic range of language correctly; handle ideas adequately with full interaction at times; demonstrate an adequate understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have some difficulties with almost all difficult questions and some average questions; write texts demonstrating an adequate command of vocabulary with an adequate level of grammatical accuracy; show a reasonable ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; express their ideas and organize their work appropriately.

Grade 4

Students speak hesitantly and at times unclearly; use a simple range of language correctly at times; handle ideas with some difficulty and with fairly limited interaction; demonstrate some understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties with questions of average difficulty; write texts demonstrating a basic command of vocabulary and some awareness of grammatical structure; show some ability to adapt their writing to suit the intended audience and purpose; make some attempt at expressing their ideas and organizing their work.

Grade 3

Students speak hesitantly and generally unclearly; use a limited range of language, often incorrectly; handle ideas with difficulty and with restricted interaction; demonstrate a fairly limited understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties with some easy questions; write texts demonstrating a fairly limited command of vocabulary and little awareness of grammatical structure; produce an identifiable text type; make some attempt at basic organization; content is rarely convincing.

Grade 2

Students speak hesitantly and unclearly; use a very limited range of language mostly incorrectly; handle ideas with great difficulty and with very restricted interaction; demonstrate a limited understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties even with easiest questions; write texts demonstrating a limited command of vocabulary and little awareness of grammatical structure; produce an identifiable text type with limited success; lack organization to an extent that content is unconvincing.

Grade 1

Students speak very hesitantly and unclearly; use a very limited range of language incorrectly; handle ideas unsuccessfully and with very restricted interaction; demonstrate a very limited understanding of the meaning and purpose of written texts; have difficulties with almost all questions; write texts demonstrating a very limited command of vocabulary and very little awareness of grammatical structure; produce a barely identifiable text type; lack organization to an extent that content is confusing.

Language ab initio (SL)

Grade 7

Receptive skills: students respond clearly and effectively to all basic and most complex information and ideas.

Interactive skills: students respond accurately, communicate effectively and demonstrate comprehension; pronunciation and intonation always facilitate the understanding of the message; students sustain participation and make good independent contributions. The message is always clear.

Productive skills: students develop ideas well using an effective, logical structure; they successfully use a range of simple and some complex cohesive devices; they use both basic and complex grammatical structures accurately. However, they may make occasional errors in complex structures; they use varied and effective vocabulary and appropriate register; they demonstrate clear evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 6

Receptive skills: students respond clearly to all basic and most complex information and ideas.

Interactive skills: students respond mostly accurately, communicate almost always effectively and demonstrate comprehension; pronunciation and intonation almost always facilitate the understanding of the message; students almost always sustain participation and make independent contributions. The message is usually clear.

Productive skills: students develop ideas well using a logical structure; they successfully use a range of basic and some complex cohesive devices; they use both basic and complex grammatical structures

accurately. However, they may make several errors in complex structures; they use varied vocabulary and appropriate register; they almost always demonstrate clear evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 5

Receptive skills: students generally respond clearly to basic and some complex information and ideas.

Interactive skills: students respond accurately and generally demonstrate comprehension; pronunciation and intonation often facilitate the understanding of the message; students generally sustain participation and make some independent contributions. The message is often clear.

Productive skills: students develop some ideas using a logical structure; they often use a range of basic and some complex cohesive devices; they use basic grammatical structures accurately. However, complex structures are rarely accurate; they use a range of basic vocabulary and appropriate register; they often demonstrate evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 4

Receptive skills: students respond clearly to most basic information and ideas.

Interactive skills: students respond accurately and demonstrate comprehension in simple exchanges; pronunciation and intonation usually facilitate the understanding of the message; students sustain participation in simple exchanges. The message is usually clear.

Productive skills: students develop basic ideas using a logical structure; they use a range of simple cohesive devices successfully; they use most basic grammatical structures accurately; they use basic vocabulary and appropriate register successfully; they usually demonstrate evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 3

Receptive skills: students sometimes respond clearly to basic information.

Interactive skills: students sometimes respond accurately and sometimes demonstrate comprehension in simple exchanges; pronunciation and intonation sometimes facilitate the understanding of the message; students sometimes sustain participation in simple exchanges. The message is sometimes clear.

Productive skills: students sometimes develop basic ideas; they sometimes use simple cohesive devices successfully; they sometimes use basic grammatical structures accurately; they sometimes use basic vocabulary and appropriate register successfully; they sometimes demonstrate evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 2

Receptive skills: students rarely respond clearly to basic information.

Interactive skills: students rarely respond accurately or demonstrate comprehension; pronunciation and intonation rarely facilitate the understanding of the message; students rarely sustain participation in simple exchanges. The message is rarely clear.

Productive skills: students rarely develop basic ideas; they rarely use simple cohesive devices; they rarely use basic grammatical structures accurately; they rarely use basic vocabulary or appropriate register successfully; they rarely demonstrate evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Grade 1

Receptive skills: students very rarely respond clearly to basic information.

Interactive skills: students very rarely respond accurately or demonstrate comprehension; pronunciation and intonation very rarely facilitate the understanding of the message; students very rarely sustain participation in simple exchanges. The message is very rarely clear.

Productive skills: students very rarely develop ideas; they very rarely use simple cohesive devices; they very rarely use basic grammatical structures accurately; they very rarely use basic vocabulary or appropriate register successfully; they very rarely demonstrate evidence of intercultural understanding where required.

Classical languages (Latin and classical Greek)

Grade 7

Demonstrates excellent content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness and critical, reflective thinking. Responses are logical and structured, make very effective use of well-selected examples, demonstrate awareness of alternative points of view and provide clear evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are very accurate and convey the meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is appropriate for the original text.

Highly effective research, investigation and technical skills are evident, as is the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence in an insightful way.

Grade 6

Demonstrates very good content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness and critical, reflective thinking. Responses are mostly logical and structured, make effective use of well-selected examples, demonstrate sufficient awareness of alternative points of view and provide clear evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are accurate and mostly convey the meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is mostly appropriate for the original text.

Effective research, investigation and technical skills are evident, as is the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence competently.

Grade 5

Demonstrates sound content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness, and critical, reflective thinking. Responses are generally logical and structured, make good use of examples, demonstrate generally accurate awareness of alternative points of view and provide some evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are somewhat accurate and convey the general meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is generally appropriate for the original text.

Good research, investigation and technical skills are evident; the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence is evident but not consistently developed.

Grade 4

Demonstrates secure content knowledge and understanding (although there are some gaps), some conceptual and contextual awareness, and some critical, reflective thinking. Responses are somewhat logical and structured, make use of examples, demonstrate some awareness of alternative points of view and provide some evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are partially accurate and convey

some meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is somewhat appropriate for the original text.

Some research, investigation and technical skills are evident; the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence is evident but not consistently developed.

Grade 3

Demonstrates basic content knowledge and understanding, with some gaps, some conceptual and contextual awareness, and some critical, reflective thinking. Responses are valid, but lack clarity and structure, make use of limited examples, demonstrate limited awareness of alternative points of view and provide limited evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are rarely accurate but convey the basic meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is somewhat appropriate for the original text.

Basic research, investigation and technical skills are evident; the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence is not always shown.

Grade 2

Demonstrates little content knowledge and understanding, with significant gaps, little conceptual and contextual awareness, and little critical, reflective thinking. Responses are rarely valid, lack clarity and structure, make use of weak/inappropriate examples, demonstrate very little awareness of alternative points of view and provide very limited evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are mostly inaccurate and rarely convey the basic meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is rarely appropriate for the original text.

Limited research, investigation and technical skills are evident; the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence is rarely shown.

Grade 1

Demonstrates almost no content knowledge and understanding, conceptual and contextual awareness, or critical, reflective thinking. Responses are rarely valid, lack clarity and structure, make use of irrelevant examples, demonstrate little or no awareness of alternative points of view and provide little or no evidence of intercultural understanding. Translations are mostly inaccurate and very rarely convey the basic meaning of the original text, with use of grammar and vocabulary that is rarely appropriate for the original text.

Very limited research, investigation and technical skills are evident; the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize evidence is not shown.

Group 3 (individuals and societies) grade descriptors

Individuals and societies

Grade 7

Demonstrates: conceptual awareness, insight, and knowledge and understanding which are evident in the skills of critical thinking; a high level of ability to provide answers which are fully developed, structured in a logical and coherent manner and illustrated with appropriate examples; a precise use of terminology which is specific to the subject; familiarity with the literature of the subject; the ability to analyse and evaluate evidence and to synthesize knowledge and concepts; awareness of alternative points of view and subjective and ideological biases, and the ability to come to reasonable, albeit tentative, conclusions; consistent evidence of critical reflective thinking; a high level of proficiency in analysing and evaluating data or problem solving.

Grade 6

Demonstrates: detailed knowledge and understanding; answers which are coherent, logically structured and well developed; consistent use of appropriate terminology; an ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesize knowledge and concepts; knowledge of relevant research, theories and issues, and awareness of different perspectives and contexts from which these have been developed; consistent evidence of critical thinking; an ability to analyse and evaluate data or to solve problems competently.

Grade 5

Demonstrates: a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject using subject-specific terminology; answers which are logically structured and coherent but not fully developed; an ability to provide competent answers with some attempt to integrate knowledge and concepts; a tendency to be more descriptive than evaluative (although some ability is demonstrated to present and develop contrasting points of view); some evidence of critical thinking; an ability to analyse and evaluate data or to solve problems.

Grade 4

Demonstrates: a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject going beyond the mere citing of isolated, fragmentary, irrelevant or "common sense" points; some ability to structure answers but with insufficient clarity and possibly some repetition; an ability to express knowledge and understanding in terminology specific to the subject; some understanding of the way facts or ideas may be related and embodied in principles and concepts; some ability to develop ideas and substantiate assertions; use of knowledge and understanding which is more descriptive than analytical; some ability to compensate for gaps in knowledge and understanding through rudimentary application or evaluation of that knowledge; an ability to interpret data or to solve problems and some ability to engage in analysis and evaluation.

Grade 3

Demonstrates: some knowledge and understanding of the subject; a basic sense of structure that is not sustained throughout the answers; a basic use of terminology appropriate to the subject; some ability to establish links between facts or ideas; some ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.

Grade 2

Demonstrates: a limited knowledge and understanding of the subject; some sense of structure in the answers; a limited use of terminology appropriate to the subject; a limited ability to establish links between facts or ideas; a basic ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.

Grade 1

Demonstrates: very limited knowledge and understanding of the subject; almost no organizational structure in the answers; inappropriate or inadequate use of terminology; a limited ability to comprehend data or to solve problems.

Group 4 (sciences) grade descriptors

Sciences

Grade 7

Displays comprehensive subject knowledge and a thorough command of concepts and principles. Selects and applies relevant information, concepts and principles in a wide variety of contexts. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and qualitative data thoroughly. Constructs detailed explanations of complex phenomena and makes appropriate predictions. Evidences great proficiency in solving problems, including those that are challenging or unfamiliar. Communicates logically and concisely using appropriate terminology and conventions. Shows insight or originality.

Approaches investigations in an ethical manner, paying full attention to environmental impact and safety where applicable. Investigations demonstrate insight and independence to design and complete innovative practical work with highly competent investigative and analytical techniques, and with innovative and effective conclusions to resolve authentic problems.

Grade 6

Displays very broad subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of concepts and principles. Selects and applies relevant information, concepts and principles in most contexts. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and qualitative data with a high level of competence. Constructs explanations of complex phenomena and makes appropriate predictions. Solves basic or routine problems and evidences competency in solving those that are challenging or unfamiliar. Communicates effectively using appropriate terminology and conventions. Shows occasional insight or originality.

Approaches to investigations in an ethical manner, paying significant attention to environmental impact and safety where applicable. Investigations demonstrate some innovative thinking and independence to design and complete practical work with competent investigative and analytical techniques, and with highly competent and reasonable conclusions to resolve authentic problems.

Grade 5

Displays broad subject knowledge and shows sound understanding of most concepts and principles, and applies them in some contexts. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and qualitative data competently. Constructs explanations of simple phenomena. Solves most basic or familiar problems and some new or difficult quantitative and/or qualitative problems. Communicates clearly with little or no irrelevant material.

Approaches investigations in an ethical manner, paying attention to environmental impact and safety where applicable. Investigations demonstrate appropriate investigative and analytical techniques with relevant and pertinent conclusions to resolving authentic problems.

Grade 4

Displays reasonable subject knowledge (though possibly with some gaps) and shows adequate understanding of most basic concepts and principles, but with limited ability to apply them. Demonstrates some analysis or evaluation of quantitative or qualitative data. Solves some basic or routine problems but shows limited ability to solve challenging or unfamiliar problems. Communicates adequately, although responses may lack clarity and include some repetitive or irrelevant material.

Generally approaches investigations in an ethical manner, with some attention to environmental impact and safety where applicable. Investigations demonstrate an ability to complete fairly routine practical work with some appropriate investigative and analytical techniques, and with some conclusions relevant to the problem under study.

Grade 3

Displays limited subject knowledge and shows a partial understanding of basic concepts and principles, and weak ability to apply them. Shows some ability to manipulate data and solve basic or routine problems. Communicates with a lack of clarity and some repetitive or irrelevant material.

Sometimes approaches investigations in an ethical manner, with some attention to environmental impact and safety where applicable. Investigations demonstrate an ability to complete a basic investigation with simple analytical techniques, and with some partial conclusions of some relevance to study.

Grade 2

Displays little subject knowledge and shows weak understanding of basic concepts and principles, and little evidence of application. Exhibits minimal ability to manipulate data and little or no ability to solve problems. Offers responses which are often incomplete or irrelevant.

Occasionally approaches investigations in an ethical manner, but shows very limited awareness of environmental impact and safety. Investigations demonstrate an ability to undertake basic investigative work requiring considerable guidance and instruction, and attempts at conclusions that are largely incorrect/irrelevant.

Grade 1

Fragmentary subject knowledge and shows very little understanding of any concepts or principles. Rarely demonstrates personal skills, perseverance or responsibility in investigative activities.

Rarely approaches investigations in an ethical manner, or shows an awareness of environmental impact and safety. Investigations demonstrate an ability to undertake very basic practical work with complete dependence on supervised instruction, with attempts at conclusions are either absent or completely incorrect/irrelevant.

Computer science

Grade 7

Displays comprehensive knowledge of computer science factual information and a thorough command and understanding of concepts and principles. Selects, applies and analyses relevant information, concepts and principles in a wide variety of contexts to solve most problems proficiently. Interprets and constructs fairly complex algorithms and produce workable and mostly efficient solutions. Communicates logically and concisely using appropriate terminology. Shows insight and initiative in extended responses.

Produces a complete plan and provides a fully consistent design overview. The product developed completely matches the plan and works. The documentation is complete and the product is fully tested and evaluated. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates high levels of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 6

Displays very broad knowledge of computer science factual information and an understanding of concepts and principles. Selects and applies relevant information, concepts and principles in most contexts, to solve basic or familiar problems and most new or difficult problems. Interprets and constructs fairly complex algorithms with few errors to produce workable solutions. Communicates effectively using appropriate terminology. Shows occasional insight or initiative in extended responses.

Produces a plan and design overview. The product matches the plan and works. The documentation is complete and the product has been tested and evaluated. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates a very good level of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 5

Displays broad knowledge of computer science factual information. Shows sound understanding of most concepts and principles and applies them in some contexts, to solve most basic or familiar problems and some new or difficult problems. Interprets and constructs fairly complex algorithms and produce a partially workable or inefficient solution. Communicates clearly, using appropriate terminology, with little or no irrelevant material.

Produces a partial plan and a design overview that meets plan requirements. The product works but does not fully match the plan. The testing and documentation is complete, but evaluation is incomplete. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates a good level of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 4

Displays reasonable knowledge of computer science factual information, though with some gaps. Shows adequate comprehension of most basic concepts and principles but with limited ability to apply them. Solves some basic or routine problems but shows limited ability to deal with new or difficult situations. Interprets and constructs simple algorithms. Communicates adequately, using mostly correct terminology, although responses lack clarity and include some repetitive or irrelevant material.

Produces a basic plan and a design overview. The product mostly works but does not match all aspects of the plan. The documentation is complete and there is evidence of testing but the evaluation is incomplete. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates an adequate level of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 3

Displays limited knowledge of computer science factual information. Shows a partial comprehension of basic concepts and principles and limited ability to apply them. Interprets or constructs simple algorithms. Communicates, using basic terminology, with a lack of clarity and some repetitive or irrelevant material.

Produces an incomplete plan and design overview. The product matches some aspects of the plan and there is some evidence of testing or evaluation in the documentation. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates a limited level of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 2

Displays little recall of computer science factual information. Shows limited comprehension of basic concepts and principles and little evidence of application. Some evidence of being able to interpret or construct simple algorithms. Offers responses which are often incomplete or irrelevant.

Produces a weak and incomplete plan. The design overview is poor and does not match the plan. The product is poor and does not work. There is limited evidence of testing, poor documentation, and limited or no evaluation. The use of techniques in solving problems demonstrates a low level of complexity and ingenuity.

Grade 1

Recalls fragments of computer science factual information and shows very little understanding of any concepts or principles. Displays little or no ability at algorithm construction and interpretation.

Their design overview and plan are not attempted. There is little or no evidence of a working product and little or no evidence of testing, documentation or evaluation. The use of techniques in solving problems fails to demonstrate any level of complexity or ingenuity.

Group 5 (mathematics) grade descriptors

Mathematics

Grade 7

Demonstrates a thorough knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the syllabus; successfully constructs and applies mathematical arguments at a sophisticated level in a wide variety of contexts; successfully uses problem solving techniques in challenging situations; recognizes patterns and structures, makes generalizations and justifies conclusions; understands and explains the significance and validity of results, and draws full and relevant conclusions; communicates mathematics in a clear, effective and concise manner, using correct techniques, notation and terminology; demonstrates the ability to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of the course; uses technology correctly in challenging situations—makes efficient use of calculator’s functionality when required.

Grade 6

Demonstrates a broad knowledge and comprehensive understanding of the syllabus; successfully constructs and applies mathematical arguments in a variety of contexts; uses problem solving techniques in challenging situations; recognizes patterns and structures, and makes some generalizations; understands and explains the significance and validity of results, and draws relevant conclusions; communicates mathematics in a clear and effective manner, using correct techniques, notation and terminology; demonstrates some ability to integrate knowledge, understanding and skills from different areas of the course; uses technology correctly in routine situations—makes efficient use of calculator’s functionality when required.

Grade 5

Demonstrates a broad knowledge and good understanding of the syllabus; applies mathematical arguments in performing routine tasks; successfully uses problem solving techniques in routine situations; successfully carries out mathematical processes in a variety of contexts, and recognizes patterns and structures; understands the significance of results and draws some conclusions; communicates mathematics effectively, using appropriate techniques, notation and terminology; demonstrates an awareness of the links between different areas of the course; makes use of calculator’s functionality when required (this use may occasionally be inefficient).

Grade 4

Demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the syllabus; applies mathematical arguments in performing some routine tasks; uses problem solving techniques in routine situations; successfully carries out mathematical processes in straightforward contexts; shows some ability to recognize patterns and structures; has limited understanding of the significance of results and attempts to draw some conclusions; communicates mathematics adequately, using some appropriate techniques, notation and terminology; makes some use of calculator’s functionality, but perhaps not always when required (this use may occasionally be inefficient).

Grade 3

Demonstrates partial knowledge of the syllabus and limited understanding of mathematical arguments in performing some routine tasks; attempts to carry out mathematical processes in straightforward contexts; makes an attempt to use problem solving techniques in routine situations; communicates some

mathematics, using some appropriate techniques, notation or terminology; occasionally uses calculator's functionality, but often inefficiently—does not always use it when required and may use an inefficient analytic approach.

Grade 2

Demonstrates limited knowledge of the syllabus; attempts to carry out mathematical processes at a basic level; communicates some mathematics, but often uses inappropriate techniques, notation or terminology; unable to use calculator correctly when required—questions exclusively requiring the use of the GDC are generally not attempted.

Grade 1

Demonstrates minimal knowledge of the syllabus; demonstrates little or no ability to use mathematical processes, even when attempting routine tasks; communicates only minimal mathematics and consistently uses inappropriate techniques, notation or terminology; is unable to make effective use of technology.

Group 6 (arts) grade descriptors

Arts

Grade 7

The student's work demonstrates highly effective research and inquiry and the highly effective use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate a highly effective understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates highly effective subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates highly effective critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 6

The student's work demonstrates effective research and inquiry and the effective use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate an effective understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates the effective use of subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates effective critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 5

The student's work demonstrates developed research and inquiry and developed use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate a developed understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates developed subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates developed critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 4

The student's work demonstrates basic research and inquiry and the basic use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate a basic understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates basic subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates basic critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 3

The student's work demonstrates undeveloped or limited research and inquiry and undeveloped or limited use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate an undeveloped or limited understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates undeveloped or limited subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates undeveloped or limited critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 2

The student's work demonstrates superficial research and inquiry and superficial use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate a superficial understanding of artistic ideas and intentions.

Practical/performance work demonstrates superficial subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates superficial critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Grade 1

The student's work demonstrates irrelevant or inadequate research and inquiry and irrelevant or inadequate use of subject-specific terminology.

Creative work and processes demonstrate an irrelevant or inadequate understanding of artistic intentions or development of ideas.

Practical/performance work demonstrates irrelevant or inadequate subject-specific skills, techniques and competences.

The student demonstrates irrelevant or inadequate critical reflection on both work created and work in progress.

Interdisciplinary subjects grade descriptors

Literature and performance

Grade 7

Demonstrates: excellent understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that may be convincing, detailed, independent in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; highly developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; very good degree of accuracy and clarity; very good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; very effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s); refined appreciation of literary style and a full engagement with the act of transforming literature into performance; the personal qualities necessary to work with others in a purposeful and effective manner.

Grade 6

Demonstrates: very good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that are, mainly, convincing, as well as detailed and independent to some degree, in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; well-developed levels of expression, both orally and in writing; a good degree of accuracy and clarity; good awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; effective structure with relevant textual detail to support a critical engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s); clear appreciation of literary style and a solid engagement with the act of transforming literature into performance; willingness to work with others in a constructive manner.

Grade 5

Demonstrates: good understanding and appreciation of the interplay between form and content in regard to the question or task; responses that offer generally considered and valid analysis, synthesis and/or evaluation; good levels of expression, both orally and in writing; an adequate degree of accuracy and clarity; awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; clear structure with relevant textual detail to support an engagement with the thoughts and feelings expressed in the work(s); an appreciation of literary style and an engagement with the act of transforming literature into performance; recognizable involvement to work with others in a cooperative manner.

Grade 4

Demonstrates: adequate knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are generally valid in analysis and/or synthesis; satisfactory powers of expression, both orally and in writing; few lapses in accuracy and clarity; some awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; a basic structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored; some appreciation of literary style and some commitment in the act of transforming literature into performance; an acceptance of the need to work with others.

Grade 3

Demonstrates: some knowledge and some understanding of the question or task; responses that are only sometimes valid and/or appropriately detailed; some appropriate powers of expression, both orally and in writing; lapses in accuracy and clarity; limited awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the

audience/reader; some evidence of a structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored; little appreciation of literary style and modest commitment to the act of transforming literature into performance; little apparent attempt to work with others effectively.

Grade 2

Demonstrates: superficial knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of generally limited validity; limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; significant lapses in accuracy and clarity; little awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; a rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored; very little appreciation of literary style and little commitment to the act of transforming literature into performance; sparse evidence of involvement in working with others effectively.

Grade 1

Demonstrates: very rudimentary knowledge and understanding of the question or task; responses that are of very limited validity; very limited powers of expression, both orally and in writing; widespread lapses in accuracy and clarity; no awareness of context and appreciation of the effect on the audience/reader; a very rudimentary structure within which the thoughts and feelings of the work(s) are explored; very little appreciation of literary style and negligible involvement with the act of transforming literature into performance; inability to work with others.

Environmental systems and societies SL

Grade 7

Demonstrates: comprehensive and sound knowledge and understanding of relevant environmental systems and societies (ESS) concepts and issues; well-structured, clearly expressed accounts with consistently appropriate and precise use of ESS terminology; effective use of pertinent, well-explained examples that show some originality; some informed appreciation for a range of viewpoints or value systems alongside their own; thorough, well-balanced and insightful analysis or argument with thorough evaluations; ability to solve complex and unfamiliar problems; explicit judgments or conclusions that are well-supported by evidence or arguments, and that include some critical reflection. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and/or qualitative data thoroughly.

Practical work demonstrates: insight and independence to design and complete innovative practical investigations with thorough regard to ethical issues and highly competent investigative and analytical techniques; innovative and effective conclusions to resolve authentic problems; an appreciation and effective attempt to minimize the potentially harmful impacts of the study; thorough discussion of an environmental issue that provides a detailed explanation of the research question.

Grade 6

Demonstrates: a wide breadth of sound knowledge and understanding of relevant ESS concepts and issues; structured, clearly expressed accounts with appropriate and precise use of ESS terminology; effective use of pertinent, well-explained examples that may show hints of originality; some informed acknowledgement of a range of viewpoints or value systems alongside their own; thorough, well-balanced analysis or argument with valid evaluations; some ability to solve complex and unfamiliar problems; explicit judgments or conclusions that are well-supported by evidence/arguments. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and/or qualitative data with a high level of competence.

Practical work demonstrates: some innovative thinking and independence to design and complete investigations in an ethical manner with competent investigative and analytical techniques; highly competent and reasonable conclusions to resolve authentic problems; an appreciation and valid attempt to minimise the potentially harmful impacts of the study; highly competent discussion of an environmental issue that provides a clear explanation of the research question.

Grade 5

Demonstrates: several areas of sound knowledge and understanding of relevant ESS concepts and issues; generally clearly expressed accounts with largely appropriate use of ESS terminology; effective use of relevant examples that include some explanation; some informed awareness of a range of viewpoints or value systems alongside their own; clear analysis or argument that shows a degree of balance and attempts at evaluation; some ability to engage effectively with complex or unfamiliar problems; identifiable judgments or conclusions that are partially supported by evidence/arguments. Analyses and evaluates quantitative and/or qualitative data competently.

Practical work demonstrates: some independence to complete investigations in an ethical manner with appropriate investigative and analytical techniques; relevant and pertinent conclusions to resolving authentic problems; some appreciation of the potentially harmful impacts of the study and some reasonable attempts at minimising them; a competent discussion of an environmental issue that generally explains the research question.

Grade 4

Demonstrates: one or two areas of sound knowledge and understanding of relevant ESS concepts and issues; sometimes clearly expressed accounts and largely appropriate use of ESS terminology; some use of relevant examples with very limited explanation; some awareness of other viewpoints or value systems alongside their own; some clear but patchy analysis or argument with a limited attempt at balance; some ability to solve simple or familiar problems; identifiable judgments or conclusions that are supported by very limited evidence or argument. Demonstrates some analysis or evaluation of quantitative or qualitative data.

Practical work demonstrates: an ability to complete fairly routine investigations in an ethical manner with some appropriate investigative and analytical techniques; some conclusions relevant to the problem under study; occasional appreciation of the potentially harmful impacts of the study; an outline of the environmental issue and identifies a link to the research question.

Grade 3

Demonstrates: only vague, partial knowledge and understanding of relevant ESS concepts and issues; generally unclear accounts and relevance with some isolated use of ESS terminology; examples that lack relevance and explanation; very limited awareness of viewpoints or value systems other than their own; analysis/argument is lacking or no more than a list of facts/ideas; very limited ability to solve simple or familiar problems; judgments or conclusions are unclear and not supported by evidence or argument.

Practical work demonstrates: an ability to complete a basic investigation, with vague recognition of ethical issues and simplest of analytical techniques; some partial conclusions of some relevance to study; very limited appreciation of the potentially harmful impacts of the study; a limited grasp of environmental issue and link to the research question.

Grade 2

Demonstrates: fragmented or limited knowledge but little understanding of relevant ESS concepts and issues; generally incomprehensible accounts with very little, if any, use of ESS terminology; examples (if any) that are incomplete and or irrelevant; limited ability to express their own viewpoints or value system; no

evidence of real analysis/argument; attempts to solve simple or familiar problems are incorrect/unsuccessful; no clear attempt to make judgments/conclusions.

Practical work demonstrates: an ability to undertake basic investigations with little recognition of ethical issues and requiring considerable guidance and instruction; attempts at conclusions that are largely incorrect or irrelevant; no valid appreciation of the potentially harmful impacts of the study; identification of environmental issue is unclear or absent, and may not be linked to the research question.

Grade 1

Demonstrates: very little knowledge of relevant ESS concepts and issues; incomprehensible accounts with no use of ESS terminology; no recognisable use of examples; expresses no clear viewpoint/value system; no analysis/argument; no significant attempts to solve simple or familiar problems; no judgments/conclusions.

Practical work demonstrates: an ability to undertake very basic investigations with limited regard for ethical issues and completely dependent on supervised instruction; attempts at conclusions are either absent or completely incorrect/irrelevant; no recognition of the potentially harmful impacts of the study; no identification of an environmental issue.

Extended essay grade descriptors

Extended essay

Grade A

Demonstrates: effective research skills resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; the effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts further supporting this; consistent and relevant conclusions that are proficiently analysed; sustained reasoned argumentation supported effectively by evidence; critically evaluated research; excellent presentation of the essay, whereby coherence and consistency further support the reading of the essay; present and correctly applied structural and layout elements.

Engagement with the process is conceptual and personal, key decision-making during the research process is documented, and personal reflections are evidenced, including those that are forward-thinking.

Grade B

Demonstrates: appropriate research skills resulting in a research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; reasonably effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; good knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; a reasonably effective application of source material and use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts; consistent conclusions that are accurately analysed; reasoned argumentation often supported by evidence; research that at times evidences critical evaluation; a clear presentation of all structural and layout elements, which further supports the reading of the essay.

Engagement with the process is generally evidenced by the reflections and key decision-making during the research process is documented.

Grade C

Demonstrates: evidence of research undertaken, which has led to a research question that is not necessarily expressed in a way that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; partially effective engagement with mostly appropriate research areas, methods and sources—however, there are some discrepancies in those processes, although these do not interfere with the planning and approach; some knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which is mostly relevant; the attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; an attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis; conclusions partly supported by the evidence; discussion that is descriptive rather than analytical; attempted evaluation; satisfactory presentation of the essay, with weaknesses that do not hinder the reading of the essay; some structural and layout elements that are missing or are incorrectly applied.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but shows mostly factual information, with personal reflection mostly limited to procedural issues.

Grade D

Demonstrates: a lack of research, resulting in unsatisfactory focus and a research question that is not answerable within the scope of the chosen topic; “at times engagement with appropriate research, methods and sources, but discrepancies in those processes that occasionally interfere with the planning and

approach; some relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which are at times irrelevant; an attempted application of source material, but with inaccuracies in the use of, or underuse of, terminology and/or concepts; irrelevant analysis and inconsistent conclusions as a result of a descriptive discussion; a lack of evaluation; presentation of the essay that at times is illogical and hinders the reading; structural and layout elements that are missing.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but is superficial, with personal reflections that are solely narrative and concerned with procedural elements.

Grade E

Demonstrates: an unclear nature of the essay; a generally unsystematic approach and resulting unfocused research question; limited engagement with limited research and sources; generally limited and only partially accurate knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; ineffective connections in the application of source material and inaccuracies in the terminology and/or concepts used; a summarizing of results of research with inconsistent analysis; an attempted outline of an argument, but one that is generally descriptive in nature; a layout that generally lacks or incorrectly applies several layout and structural elements.

Engagement with the process is limited, with limited factual or decision-making information and no personal reflection on the process.

Theory of knowledge grade descriptors

Theory of knowledge

Grade A

Knowledge questions are thoroughly and effectively explored. Analysis is clear and coherent with a sustained focus on knowledge and knowing throughout. Links are clearly made and well-explained. Points are well-developed, with examples and evidence used effectively to support the exploration. Discussions include consideration of implications, assumptions and different points of view.

Grade B

Knowledge questions are explored. Analysis is clear, coherent and focused on knowledge and knowing. Links are made and explained, although these explanations may lack precision. Examples and evidence are used to support the exploration. Discussions identify some implications and/or assumptions and include some consideration of different points of view.

Grade C

There is some consideration of knowledge questions. Discussions are focused on knowledge and knowing but are more descriptive than analytical. Some relevant links are made. Examples and evidence are included. Different points of view are identified but are not evaluated.

Grade D

There is limited consideration of knowledge questions. Discussions are simplistic and mainly descriptive, with some focus on knowledge and knowing. Superficial links are made. Where examples and evidence are included, they do not support the points being made. There is little reference to different points of view.

Grade E

There is little consideration of knowledge questions. Discussions are simplistic and highly descriptive, with minimal focus on knowledge and knowing. Where links are made, these are inappropriate or lack relevance. Discussions consist of unsupported assertions. Different points of view are not identified.