



# Language Policy



## 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

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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

## **IB's 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 organisation works with schools, governments and international organisations 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.

## **WAT's Mission Statement**

The mission of the World Academy of Tirana (WAT) is to cultivate internationally-minded students who connect their acquired knowledge to action in the real world. Our goal is to inspire children to become active, compassionate, lifelong learners who can relate harmoniously with other people and cultures.

As an IB school, WAT's Vision, Mission and Values are closely aligned with the IB Learner Profile and provide a framework of values to which we aspire as a community. The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities

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## Our Philosophy of Language

This language policy aims to define the philosophy of World Academy of Tirana, where we offer education from PYP until DP, from grades Pre-Elementary through to Grade 12. The purpose of this document is to outline our goals for language teaching and learning and to guide our curriculum. The beliefs of our teachers and administrative staff support the goals included in this document. At WAT, through our language programme, we aim to develop effective communicators who are able to express their thoughts and feelings in daily life and in an academic context. We believe that students should be present in a language-rich environment where all school community members support the acquisition and enrichment of languages. Language learning nurtures growth and development as well as supporting international diversity and cultural understanding. Mother tongue language development is crucial for maintaining cultural identity. We also believe that the acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and supports internationalism.

### Mother tongue support

- For students whose mother tongue is not Albanian or English, additional classes can be programmed on a case by case basis, at extra cost.
- German and French are offered separately to native & non-native speakers during German/French scheduled classes in Primary and at differentiated levels in Secondary.
- Mandarin is offered at an emergent level during co-curriculars.
- Other languages are identified during week one of the academic year and are offered as co-curricular clubs

### School Language Profile for WAT

- The main language of teaching and learning is English.
- Albanian is the mother tongue for the majority of our students.
- Albanian is maintained at grade level proficiency for native speakers through their daily coursework mandated by the Albanian government.
- Albanian B classes are offered to non-native speakers in the PYP and MYP. Albanian MYP students fulfill the requirements of the Albanian Education Ministry through Albanian Geography and History coursework.
- Differentiated Albanian classes for native and non-native speakers are provided.
- French or German are offered as a second language from G1 in the PYP, and are delivered as mandatory Language B classes in MYP and DP.
- In PYP, ESL “pullout” classes are provided and, in MYP and DP, English B classes are provided according to the WAT Guidelines.
- The *main* language of instruction at WAT is English. While competence in the English language will develop in order to gain the fullest access to our written curriculum, we strive to support students in their mother tongue. The taught curriculum provides opportunities for the students to be active participants in the learning process. The teaching and learning should be meaningful, authentic and purposeful.

## Language Practices within the Classroom

### We believe the following:

- All teachers are language teachers.
- Language learning should be supported according to the level of the student's needs in an interactive, hands-on environment.
- Language learning in IB programmes is concept driven and inquiry based and taught in the context of relevant units of inquiry.
- Each student acquires language differently according to their learning style, ability, experiences and pace.
  - The use of mother tongue in social settings and selected activities should be encouraged and respected.
  - The development of the mother tongue should be supported through language classes and availability of age-appropriate texts and materials.
  - Students should receive appropriate and timely feedback about their progress in language development.
  - Students should recognize their own growth in the process of learning a new language.
  - Students should receive differentiated lessons according to their language needs.
  - Special accommodations should be made for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction.
  - There is provision for language professional development sessions for teachers to stay up to date with language learning and teaching methods.
  - Students' understanding of a language should be monitored and assessed using a variety of assessment strategies.
- The classroom environment should support languages of instruction and mother tongue.

## Language and Literature Classes

Through studying language and literature, students will show an increasing awareness of the power of language, both in their own, and others', language use. Students will be able to use and interpret language suitably for a variety of intentions and contexts.

### 1. PYP

As the language of instruction, English is involved in all learning stages including PYP. Through the PYP, language development is concerned with acquiring, applying as well as understanding of the use of language which should build the foundations required to study in the MYP and DP. Features of the English language curriculum include the PYP Language strands of:

- Written: Reading and Writing
- Oral: Listening and Speaking
- Viewing and Presenting

### 2. MYP (Grades 6 – 10)

MYP Language and Literature builds on experiences in language learning that students have gained during their time in the PYP, or in their previous years. Language and Literature is academically rigorous and requires students to develop an appreciation of language and literature. It provides students with

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linguistic, analytical and communicative skills that can also be used to develop interdisciplinary understanding across all other subject groups at increasing levels of sophistication. Appreciation of language and literature is built through the four criteria that are taught, which include:

- Analyzing
- Organizing
- Producing text
- Using Language

### **3. DP (Grades 11 – 12)**

The Diploma Programme is a rigorous pre-university course of study. The DP is designed to support future academic study by developing a high social, aesthetic, and cultural literacy, as well as effective communication skills. Through the study of a wide range of language and literature, Language A at WAT encourages students to appreciate the artistry of language and literature and to develop an ability to reflect critically on their reading, which is built upon the study of the following key areas:

- Know, understand and interpret
- Analyse and evaluate
- Communicate

## **Language Acquisition (Language B)**

At WAT, French and German are offered as additional languages from PYP through to DP (depending on numbers). We believe that students can expand and develop their minds and their knowledge through academic acquisition of a second language. Through French and German classes, the students are encouraged to inquire about French and German culture, arts, holidays, history and traditions.

English as an additional language (or Language B) is also offered for students whose academic level of English language does not yet meet the standards required in Language A.

French B and English B classes are offered during the regular school day schedule. These lessons are differentiated to meet the individual levels of the students into the phases as per IB requirements and the students are grouped accordingly.

### **1. MYP Language Acquisition**

In the MYP, language acquisition is organized under the same four communicative processes for each of the six phases as in PYP in order to assist teachers with planning, teaching and assessing. They are as follows:

- Listening
- Reading
- Speaking
- Writing

Some students in PYP and MYP are offered Albanian B

## 2. DP (Grades 11 – 12)

Students choose one of several options depending on their nationality, English language skills, and linguistic preferences:

- Albanian citizens are required to follow an Albanian Literature, Language A, course unless Parents formally opt out of this requirement in writing.
- Non native English speakers have the option to take English as a Language A or B.
- Students who do not take English B (native English speakers and those who demonstrate proficiency) must choose French B or German B or opt for a school supported Language A, Literature, self-taught course (SSST).
- In specific cases, students can choose their mother tongue as language A or B, in a school supported self-taught (SSST) online course. We have accommodated Romanian in MYP and Dutch, French and Georgian in DP.
- Appropriate Language placement in the DP allows for suitable degrees of challenge for development in those languages. “Language acquisition in DP is designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the language studied is spoken.” (DP language courses: overview and placement guidance)
- When placing a student in DP Language courses, please consult “**Placement of students in language courses**” in the *DP language courses: overview and placement guidance* Document. This has a useful table with “If a student can...” statements providing guidance in placing students in an appropriate language course.

### Students will:

- communicate clearly and effectively in a range of situations, demonstrating linguistic competence and intercultural understanding
- use language appropriate to a range of interpersonal and/or cultural contexts
- understand and use language to express and respond to a range of ideas with accuracy and fluency
- organize ideas on a range of topics, in a clear, coherent and convincing manner
- understand, analyse and respond to a range of written and spoken texts
- understand and use literature written in the target language of study

## Albanian Language

Albanian language programmes in our school are designed to help students develop and maintain an interest in the language itself, while gaining the knowledge and skills to become proficient in their native language. The programmes we offer accommodate two distinct language needs within our school.

- The first Albanian language programme is for Albanian children as their native language. This programme is organized to allow native speakers to maintain language proficiency and cultural identity. The curriculum allows students to continue to develop and improve their mother tongue throughout each school year. It is a national requirement that all Albanian citizens attend Albanian language and literature classes up until Grade10.
- In order to take the Albanian Matura assessments, students must fulfill Albanian Ministry of Education hour requirements for required Matura components. e.g in G11 and G12 there are three classes per week. For Albanian students, who do not wish to take the Matura assessments, parental permission is required to drop Albanian Literature: not attending Albanian classes will

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lead to the inability to complete Matura exams

- The second Albanian Language programme is for non-native Albanian speakers. This programme gives students the opportunity to discover more about Albania's culture, arts and history. With a focus on oral language, students are also introduced to words and phrases in the Albanian Language, pertaining to the functional vocabulary, grammar, and other daily aspects, important when moving to a new country. More information on this program can be found in the document, 'Albanian for Beginners'.

## Parent involvement with the Language Process

We believe that parents play an important role in their child's education. We also believe that the learning process continues at home and the students will benefit by writing and reading in their mother tongue as well as in English. Our teachers work closely with the parents to provide any needed materials or resources that will benefit the student's learning and acquisition of the languages. Library resources are available on request. We encourage parents to support their child by helping ensure completion of their daily homework.

## Guidelines for English B classes

### 1. The primary aims of the Language B programme are:

To enable English Language Learning initially to acquire basic survival skills and then conversational fluency with academic language proficiency and full independent participation in the homeroom English curriculum as the long-term objective. The classes range from 30-45 minute sessions.

### 2. In grades 4 through 10 (PYP and MYP), English B students are identified and placed according to the six Language Acquisition Phases by:

- Teacher-made assessments;
- student portfolios and other samples of work;
- reviewing school reports and records and teachers anecdotal records and observations;
- and conference with students, parents and their homeroom teachers.

### 3. English Language Acquisition teachers collaborate with subject teachers to facilitate the integration of students into their classrooms. Collaboration is done in the following ways:

- **English Language Acquisition teachers** align their Units of Inquiry and lesson plans with the subject classes.
- **English Language Acquisition** teachers work with subject teachers to produce assessment procedures to monitor students' progress. All students' work, assessments, and results are made available to students, parents and teachers.

## Transitioning from English B to English A

- Students are consistently assessed to determine their ability to participate full-time in the classroom. Assessment follows IB recommendations in each of the IB programmes by using a range of strategies and tools to gather information about students' knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding.
- Both the English A and B teachers are responsible for assessing ELL students according to the MYP language acquisition global proficiency table.
- When it is determined that the student has achieved a satisfactory level of proficiency, students may exit the programme.
- A student in Phase 5 & 6 in Grade 10 will need to spend at least one semester in Language A class before starting Language A: language and literature SL in DP.
- The parents and the students will be informed in a timely manner by the teachers, coordinator, or head of school.
- Our policy requires new students to take an English placement test before they are admitted to MYP 4 and above so that students have every chance of success in the DP.

### Language Policy Review Process

- The Language Policy will be reviewed and updated annually by the WAT staff and community.

## Bibliography

- *DP language courses: overview and placement guidance (IBO)*