

## **Germantown High School International Baccalaureate Language Policy**

### **I. Introduction**

Authorized in 2008, the Germantown High School International Baccalaureate Diploma Program seeks to perpetuate the longstanding traditions of Germantown High School through its rich program of study. Aligned with the school at large mission statement, the program integrates excellence in academics, arts, athletics, and community outreach. Central to the education of all students is the language(s) through which they learn and communicate, achieve and explore their acquired knowledge and skills in the world around them. Thus, this document contains Germantown High School's guidelines pertaining to language instruction for students in the IB Diploma Program. Instruction and support for languages A and B, along with the philosophy and aims of language teaching and learning are all addressed. We believe that the information outlined in this document is consistent with Germantown's school-wide approach to the IB Diploma Program. Additionally, we recognize language development as a critical component in not only the education of our students but also in the development of our students as critical thinkers, risk-takers, inquirers, and confident interactive citizens who are both principled and reflective in a global society. As a faculty we recognize that language acquisition, skills, and cultural awareness are of critical importance in our increasingly interdependent world. Important to the school's success is the awareness of these goals and practices; in an effort to encourage understanding and solicit community support we post the policies and guidelines on the IB Diploma Program website and invite and encourage innovative feedback and suggestions.

### **II. Philosophy**

Germantown High School believes that language learning is of utmost importance and must be at the center of instruction to facilitate communication skills in the Language A, student learning in other disciplines, and establish the foundation for lifelong learning skills. To succeed in the IB Diploma Program, students must be able to use language accurately and appropriately in a variety of modes. Students should expect to engage in diverse areas of performance: close reading of texts, identification and application of rhetorical devices in multiple genres of study, analysis and explanation of the purpose of literary techniques in the development of the author's purpose and the development of theme. Extensive writing instruction is critical to language development and sophistication in preparation for students to be successful in the academic and professional worlds as well as thoughtful global citizens. It is also essential for students to be able to understand language nuance because they encounter so many different kinds of texts and diversity in their colleagues in all classes. Oral discussion and individual oral presentations are an integral component of the IB program. As a result of the scope and importance of language competency, all IB faculty work with the faculty at large in a collaborative effort of language instruction.

Meanwhile, in order to stay in accord with the IB DP's focus on International-Mindedness, Germantown offers four different foreign languages that students may choose to take as Language B. Of the six areas of the IB DP circle, our foreign language classes address the principles of Language Acquisition, Studies in Language and Literature, and Individuals and Societies. This instruction provides our students with different perspectives culturally and

linguistically. Most importantly, Language B instruction prepares our students to enter and succeed in a global society.

### **III. Language Profile**

The language of instruction at Germantown High School is English with the exception of Language B classes. The majority of our IB DP students speak English as their first language. However, we have a large number of students who speak one or more other languages at home, of which nineteen, other than English, languages are represented. They include the following: Vietnamese, Japanese, Arabic, Spanish, Gujarati, Wolof, Chinese, Hindi, Mandarin, Urdu, Persian (Farsi), Russian, French, Telus, and Fula. We have students that fall into these categories: English speaking students with no or limited prior Language B instruction, English speaking students with prior Language B instruction, and bilingual students who speak in their mother tongue in addition to English.

#### **ESL**

To address the needs of students learning in a language other than their mother tongue, Germantown High School offers beginning, intermediate, and advanced classes in English as a Second Language (ESL). Up to two credits from the ESL program can be applied toward the 4-credit English graduation requirement. The transitional ESL program is designed to assist English Language Learners (ELL) in building a solid foundation in English and academic literacy while providing a linguistic bridge to the academic curriculum. Primary ESL instruction is in English with supplemental support in the native language. All English Language Learners benefit from individual learning plans. ELL students have a least one ESL class per day, but may be pulled from study periods or advisory periods for additional English language development support. In the spirit of cooperative approaches, the ESL and classroom teachers collaborate on a Language Support Plan (LSP) for each student that provides English proficiency data and suggests strategies to help ELL assimilate effectively into the classroom. Growth in English language proficiency is evaluated on an ongoing basis and instructional adjustments are made as the students' acquisition of English and academic literacy evolves.

#### **Language A**

Language A instruction encompasses all four years of enrollment in the IB Program. Students in Grades 9 and 10 are classified as Pre-IB enrollment. IB Language A: Literature HL is a 240 hour course looped over a two-year period of study at Grades 11 and 12. In pre-IB studies, students engage in the vocabulary of IB learning, embracing the descriptors of the IB Learner Profile and integrating those concepts into the English language curriculum conceptually and practically. Pre-IB classes are focused upon teaching close reading strategies, identification of text content for citing features conducive to analysis. Pre-IB English teaches the skill of dialogue and collaboration with peers for the purposes of discussion, oral presentations, and entertaining diverse viewpoints. Much time is devoted to inter-textuality among world literature texts and discerning the differences among texts from standpoints of voice, dramatic pacing, and/or divergent interpretation. Students advance analytical composition skills in identification of claim, citing evidence, and clarifying stance. At the IB level, students perfect close reading techniques and advanced analytical composition skills. All IB assessments align

with curricular planning executed in vertical planning and collaboration. All IB assessments are aligned with the curriculum to secure one hundred per cent participation in extended essay submission, appropriate selection and development of the written assignment, oral presentation and oral commentary. A primary focus of English A HL is the preparation for the May examinations requiring sophisticated commentary on both seen and unseen texts.

Additional IB electives include Creative Writing, Etymology, Journalism, and Literature and Performance, and Mythology. These electives enhance the academic, theoretical, and practical applications of all aspects of Language A study and cultural integration.

Language A and Language B faculty meet regularly to plan curriculum, synchronize due dates, and analyze and evaluate performance effectiveness. Reevaluation and adjustment to course content and activities are addressed on an on-going basis. Students in need of remediation or additional mentoring find language tutoring during Advisory Period and special tutoring services offered twice weekly after school.

### **Language B**

All Language B classes are taught in the target language with the exception of Latin.

Germantown High offers students the choice of taking one of these as their Language B: French, German, Latin, or Spanish. Some students will have begun their language instruction in middle school and will continue through their time at Germantown High. Many others will begin their language instruction upon their arrival at Germantown. IB DP students take Honors/Pre-IB classes and then take their Language B IB course at the Standard or Higher Level over the course of two years.

There are two potential Language B tracks. For students with no prior experience in the language of study, they may start their Language B study as a freshman and will take their IB exams in their senior year. These students must meet the criteria for Honors/IB studies at Germantown High School.

Germantown High School is fortunate to have several feeder schools offering foreign languages (French, Spanish and/or Latin) in the elementary and middle school years, either through exploratory classes or classes for high school credit. For students who are enrolled in a course of study and receive a Carnegie Credit for Level 1 of high school foreign language study, a logical path for Language B study would be placement into Level 2 as a freshman, with three additional years of Language B study. Students on this track may choose to take the SL as a Junior, or the SL or the HL test as a Senior.

### **Extra-curricular Language and Culture Opportunities**

Language A students find a creative writing outlet through submission to the literary magazine *The Iconoclast* or serving on its editorial staff. Frequent submissions to national competitions sponsored by Creative Communications and a variety of other organizations continue to garner highest ratings and awards for GHS students. Students place yearly in the NCTE Writing Awards, a national writing competition. In addition, students compete in the annual Wordsmith Writing Competition sponsored by the University of Memphis. Journalism students pursue news media interests through participation on *The Pitchfork*, the school newspaper. The staff also participates in the Mississippi Scholastic Press Conference at the University of Mississippi to

participate in the annual journalism retreat and competition. Quill and Scroll is the creative writing and journalism honor society.

Language B students are encouraged to practice and utilize their language of study both within and outside of the school community. Every fall students participate in Foreign Language Week at GHS, a cross-cultural exchange among students within the foreign language department. In addition German students sponsor an annual Oktoberfest. Also, a long-time tradition is the participation in the University of Memphis Foreign Language Fair, a regional competition among public and private high schools in the tri-state region. Classical languages compete in a similar competition at the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga. For those students interested in travel scholarships, they may choose to compete in the National Examinations sponsored by the local chapters of the Honor Societies.

Germantown High School also sponsors a chapter in the following Honor Societies. These Honor Societies are service organizations, which require students to maintain a GPA representative of academic excellence as well as service hours in their school and local communities using their target language. Inductions into these prestigious organizations are held according to the criteria established by the professional associations and the local chapters.

Die Deutsche Ehrenverbindung (AATG)  
Societe Honoraire de Francais (AATF)  
Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica (AATSP)  
National Latin Honors Society (NLHS)

The following are a list of organizations with which Honor Societies are partnered:

- Alliance Francaise – French Writing Contest/ community projects
- Celebrate French! – Local service organization
- Orfanos - Students write holiday cards to orphan children throughout the world.
- Latino Memphis - Students participate in a variety of service activities advocating the rights of Spanish speakers and immigrants in Greater Memphis
- StoryTime - Students who are interested in theater perform children's stories in partnership with Germantown and Collierville Public Libraries and other community organizations.