ECLASSOPEDIA

Premium IB Coaching & Academic Excellence

How to Choose IB Subjects

The Definitive Diploma Programme Guide

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Foreword from Eclassopedia

Choosing your International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) subjects is one of the most consequential academic decisions you will ever make. It shapes your university applications, determines which degree programmes you are eligible for, and, most importantly, influences whether your final two years of school are energising or exhausting.

At Eclassopedia, we have guided thousands of IB students across the globe through this exact crossroads. Our expert tutors, many of whom are former IB examiners and university admissions consultants, have distilled years of insight into this single, comprehensive guide. Whether you are a student approaching subject selection for the first time or a parent trying to support your child, this 2026 edition is your definitive companion.

The IB DP is a rigorous, internationally recognised qualification accepted by top universities worldwide. The subject choices you make now lay the groundwork for where you will study, what you will study, and ultimately the career you will build. Use this guide wisely — and remember, the Eclassopedia team is always here to help.

Chapter 1: Understanding the IB Diploma Programme Structure

1.1 What Is the IB Diploma Programme?

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is a two-year pre-university curriculum designed for students aged 16 to 19. Launched in 1968 and now offered in over 5,000 schools across 160 countries, the IB DP is celebrated for its academic breadth, depth, and its holistic approach to education. Unlike single-subject or purely exam-focused systems, the IB DP insists that students become well-rounded thinkers, communicators, and global citizens.

In 2026, the IB DP continues to evolve in response to shifting university admission practices and global workforce demands. Universities from the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Singapore, the Netherlands, and beyond actively seek IB Diploma holders, recognising the credential as a mark of intellectual rigour and intercultural awareness.

1.2 The Six Subject Groups

Every IB DP student must choose one subject from each of the following six groups:

Group	Subject Area	Example Subjects
Group 1	Studies in Language & Literature	English A: Literature, English A: Language & Literature, Hindi A, French A
Group 2	Language Acquisition	French B, Spanish B, Mandarin B, German Ab Initio

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Group	Subject Area	Example Subjects
Group 3	Individuals & Societies	Economics, History, Geography, Psychology, Business Management, Philosophy
Group 4	Sciences	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Environmental Systems & Societies
Group 5	Mathematics	Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches (AA), Mathematics: Applications & Interpretation (AI)
Group 6	The Arts (or a replacement)	Visual Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, Dance — or a second subject from Groups 1–4

Of the six subjects chosen, three must be taken at Higher Level (HL) — typically 240 teaching hours — and three at Standard Level (SL) — typically 150 teaching hours. The distinction between HL and SL is critical, as universities frequently specify minimum HL grades for competitive courses.

1.3 The Core Components

Beyond the six subjects, all IB Diploma students must complete three core requirements:

- Theory of Knowledge (TOK): A unique interdisciplinary course that challenges students to reflect on the nature of knowledge across different disciplines. Students produce a TOK Exhibition and a TOK Essay, with performance contributing up to 3 bonus points.
- Extended Essay (EE): A 4,000-word independent research essay in a subject of the student's choosing. The EE develops university-level research and writing skills and is assessed externally by IB examiners. Combined with TOK, it can contribute 0–3 bonus points.
- Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS): A programme of extracurricular engagement that ensures students develop as people, not just as exam candidates. CAS is not graded but must be completed satisfactorily to receive the Diploma.

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The TOK–EE matrix can add up to 3 bonus points to your total score, potentially lifting you from 42 to 45. Many students underestimate this — Eclassopedia's dedicated TOK and EE tutors help you maximise every point.

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1.4 How the Diploma Is Scored

Each of the six subjects is graded on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest), giving a maximum of 42 subject points. Add the potential 3 bonus points from TOK and the EE, and the absolute maximum is 45 points. The minimum to earn the Diploma is 24 points, with no subject scoring below a 2 and with core requirements fulfilled.

Top universities typically expect scores of 38–42+ for the most competitive programmes. Understanding this scoring system at the outset helps students make strategic subject choices that maximise their chances of achieving their target score.

Chapter 2: The Factors That Should Drive Your Subject Choices

2.1 Factor One — University Course Requirements

The single most important driver of subject selection is your intended university destination and degree programme. Universities worldwide publish specific IB subject requirements, and failing to meet them can mean rejection regardless of your overall score.

Below are common requirements for popular degree pathways in 2026:

Degree Programme	Typical HL Requirements	Notes
Medicine / Dentistry	Biology HL + Chemistry HL (score 6 or 7)	Most UK and European medical schools require both at HL
Engineering	Mathematics AA HL + Physics HL	Many US and UK universities also want Chemistry or Computer Science
Economics / Business	Mathematics HL or AA HL recommended	LSE, Warwick, and others may specify Maths HL
Law	History or Literature HL preferred	Strong performance in Group 1 and Group 3 valued
Computer Science / AI	Mathematics AA HL + Computer Science HL	Physics HL an advantage for hardware/systems programmes
Psychology	Biology HL or Psychology HL	Varies significantly by institution
Architecture	Mathematics HL + Visual Arts or Physics HL	Portfolio may also be required

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Degree Programme	Typical HL Requirements	Notes
International Relations	History HL + a Language B	Global perspectives valued highly

⚠ Important Warning

Subject requirements change annually. Always check the official admissions pages of your target universities before finalising your choices. Eclassopedia's admissions counsellors provide up-to-date requirement checks for 2026 intake cycles.

2.2 Factor Two — Your Genuine Interests and Strengths

While university requirements are paramount, they must be balanced against your genuine academic interests and strengths. IB HL subjects demand 240 hours of teaching, plus significant independent study. Choosing a subject purely because it looks impressive — without real interest or aptitude — is a recipe for burnout and lower grades.

Ask yourself honestly: In which subjects do I consistently perform well? Which subjects do I enjoy revising, even when exams are not imminent? Which subjects make me want to explore ideas beyond the syllabus?

The answers to these questions should form the backbone of at least two or three of your HL choices. Students who marry strategic selection with genuine passion consistently outperform those who select purely on the basis of perception.

2.3 Factor Three — The HL vs SL Decision

Perhaps no single decision carries more weight in subject selection than determining which three subjects to take at Higher Level. Here are the key principles Eclassopedia recommends:

- Take at HL the subjects required by your target university courses — this is non-negotiable.
- Take at HL the subjects in which you are most likely to score 6 or 7.
- Avoid taking a subject at HL purely because it sounds prestigious; a 7 at SL is worth the same as a 7 at HL in terms of points.
- Be aware that HL subjects carry a significantly higher internal and external assessment burden. Never underestimate the jump from SL to HL.

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💡 Eclassopedia Strategy

We often advise students who are borderline between HL and SL for a subject to trial both routes for the first month of Year 1, then make a final decision. This avoids locking in a choice that becomes a burden over two years.

2.4 Factor Four — Your School's Subject Offerings

IB schools differ significantly in which subjects they offer and how strong their teaching is in each. It is worth researching your school's recent IB results by subject before making a final choice. A subject with world-class teaching at your school may be a better choice than a subject you prefer but your school teaches less effectively.

If your school does not offer a subject you require, online IB tutoring platforms — such as Eclassopedia — can supplement or even fully deliver subject content through qualified IB tutors.

2.5 Factor Five — Workload Balance

A significant but often overlooked factor is workload balance across your six subjects. The most common mistake students make is choosing a combination that produces an unsustainable workload, particularly in Year 2 when internal assessments, mock exams, the Extended Essay, TOK, and CAS all converge simultaneously.

As a rule of thumb, aim for a balanced combination — perhaps two science HLs and one humanities HL, or two humanities HLs and one science HL. Choosing three science HLs alongside Mathematics AA HL is possible, but only recommended for students with exceptional scientific aptitude and strong time management skills.

Chapter 3: A Deep Dive Into Each Subject Group

Group 1 — Studies in Language & Literature

Group 1 subjects form the linguistic and literary foundation of the IB DP. Every student must choose a Language A — their strongest language, usually their mother tongue or the primary language of instruction at their school.

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English A: Literature vs Language & Literature

The choice between English A: Literature and English A: Language & Literature is one of the most common dilemmas for anglophone students. Literature focuses entirely on literary texts — novels, poetry, drama, and prose — emphasising close reading, literary analysis, and comparative study. Language & Literature includes non-literary texts such as advertisements, speeches, news articles, and social media, broadening the scope of analysis to include how language functions in wider society.

- Choose Literature if: You love novels and poetry, you plan to study English Literature, Law, or Philosophy at university, or you are a confident literary analyst.
- Choose Language & Literature if: You are interested in media, communications, journalism, or politics, or if you find broad textual analysis more engaging than purely literary study.

At HL, both courses require two written tasks and a comprehensive examination. Universities generally regard both courses equally. The choice should reflect your genuine interests and strengths.

Group 1 in Languages Other Than English

If your strongest language is not English — for example, Hindi, Arabic, Mandarin, or French — you may take your Language A in that language. Schools may offer these as School-Supported Self-Taught (SSST) options if no teacher is available on-site. Eclassopedia provides dedicated Language A tutoring in a wide range of languages for self-taught students.

Group 2 — Language Acquisition

Group 2 is the language acquisition group — the second language. Students can choose from Language B (for those with prior exposure to the language) or Ab Initio (for true beginners, SL only).

Language B

Language B subjects are available in dozens of languages, including French, Spanish, German, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, and Hindi. HL Language B is a demanding course requiring sophisticated linguistic production and analysis of authentic literary and non-literary texts. SL Language B is more accessible but still expects genuine communicative competence.

Ab Initio

Ab Initio is designed for students with little or no prior knowledge of the language. It is only available at SL. Students who choose Ab Initio should not underestimate the commitment required — learning a language from scratch while managing five other IB subjects and the core requirements demands consistent daily study.

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Choosing a language strategically can open doors. Mandarin B HL is increasingly valued by universities and employers given China's economic influence. Eclassopedia offers expert Mandarin B, Spanish B, French B, and German B tutoring at both HL and SL.

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Group 3 — Individuals & Societies

Group 3 covers the social sciences and humanities, including Economics, History, Geography, Psychology, Business Management, Global Politics, Environmental Systems & Societies (ESS), Philosophy, and Social & Cultural Anthropology. This is one of the most diverse groups, offering something for virtually every student.

Economics

Economics is consistently one of the most popular IB subjects globally. It blends theoretical models with real-world application and is valued by universities offering degrees in Economics, Finance, Politics, Business, and Law. At HL, students cover Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, International Economics, and Development Economics in significantly greater depth than at SL.

History

History HL is regarded by many universities as one of the most rigorous IB subjects. It develops exceptional essay-writing and analytical skills. Students choose from a range of prescribed subjects and world history topics, making history a highly flexible and globally relevant subject.

Psychology

IB Psychology has grown in popularity significantly over the past decade. It introduces students to biological, cognitive, and sociocultural approaches to human behaviour, with a substantial research component. At HL, students conduct internal assessment experiments and explore additional options such as Abnormal Psychology or Developmental Psychology.

Business Management

Business Management suits students interested in entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, and organisational behaviour. It is less mathematically demanding than Economics and places greater emphasis on case studies, strategic analysis, and business decision-making.

Group 4 — Sciences

Group 4 includes Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Environmental Systems & Societies (ESS), and Sports, Exercise & Health Science (SEHS). Science subjects are among the most demanding in the IB DP, particularly at HL.

Biology

IB Biology is often chosen by students aspiring to careers in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, nursing, and biological research. The 2023 syllabus revision introduced a more concept-driven

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approach, emphasising evolution, ecology, and cellular processes. At HL, students tackle additional content including genomics and immunology in greater depth.

Chemistry

Chemistry is considered by many students as the most demanding science option. It underpins medicine, pharmacy, materials science, chemical engineering, and food science. At HL, the mathematical component of chemistry increases significantly — students must be comfortable with quantitative analysis and problem-solving.

Physics

Physics at HL is essential for engineering, architecture, aerospace, and physical sciences. It is a highly mathematical subject, and students considering Physics HL are strongly advised to pair it with Mathematics AA HL. The internal assessment component — an independent experimental investigation — rewards students who are curious, methodical, and creative.

Computer Science

With the global demand for technology skills at an all-time high in 2026, Computer Science is increasingly chosen by students targeting careers in software development, artificial intelligence, data science, and cybersecurity. The IB Computer Science course covers object-oriented programming, system design, networks, and computational thinking, with a significant programming component.

Group 5 — Mathematics

In the 2026 IB DP, students choose between two mathematics courses: Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches (AA) and Mathematics: Applications & Interpretation (AI). This is perhaps the most consequential single subject choice a student makes.

Feature	Mathematics AA	Mathematics AI
Focus	Pure mathematics, algebra, calculus, proof	Applied mathematics, statistics, modelling
HL Emphasis	Abstract reasoning, rigorous proofs	Technology-assisted problem solving
Best For	Engineering, Physics, Pure Maths, Economics	Social Sciences, Business, Biology, Design
University Perception	Universally accepted; often required for technical degrees	Accepted for most courses; some engineering programmes prefer AA
Difficulty (HL)	Widely regarded as most challenging IB course	Challenging but more applied in nature
Calculator Use	Paper 1 is non-calculator	Calculator permitted in all papers

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The choice between AA and AI — and between HL and SL — is among the most discussed topics in IB coaching. Eclassopedia has developed a proprietary diagnostic assessment to help students determine which mathematics course suits their aptitude and aspirations.

Eclassopedia Mathematics Advice

Mathematics AA HL is often called the hardest IB subject. Choose it only if you have a genuine mathematical aptitude and if your target degree requires it. A 7 in Mathematics AI HL is academically impressive and increasingly accepted by leading universities worldwide.

Group 6 — The Arts (or Replacement Subject)

Group 6 offers Visual Arts, Music, Theatre, Film, and Dance. Crucially, students who do not wish to study an arts subject may instead choose a second subject from Groups 1 through 4. This flexibility makes Group 6 a strategic choice for many students.

Arts subjects are assessed through portfolios, performances, exhibitions, and written comparative studies. They require sustained creative commitment across two years. Students who love the arts should not shy away from choosing them — top universities value demonstrated creative talent and the analytical skills arts subjects develop.

For students not pursuing arts degrees, common Group 6 replacements include a second science (e.g., taking both Biology and Chemistry), a second Group 3 subject (e.g., both Economics and History), or an additional language. The replacement choice should be driven by university requirements and personal interest.

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Chapter 4: Subject Combinations for Popular University Pathways

Below, Eclassopedia presents recommended subject combinations for the most popular university and career pathways in 2026. These combinations reflect real requirements and real outcomes from our student community.

Medicine & Health Sciences
HL: Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics AA or AI
SL: English A, Language B, Psychology or Physics
Notes: Most UK medical schools require Biology HL and Chemistry HL with scores of 6 or 7. The US requires strong science and mathematics performance across the board. Eclassopedia's pre-med programme has helped students gain admission to UCL, King's College London, Edinburgh, and NUS Medicine.

Engineering (Mechanical, Civil, Electrical, Chemical)
HL: Mathematics AA, Physics, Chemistry or Computer Science
SL: English A, Language B, Economics or History
Notes: The Imperial College London requirement is Maths AA HL (grade 7) and Physics HL (grade 6). MIT considers the full profile. Computer Science HL is increasingly recommended for software and systems engineering.

Economics, Finance & Business
HL: Mathematics AA or AI, Economics, History or Geography
SL: English A, Language B, Business Management or Psychology
Notes: LSE specifies Maths at HL (AA preferred). Oxford PPE requires strong performance across humanities and mathematics. Business Management SL pairs well with Economics HL to provide practical and theoretical balance.

Law & International Relations
HL: History, English A: Literature, Economics or Global Politics
SL: Mathematics AI, Language B, Geography or Psychology
Notes: Oxford Law does not specify IB subjects but values academic breadth and excellent essay skills. Many students choose three humanities HLs. Language B at HL is an asset for international law and diplomacy pathways.

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Computer Science, Data Science & AI
HL: Mathematics AA, Computer Science, Physics or Chemistry
SL: English A, Language B, Economics or Psychology
Notes: Carnegie Mellon, ETH Zurich, and IIT Delhi all value strong mathematical foundations. Computer Science HL provides essential programming exposure. Maths AA HL is non-negotiable for most top CS programmes.

Architecture & Design
HL: Mathematics AA or AI, Visual Arts or Physics, History or Environmental Systems
SL: English A, Language B, Geography
Notes: Architecture balances technical skill with creative vision. UCL Bartlett and the AA School of Architecture value both artistic and mathematical ability. A strong portfolio complements subject grades.

Humanities, Social Sciences & Psychology
HL: Psychology, History or Geography, English A
SL: Mathematics AI, Language B, Biology or Economics
Notes: Social science degrees at LSE, UCL, and the University of Toronto welcome strong Group 3 performances. Psychology HL's internal assessment develops genuine research skills valued in graduate admissions.

Chapter 5: Common Mistakes to Avoid

5.1 Following Friends Rather Than Your Own Path

One of the most common and damaging mistakes in IB subject selection is choosing subjects because your friends are choosing them. Your subject combination needs to serve your university ambitions and your personal strengths — not your social circle. The IB DP is a two-year journey that will test your resilience, curiosity, and discipline. Sharing subjects with friends may ease social pressure in the short term, but it can create serious academic and career consequences in the long term.

5.2 Underestimating HL Demands

Students frequently underestimate how demanding Higher Level subjects are compared to IGCSE or GCSE work. HL Chemistry, HL Mathematics AA, and HL History, for example, require not just more content but a qualitatively different level of analytical and applied thinking. Before selecting three HLs, honestly assess whether you have the academic foundation, the time, and the resilience to succeed at that level in each subject.

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5.3 Ignoring Internal Assessment Requirements

Every IB subject includes an internally assessed component — a science investigation, a history internal assessment, a mathematics exploration, a language oral commentary, or an arts portfolio. These are substantial pieces of work that take weeks to plan, draft, and refine. Before selecting a subject, understand what its internal assessment involves and whether you are prepared to commit to that process.

5.4 Not Planning for the Extended Essay

The Extended Essay must be completed in one of your six chosen subjects. Some students choose a subject precisely because they want to write an Extended Essay in it. Others discover in Year 1 that their chosen EE subject is their weakest or least engaging. Think ahead about the Extended Essay when selecting your subjects — ideally, your EE subject should be one where you have both genuine curiosity and academic strength.

5.5 Choosing Based on Reputation Rather Than Fit

Physics HL has a reputation for being impressively difficult. Mathematics AA HL is known as the hardest IB course. History HL is considered by some to be a gold standard humanities subject. These reputations can lead students to choose subjects for their perceived prestige rather than their genuine aptitude. A well-earned 7 in a subject that suits you is immeasurably more valuable than a hard-fought 4 in a subject chosen for its reputation.

Eclassopedia Principle

We always tell our students: choose subjects that let you perform at your best, not subjects that will merely impress others. Authentic academic strength is what top universities are looking for.

Chapter 6: The Role of IB Tutoring in Subject Success

6.1 Why IB Tutoring Matters More Than Ever in 2026

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The IB DP in 2026 is more competitive than at any point in its history. Grade boundaries have tightened at several top universities, and the number of IB students globally continues to grow. In this environment, expert, personalised tutoring is no longer a luxury — it is a strategic necessity for students who aspire to the top tier of university admissions.

Eclassopedia was founded on the belief that every student deserves access to the best IB teaching in the world, regardless of geography. Our platform connects students in Mumbai, Dubai, Singapore, London, New York, and beyond with highly qualified IB tutors who understand the syllabus inside and out, have marked real IB papers, and have guided students to scores of 40 and above.

6.2 How Eclassopedia Supports Subject Selection

Before a student even begins the IB DP, Eclassopedia offers a comprehensive Subject Selection Consultation — a structured 90-minute session with one of our senior IB coaches. During this session, we:

- Review your academic history and current strengths across subjects
- Discuss your university aspirations and target degree programmes
- Analyse specific university requirements for your top choices in 2026
- Walk you through the internal assessment and examination demands of each subject you are considering
- Provide a personalised recommended combination with clear rationale
- Identify potential risks and contingency options if your circumstances change

6.3 Subject-Specific Tutoring at Eclassopedia

Once subject selection is finalised, Eclassopedia provides one-to-one and small group tutoring in all IB subjects, including:

Subject Group	Eclassopedia Tutoring Offer
Group 1 — Language & Literature	Essay technique, textual analysis, oral commentary preparation, Paper 1 & 2 practice
Group 2 — Language Acquisition	Speaking, writing, listening, reading — all four skills; exam preparation; Ab Initio intensive courses
Group 3 — Individuals & Societies	Economics, History, Geography, Psychology, Business Management — content, IA support, past paper practice
Group 4 — Sciences	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science — concept teaching, IA design, lab report writing
Group 5 — Mathematics	AA HL/SL and AI HL/SL — concept teaching, exploration coaching, Paper 1/2/3 preparation
Group 6 — The Arts	Visual Arts, Music, Theatre — portfolio development, comparative study support, performance preparation
Core — TOK	Knowledge questions, exhibition preparation, essay structuring and drafting

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Subject Group	Eclassopedia Tutoring Offer
Core — Extended Essay	Topic selection, research guidance, drafting, supervisor-style feedback across all subjects
Core — CAS	Reflection support, CAS project planning, portfolio guidance

6.4 The Eclassopedia Difference

What sets Eclassopedia apart in a crowded tutoring market is the depth of IB expertise our tutors bring. Many of our tutors are:

- Former IB examiners who have marked thousands of real student scripts
- Graduates of top universities including Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, IIT, NUS, and the Ivy League
- Experienced IB teachers who have taught in IB World Schools across multiple countries
- Subject matter specialists with postgraduate qualifications in their disciplines

Our students consistently achieve average scores of 38 or above — significantly higher than the global IB average of approximately 30 points. In 2025, over 70% of Eclassopedia students who targeted a score of 40+ achieved their goal.

Chapter 7: Frequently Asked Questions

Can I change my subjects after starting the IB DP?

In most schools, subject changes are possible within the first few weeks of Year 1 (Grade 11). After that, changes become increasingly difficult due to syllabus content covered, internal assessments begun, and school timetabling constraints. It is far better to make the right choice at the outset than to attempt a change mid-course. If you are unsure, Eclassopedia's Subject Selection Consultation is designed precisely to help you make confident choices from day one.

Is it possible to take four subjects at HL?

Technically, schools can allow students to take four subjects at HL, though this is relatively rare and not required. Some students choose to do so when two subjects fall at the boundary of their HL decision, or when a specific subject combination for a competitive university requires it. However, four HLs dramatically increases workload and should only be considered by students with exceptional academic capacity and robust support structures in place.

Which subject is easiest in the IB DP?

This is a question Eclassopedia gently discourages. Every subject has a different kind of demand — what is easy for one student may be extremely challenging for another. That said, students who have not studied a particular science, humanities, or language subject before will generally find subjects they have prior background in more accessible. Rather than asking which subject is easiest, ask which subjects you are most likely to perform excellently in, given your strengths and interests.

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Do universities penalise students for taking Mathematics AI instead of AA?

In 2026, the vast majority of universities accept both Mathematics courses. However, some engineering, physical sciences, and pure mathematics programmes specifically require or prefer Mathematics AA HL. Always verify the specific requirements of your target programmes. For most social sciences, humanities, business, and life sciences programmes, Mathematics AI HL is fully accepted and respected.

How important is the Extended Essay in university admissions?

The Extended Essay is a significant differentiator in competitive university admissions. Many top universities, particularly in the UK and the Netherlands, read the Extended Essay as evidence of a student's intellectual independence and research capability. A well-written EE on an ambitious topic — ideally connected to your intended degree — can strengthen an application considerably. Eclassopedia's EE coaching programme guides students from topic selection to final submission.

Can I study a subject my school does not offer?

Yes — online tutoring platforms like Eclassopedia make it possible to study IB subjects that your school does not offer or does not offer at the level you need. Some students use Eclassopedia to access HL tuition in a subject their school only teaches at SL, or to access an entirely different subject through self-study and online teaching. This requires school approval and strong self-discipline, but it is increasingly common among ambitious IB students.

Chapter 8: A Step-by-Step Subject Selection Action Plan

Use the following action plan to structure your subject selection process. Eclassopedia recommends beginning this process at least three months before your school's subject selection deadline.

1. Research Your University Aspirations: List 5–10 universities and 2–3 degree programmes you are seriously considering. Note the IB subject requirements for each.
2. Identify Non-Negotiable Subjects: Based on your research, identify any subjects that are required at HL for your target programmes. These are your fixed points — everything else is built around them.
3. Assess Your Strengths: Review your IGCSE, GCSE, or equivalent results. Identify the subjects where you consistently performed at the highest level. These are strong candidates for HL.
4. Consider Workload Balance: Sketch out your potential combination and honestly assess the workload. Are all three HLs subjects you are genuinely strong in? Is the combination balanced across science, humanities, and languages?
5. Speak to Current IB Students: Talk to students one or two years ahead of you who are studying the subjects you are considering. Ask them about workload, internal assessments, and their honest assessment of each subject.
6. Book an Eclassopedia Subject Selection Consultation: Our senior IB coaches will validate your thinking, identify any risks, and give you a clear, personalised recommendation based on your specific profile and ambitions.

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7. Finalise and Commit: Once you have completed the above steps, finalise your combination and commit to it wholeheartedly. Confident, purposeful engagement with your chosen subjects from Day 1 is the single biggest predictor of IB success.

Closing Words from Eclassopedia

Choosing your IB Diploma Programme subjects is not merely an administrative decision — it is the first major strategic choice of your academic career. Done thoughtfully, it sets you on a path to the universities and opportunities you have been working towards. Done carelessly, it can close doors before they have even opened.

Eclassopedia exists to ensure that every student — wherever they are in the world — has access to the expert guidance needed to make this decision wisely. Our Subject Selection Consultations, our subject-specific tutoring, our TOK and EE coaching, and our university admissions support are all designed with one purpose in mind: helping you achieve your maximum potential in the IB Diploma Programme.

We wish you every success in your IB journey. The road ahead is challenging, intellectually exhilarating, and ultimately deeply rewarding. With the right subjects, the right support, and the right mindset, the very best universities in the world are within your reach.

— The Eclassopedia Academic Team, 2026

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This guide is intended for informational purposes only. University requirements are subject to change. Always verify requirements directly with institutions.