



**REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA**  
**XV. GIMNAZIJA**  
Program međunarodne mature  
International Baccalaureate Department  
Zagreb, Jordanovac 8, Croatia  
tel: +385 1 230 2255  
e-mail: [ibzagreb-myp@hi.htnet.hr](mailto:ibzagreb-myp@hi.htnet.hr)



## **LANGUAGE POLICY**

### **The Middle Years Programme- Years 4 & 5**

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#### **Introduction**

This policy outlines the philosophy and aims of language teaching and learning across DP courses and requirements. It defines provisions for language teaching based on the school profile and in accordance with the IB principles.

#### **Philosophy and Aims**

The attributes of the IB learner profile and others like them that help students become lifelong learners, responsible citizens of both local and global communities are at the core of our value system, and we see the role of language in achieving these aims as crucial.

Language is the primary means of communication and foundation for all learning. In order for students to become successful learners and lifelong learners they must become language proficient; in other words, be able to use language, spoken and written, accurately, confidently and creatively in a variety of social contexts and for a variety of academic, social and personal purposes. Language enables us to collaborate effectively and listen carefully to the perspectives of others, and it is inextricably linked to our capacities for critical and creative thinking as well as to our aptitude to formulate and express ideas and feelings. Language also enables students to become inquirers, communicators and life-long learners. Furthermore, language proficiency enables students to acquire knowledge related to all areas of the IB Middle Years and Diploma Programme curricular framework. Through language acquisition students enhance not only the knowledge of their own language and culture but of other languages and cultures studied, thus enriching their international mindedness. Language acquisition is a life-long process.

#### **School language profile**

The language of instruction in the school's MYP is English. However, since most of the MYP students are Croatian citizens, Croatian is also often used as a form of communication inside and outside of the classroom. All of MYP Croatian national students follow Language and Literature - Croatian course whereas all non-Croatian national students follow Language Acquisition - Croatian course for foreigners.

Teachers of all subject groups use English as language of instruction and are responsible for introducing, developing and reinforcing specific, subject related register.

IB language philosophy of placing a high value to mother tongue learning is highly appreciated and followed in our school. It is also the basis for the language provision for both literature and language acquisition.

The following language options are offered in school:

**Language and literature- both Croatian and English** courses taught in student`s mother tongue or student`s best language; compulsory in all 4 years of the program (MYP and DP)

**Language acquisition** course- English, French, German and Croatian, taken at various levels depending on the previous knowledge of the language, compulsory course in the MYP, optional in the DP.

**The Middle Years Programme** (MYP4 and MYP5) at our school offers English as the language of instruction.

In order to enrol to the MYP students take an English entrance exam, unless they are native speakers or have been educated in English for at least two years. Depending on the level of their English knowledge, the results on the entrance exam/placement test as well as their previous schooling, all our students take either Language and Literature- English, or Language Acquisition- English, Phase V in MYP4 and Phase VI in MYP5.

In accordance with national educational regulations on mother language learning regulated by the Ministry of Education, all Croatian citizens, even if they have multiple citizenships one of which is Croatian, are obliged to study Croatian as their mother tongue i.e. Language and Literature in all 4 years of high school in Croatia, regardless of the programme.

In addition to English and Croatian all of MYP students also choose a second foreign language - French or German – either at the beginners level ( Phase 1) or standard level (Phase 3 and 4) depending on their previous learning experience.

Depending on the number of interested students, Latin is also offered as an optional subject and is taught in Croatian.

Bellow is the table with the number of teaching hours and language courses:

| <b><i>International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP4&amp;5)</i></b> |                                   |                            |                 |                            |                 |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
|  |                                   | <b>MYP4 teaching hours</b> |                 | <b>MYP5 teaching hours</b> |                 |
|  |                                   | Per week                   | Per school year | Per week                   | Per school year |
| <b>I Language and literature</b>   |                                   |                            |                 |                            |                 |
|  | Croatian                          | 5                          | 175             | 4                          | 140             |
|  | English                           | 4                          | 140             | 5                          | 175             |
| <b>II Language acquisition</b>   |                                   |                            |                 |                            |                 |
|  | English                           | 4                          | 140             | 5                          | 175             |
|  | French                            | 3                          | 105             | 3                          | 105             |
|  | German                            | 3                          | 105             | 3                          | 105             |
|  | Croatian                          | 3                          | 105             | 3                          | 105             |
|  | Latin in Croatian(non-MYP course) | 2                          | 70              | 2                          | 70              |

### **English language policy**

English, being the language of instruction in the MYP as well as DP, is offered as one of the two Language and Literature courses. Since there is a variety of students arriving from different parts of the world, as well as Croatian students who all have different English language backgrounds, the school also offers English Language acquisition at a very high level of proficiency (Phase 5 in MYP4 and Phase 6 in MYP5).

Many students who follow English Language and Literature in MYP5 also choose the Language and Literature course in the DP.

The English Language Acquisition students normally choose English at high level as Language Acquisition course in the DP.

**Language and literature** is primarily focused on literature and involves different aspects of communication – oral, written and visual thus developing such skills.

The course encompasses class discussions, oral presentations, speeches, dramatic and oral interpretations; written communication involves both reading both literary and non-literary texts, and writing, allowing students to develop, organize and communicate ideas and information producing various types of texts such as essays, creative writing pieces, leaflets, interviews, advertisements, etc.

The third type of communication encompasses all aspects of viewing and presenting involving PowerPoint Presentations, advertisements, commercials, video clips, films, posters and TV programmes – viewing and interpreting.

In **Language acquisition** MYP4 students follow Phase 5 and in MYP5 Phase 6. By the end of each phase, students will have acquired a high language proficiency, and they will have learnt how to analyse information and main ideas from various sources. The material used varies. Students will read one literary work of art per unit, will cover various related texts from the textbook of teacher's choice, and will review grammar and vocabulary. All these skills should enable them to have a smooth transition into the DP program.

### **Croatian language policy**

All Croatian students and citizens, even if they have multiple citizenships one of which is Croatian, have to take Croatian A Language and Literature course as it is stipulated by the national educational regulations on mother language policy, a requirement of the Croatian Ministry of Education. If students decide to study in Croatia, it is a requirement of all universities and colleges in Croatia for students to have a validation from, or an equivalent to, the Croatian final 'graduation' exam at either high or standard level. The Croatian Ministry of Education fully acknowledges the validity of IB DP Croatian A Literature.

Because of the regulations and requirements of the Croatian Ministry of Education, the Croatian syllabus in part has to follow Croatian syllabus from the national curriculum but in terms of philosophy, Approaches to learning (ATL) and Approaches to teaching and especially assessment criteria it follows the IB MYP principles and practices.

However, there is usually a small group of Croatian students who either were born or have spent most of their lives in an English-speaking environment, and whose Croatian is not very good to easily follow Croatian course. Therefore the school provides additional classes of Croatian (it follows the Language acquisition guide) for such students to prepare them better for the demands of Language and Literature- Croatian, both in MYP and DP programmes.

Finally, since the host country's language is Croatian the school believes that the foreign students should learn the language of the host country as it makes their lives outside the school community much more comfortable and everyday communication with Croatian citizens a lot easier, if they have at least a basic knowledge of Croatian. In addition to all the above mentioned, all of the MYP teachers are Croatian so our students can also benefit from them as far as Croatian is concerned.

### **Language acquisition - German, French**

Croatian, French and German as Language Acquisition courses in addition to English is offered in the MYP.

Students are usually organized in small groups, which provide an excellent environment when it comes to learning a language. Students are encouraged to raise their awareness about the advantages of such an environment, as well as to apply the skills and knowledge of the culture they come from.

Since this school is also a state school, and thus mainly funded by the Ministry of Education, due to the recession and budget cuts the school cannot organize very small groups for Languages B.

Language acquisition courses are organised in a way that aims at developing all four skills (reading, listening, writing, speaking), and thus prepare students for the final assessment based on the assessment criteria provided by the IB. Various teaching strategies are applied and students are involved as much as possible in the process of self-assessment.

Due to the fact that students come from different educational systems, it may happen that a mixed ability group is formed, so that some extra time has to be devoted to practising grammar/vocabulary in order to create a more homogenous group, and therefore, more efficient in its progress.

Since French and German classes in the MYP are taught at the same time, it is not possible to follow both courses, if a student wishes to.

IN order to accommodate our student's interest in learning languages, the school offers additional optional French and German courses covering different levels of language acquisition (beginners, intermediate and advanced learners). These courses are open for all students of the school, regardless of the programme they attend, whether national or IB.

Within this scheme there are also specially tailored courses for students who wish to take the German language certificate (Deutsches Sprachdiplom-DSD) at level I and II, and the French Language Certificate (Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française- DELF).

### **Support for mother tongues**

As the international student body in our school is quite small, and most students in the programme are Croatian or Croatian citizens, in the MYP the school has support only for Croatian as all other students in that case follow English Language and literature. However, in the DP the school tries to support as many mother tongues as possible, which is sometimes quite difficult due to the lack of qualified teachers to teach the mother tongue programme.

### **Strategies to support all teachers in their contribution to the language development of students**

Language is embedded in the concepts, contexts and big ideas across all subject areas. Further, in many cases, key terms and concepts transfer easily from one subject to another. However, there are instances when the same word in one subject may mean something completely different in another.

Helping students recognize these key terms and concepts, understand when they do and do not directly transfer, and how to use them to communicate is what makes every teacher a language teacher. The idea that every teacher teaches language does not mean that every teacher needs to be a language expert, but rather, that they are experts of the language of their subject areas.

Correct language use and communication in subject areas do not develop overnight. Teachers need to lay the groundwork by first identifying the language of the subject they are teaching. Then, they can start building a foundation for the students to acquire the subject language, transfer the language to other subjects, and use language accurately to communicate their understanding.

This process does not require expertise in language learning, but it does signify why every teacher is a language teacher. Teachers of all subject groups who use English as language of instruction are responsible for introducing, developing and reinforcing specific, subject related register (<https://www.whitbyschool.org/passionforlearning/why-every-teacher-is-a-language-teacher>).

### **Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction (ESL)**

As the majority of our students are highly proficient in English there is usually no need for the ESL support. Should there be such a need, the school has resources to organize that as an additional ESL course.