



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA

XV. GIMNAZIJA

Program međunarodne mature
International Baccalaureate Department
Zagreb, Jordanovac 8, Croatia



LANGUAGE POLICY

for MYP and DP

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1. Introduction and Purpose

Language lies at the heart of human interaction, learning, identity, and intercultural understanding. In alignment with the IB philosophy and best global practices, XV. gimnazija recognises language as a fundamental medium for cognitive development, communication, emotional expression, and social engagement.

Our Language Policy describes how language is taught, learned, supported, and assessed across the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP), fostering multilingualism, international-mindedness, and lifelong learning. It defines provisions for language teaching based on the school profile and in accordance with the IB principles.

This policy also reflects the school's commitment to:

- Inclusive, equitable education for all learners
- Support for mother-tongue maintenance and cultural identity
- Use of language as a tool for inquiry, understanding and action

2. Philosophy and Aims

We believe language is:

- the primary tool for communication, comprehension, and expression,
- essential to learning across all subjects, not just language courses,
- fundamental to the development of critical, creative, and reflective thinkers,
- key to intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

Our aims for language learning are to ensure students:

1. communicate confidently and purposefully in spoken and written forms,
2. understand and appreciate linguistic and cultural diversity,
3. develop high levels of proficiency in at least two languages,
4. use language to think, analyse, solve problems, and express perspectives,
5. become respectful and effective communicators across contexts.

We trust that:

- the attributes of the IB learner profile help students become lifelong learners, and responsible citizens of both local and global communities. Those values are at the core of our value system, and we see the role of language in achieving these goals as crucial.
- language is the primary means of communication and foundation for all learning. In order for students to become successful 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.

3. School Language Profile

Languages of Instructions

- **English** is the primary language of instruction in both MYP and DP,
- **Croatian** is also used for national students and deeply valued as students' mother tongue.

The language of instruction in the school's MYP and DP is English. However, since most of the MYP and DP 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 Croatian Language and Literature course whereas all non-Croatian nationals follow Croatian Language Acquisition course for foreigners. All of DP Croatian national students follow Croatian A Literature course whereas all non-Croatian nationals follow Croatian C, a school-devised 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 high value to mother tongue learning is highly appreciated and put in practice at our school. It is also the basis for the language provision for both literature and foreign languages.

Language Options

Students have access to structured learning in multiple languages:

- **MYP Language and Literature/DP Literature:** English is compulsory for all students in all four years. In MYP, all students take English (either Language and Literature or Language Acquisition course). For Croatian students, courses in literature are compulsory in all four years of the programme. In DP, Croatian A: Literature is available at both SL and HL. For all non-Croatian nationals, whenever possible, the school will ensure that they take their DP Language A: Literature course according to their educational background. Otherwise, students will be offered SSST Language A option.
- **Language Acquisition:** English, French, and German are taken at various levels depending on the previous knowledge of the language. All are compulsory courses in the MYP, and optional in the DP. DP French B and German B can be taken at both SL and HL. DP English B is offered at HL. DP English B SL may be taken in individual cases at the discretion of the DP Coordinator. Croatian for non-native speakers (foreign

nationals with no previous knowledge of Croatian) follows the school-devised syllabus, and is accordingly not taken as an IB exam (DP Croatian C).

- **Additional options:** Latin is offered depending on student interest. It follows the school-devised syllabus, and is accordingly not taken as an IB exam.

English language policy

English, being the language of instruction in both MYP and DP, is compulsory for all students of both programmes. Since there is a diversity of students arriving from different parts of the world, as well as Croatian students with national and international educational backgrounds, the school offers MYP English Language and Literature course and MYP English Language acquisition course at a very high level of proficiency (Phase 5 in MYP4 and Phase 6 in MYP5). For a relatively small number of students who may wish to pursue literary studies in DP, the school will consider offering an English A Literature course. MYP English Language Acquisition students normally pursue DP English B at Higher level.

MYP 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 programme.

In **DP English B** students continue to develop their linguistic skills, their ability to communicate successfully and effectively in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes, and their understanding of different cultures and perspectives. HL students will have read two compulsory works of literature originally written in English.

4. Croatian language policy

All Croatian students and citizens, even if they have multiple citizenships one of which is Croatian, have to take Croatian A course, as 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, they are required by all universities and colleges in Croatia to have a validation from, or an equivalent to, the Croatian final state graduation exam (*Državna*

matura) at either high or standard level. The Croatian Ministry of Education fully acknowledges the validity of IB DP Croatian A Literature, both on SL and HL.

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 IB philosophy, Approaches to Learning (ATL), Approaches to Teaching and, especially, assessment criteria it follows the IB principles and practices.

However, there is usually a small group of Croatian students who were either born or have spent most of their lives in an English-speaking environment, whose proficiency in Croatian requires further development to enable them to engage successfully with the Croatian course. For them, provided they qualify for the programme by passing the entrance exam, the school provides additional Croatian classes (following the Language Acquisition guide) to prepare them better for the demands of courses in Croatian, both in MYP and DP programmes.

Finally, the school believes that foreign students should learn the language of the host country. Having at least some basic knowledge of the language of the host country, in this case Croatian, will make their lives outside the school community and in everyday communication with Croatian citizens easier and much more comfortable, and it will earn them respect from the overall school and local community. For such students, we provide Croatian B (in MYP) and Croatian C (in DP). In addition, all IB teachers at school are Croatian nationals, so our students can further benefit from them as far as Croatian is concerned.

5. Language acquisition - German, French

The International Baccalaureate Language Acquisition programme promotes multilingualism, intercultural understanding and effective communication. Language learning is viewed as essential for developing international-mindedness, cognitive growth and global citizenship. The programme values all languages as part of students' identity and encourages respect for linguistic and cultural diversity. We want our students to learn as many languages as possible. The school promotes both multilingualism and plurilingualism.

Multilingualism is the ability to use and learn multiple languages. Students are encouraged to develop Croatian, French, German and English while maintaining their mother tongue.

Plurilingualism refers to the dynamic use of all linguistic knowledge. Students transfer skills across languages and use all language resources to support communication and understanding.

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.

The size of groups in Language Acquisition courses is set within available resources. XV. gimnazija is a state school, thus not entirely free in terms of size of groups.

Students are placed according to proficiency:

- **Phases 1–2:** Emergent learners (basic vocabulary and simple communication)
- **Phases 3–4:** Developing learners (structured communication and increasing accuracy)
- **Phases 5–6:** Proficient learners (independent and complex communication)

Placement is flexible and reviewed regularly.

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.

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. Assessment is both formative and summative. Tasks are differentiated to ensure accessibility and academic rigor.

Since French and German classes are taught at the same time, it is not possible to follow both courses.

All subject teachers are responsible for reinforcing language and academic vocabulary within their disciplines.

6. Mother Tongue and Additional Language Learning

XV. gimnazija promotes mother-tongue learning as critical to academic success, emotional well-being, cultural identity, and lifelong learning. All students are encouraged to maintain and develop their first language alongside additional languages.

The school advocates for equitable access to language learning opportunities, acknowledging that linguistic diversity enriches the community and enhances intercultural understanding.

7. Support for mother tongues

As the international student body in our school is relatively 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 puts continuous effort to provide formal instruction in individual Languages A, whenever possible. Students will be offered SSST Language A course if the school is unable to provide an adequate Language A teacher.

The school library is well stocked with books and magazines in a variety of languages. These are ordered based on the need of our students and the collection grows each year.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers

- All teachers are language educators: they model, scaffold, and develop language skills across the curriculum.
- Language teachers explicitly teach linguistic structures, vocabulary, and communication strategies.
- Content area teachers integrate language learning into their units to support comprehension and expression.

Students

- Students are expected to engage actively in language learning across contexts and programmes.
- They are encouraged to reflect on their progress, set goals, and use language to inquire, communicate, and connect.

Families and Community

- Families are partners in supporting language development at home and in school.
- Home languages are respected and valued as assets in learning and identity formation.

9. Curriculum and Learning Approaches

Language learning is structured to develop skills progressively across both MYP and DP frameworks. Instruction promotes:

- **inquiry and critical thinking** through authentic use of language,
- **multilingual competence** through structured acquisition of more than one language,
- **appreciation of literature** as a means of understanding human experiences,
- **communication for action** in academic, social, and real-world contexts.

Language learning pathways are tailored to individual student needs, with placement determined through assessment of prior knowledge and language proficiency.

10. Assessment

Assessment in language is criterion-related (MYP) and aligned with IB DP expectations. It includes formative, summative, and performance-based tasks that evaluate:

- comprehension (listening, reading);
- expression (speaking, writing);
- intercultural understanding;
- creative and analytical use of language.

Evidence of language proficiency is gathered through varied tasks that allow students to demonstrate understanding and communication across contexts.

Assessment in DP is both criterion-based (speaking and writing) and mark scheme-based (listening and reading). It also includes formative, summative and performance-based tasks, and monitoring of students' performance up to the final graduation exams.

11. Support for Linguistic Diversity and Inclusion

XV. gimnazija is committed to inclusive practices that support learners with diverse language backgrounds. Where appropriate, students receive targeted language support and differentiated instruction.

In order to accommodate for our students' 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 are not IB subjects. They are the German language certificate (**Deutsches Sprachdiplom - DSD**) at level I and II, and the French Language Certificate (**Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française - DELF**). These courses are open for all students of the school, whether national or IB, and those who pass the exams are awarded respective certificates.

12. Students with special educational needs

Students with special educational needs – students needing additional support and gifted or advanced students are approached individually and provided with extra learning materials, often tailored to suit their needs, as detailed in the “Inclusion Policy.”

Strategies to support all teachers in their contribution to the language development of students Language is embedded in the concepts, contexts and 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 uses of language 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.

13. Academic Honesty

All language teachers are committed to teaching the principles of Academic Honesty. Students demonstrate academic integrity by properly acknowledging sources and using digital tools responsibly.

14. Use of Technology

All language teachers agree that technology can support and enhance language learning through the use of digital platforms, on-line dictionaries, multimedia resources, various communication tools and language-learning applications, but cannot replace the teacher.

15. policy Review and Communication

This Language Policy is aligned with IB standards and is reviewed periodically to ensure it reflects best practice, school needs, and compliance with international and national educational expectations. The policy is communicated to students, families, faculty, and the wider community.

16. References

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO).

1. *Programme Standards and Practices.*
2. *What is an IB Education?*
3. *Language and Learning in IB Programmes* (2011).
4. *Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy* (2008).
5. *Learning Diversity and Inclusion in IB Programmes.*
6. *Academic Integrity.*
7. *MYP: From Principles into Practice* (updated August 2022).
8. *Approaches to Learning and Approaches to Teaching in the MYP.*
9. *MYP Language and Literature Guide.*
10. *MYP Language Acquisition Guide.*
11. *Approaches to Teaching and Learning in the Diploma Programme.*
12. *DP Language A: Literature Guide* (First Assessment 2026).
13. *DP Language B Guide* (Current edition).