

# Diploma Programme language A: literature and language and literature

## *Summary of changes for teachers*

Diploma Programme language A curriculum team

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This document provides a summary of the reduction of texts for all language A: literature courses, including school-supported self-taught (SSST).

This document also details the clarified assessment criteria for paper 2 for language A: language and literature and language A: literature courses, including SSST.

These changes are to be implemented with first teaching in 2024, first assessment in 2026.

There is a list of frequently-asked questions (FAQs) included after the summary of changes.

## Reduction in required texts—language A: literature

As part of an overall consideration of workload across the Diploma Programme (DP), a decision was made to reduce the number of required texts in literature courses. The numbers below represent the new requirements for the minimum number of required texts studied during the course.

### Higher level language A: literature

At higher level (HL), students must study **10 works**, of which:

- a minimum of **four** must be written originally in the language studied, by authors on the [Prescribed reading list](#)
- a minimum of **three** must be works in translation written by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- **three** can be chosen freely—from the *Prescribed reading list* or elsewhere—and may be in translation.

Works must be selected to cover the **four** literary forms, **three** periods and **three** countries or regions in at least **two** continents.

### Standard level language A: literature

At standard level (SL), students must study **seven** works, of which:

- a minimum of **three** must be written originally in the language studied, by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- a minimum of **two** must be works in translation written by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- **two** can be chosen freely—from the *Prescribed reading list* or elsewhere—and may be in translation.

Works must be selected to cover **three** literary forms, **three** periods and **three** countries or regions in at least **two** continents.

### SSST language A: literature SL

Students must study **seven** works written by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*, of which:

- a minimum of **three** must be written originally in the language studied
- a minimum of **two** must be works in translation.

Works must be selected to cover **three** literary forms, **three** periods and **three** countries or regions in at least **two** continents.

## Clarified assessment criteria: Paper 2

Language A: language and literature, language A: literature, and language A: literature SSST

A decision was made to clarify the assessment criteria of paper 2 after its initial assessment in May 2023. These clarifications retain the essence of performance descriptors found in the previous guide, making them more delineated, and maintain the nature of the paper 2 task.

The streamlining is intended to clarify the assessment of the task; the nature of the task will not change from a student's perspective. Nothing has been changed in criteria C and D.

As paper 2 is the same across all literature and language and literature courses, the following applies to all courses and levels.

Criterion A	Knowledge, understanding and interpretation	5 marks
Criterion B	<b>Analysis and evaluation</b> Analysis and evaluation of textual features and/or authorial choices (B1) Comparative analysis (B2)	<b>10 marks</b> 5 marks 5 marks
Criterion C	Focus and organization	5 marks
Criterion D	Language	5 marks
<b>Total</b>		<b>25 marks</b>

### Criterion A: Knowledge, understanding and interpretation

How much knowledge and understanding does the candidate demonstrate of the works in relation to the question?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is little knowledge and understanding of the works in relation to the question.
2	There is some knowledge and understanding of the works in relation to the question.
3	There is satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the works and an interpretation of their implications in relation to the question.
4	There is good knowledge and understanding of the works and a sustained interpretation of their implications in relation to the question.

Marks	Level descriptor
5	There is perceptive knowledge and understanding of the works and a persuasive interpretation of their implications in relation to the question.

### Criterion B: Analysis and evaluation (10 marks)

#### Criterion B1: Analysis and evaluation of textual features and/or authorial choices (5 marks)

To what extent does the candidate analyse and evaluate how meaning is shaped by the choices of language, technique and style, and/or broader authorial choices?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	The essay is descriptive and/or demonstrates little relevant analysis of textual features and/or the broader authorial choices.
2	The essay demonstrates some appropriate analysis of textual features and/or broader authorial choices but is reliant on description.
3	The essay demonstrates a generally appropriate analysis of textual features and/or broader authorial choices.
4	The essay demonstrates an appropriate and at times insightful analysis of textual features and/or broader authorial choices. There is a good evaluation of how such features and/or choices shape meaning.
5	The essay demonstrates a consistently insightful and convincing analysis of textual features and/or broader authorial choices. There is a very good evaluation of how such features and/or choices contribute to meaning.

#### Clarification for “and/or”

The use of **and/or** recognizes that a candidate’s choice of literary works may be better suited for the analysis of textual features, broader authorial choices, or a combination of the two.

Marks must be awarded based on the overall quality of the analysis and the extent to which students evaluate how textual features and/or broader authorial choices shape meaning. Marks should not be based on the quantity of textual features or broader authorial choices discussed in the response.

**Criterion B2: Comparative analysis (5 marks)**

How effectively does the candidate analyse similarities and/or differences between the two works studied?

Marks	Level descriptor
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1	There is little meaningful analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the two works selected.
2	There is a superficial analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the two works selected.
3	There is an adequate analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the two works selected.
4	There is a good analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the two works selected.
5	There is a very good analysis of the similarities and/or differences between the two works selected.

**Clarification for “and/or”**

The use of **and/or** recognizes that a candidate’s choice of literary works may be better suited for the analysis of similarities, or differences, or a combination of the two.

Marks must be awarded based on how the similarities or differences (or both) contribute to the depth of analysis of the selected works. Marks should not be based on the quantity or on the relative balance between the similarities and differences discussed in the response.

## FAQs: Language A

### General

*When will the new guides be published on the Programme Resource Centre (PRC)?*

The guides reflecting these changes will be published in the second half of 2024. From this point until December 2025, there will be two guides on the PRC for all language A courses, so it is important to ensure that you are accessing the correct guide.

*Usually when there is a new guide released, there is a lot of time for stakeholders to update their professional development. Why is that not the case with these new guides?*

It has been determined by the development team and in consultation with educators that these changes are easily implemented without the professional development that usually accompanies the release of the new guide. Additionally, these changes do not fundamentally impact the nature of texts required for study, and the task for the paper 2 assessment component remains unchanged.

### Reduction in texts—language A: literature

*Can I continue to teach the number of texts I have taught previously?*

The numbers of required texts have been and remain as a **minimum** requirement. Teachers should and are encouraged to make decisions about text choices that reflect their context and student population. This includes a consideration of quantity of texts as well as the accessibility of the text itself. The International Baccalaureate (IB) supports the professional judgement of educators in making such decisions.

*Have the number of texts required for literary works reduced for language A: language and literature as well?*

No. Although there are commonalities across all group 1 courses (e.g. areas of exploration, paper 2), the required number of literary texts studied is not one of these commonalities. Additionally, it was determined that lowering the number of required literary works for language A: language and literature would most likely disadvantage students in assessment tasks by limiting their breadth of literary study.

*Will the reduction impact language A: literature students' choice of texts for assessment tasks?*

Careful consideration of how the reduced required minimum of texts might impact students' preparation for assessment tasks concluded that this reduction could be made without disadvantaging students in their choice of texts for assessment tasks. It is anticipated that the reduction will be of benefit to students who, in preparing for paper 2, are now choosing three texts from a smaller set of texts that have not been used on assessment tasks previously.

## Paper 2 assessment criteria: All language A courses

*Are there any changes to the paper 2 assessment task?*

No. The assessment task remains the same.

*Are there any changes to the skills being assessed in paper 2?*

No. All the skills on which students have previously been assessed remain the same.

*I see that there are now 25 available marks for paper 2 instead of the previous 30. Will this change the weighting of paper 2 in the overall assessment structure?*

No. The weighting of paper 2 (25% of the overall grade at HL and 35% at SL) remains the same despite the change of marks available for the component.

*Why are these changes being made so soon after paper 2 was first assessed?*

After a guide is released, research begins to investigate how its implementation is being experienced by educators, students and IB staff such as examiners and paper authors. Based on this preliminary research, adjustments can be made to a guide and/or assessment model and teacher support material (TSM). As the reduced assessment model that was implemented during COVID-19 did not include the assessment of paper 2, research about its implementation could not occur until a full assessment model was undertaken, which was in May 2023.

*How do these changes to assessment criteria impact the teaching of the course?*

Before implementing any changes to paper 2 assessment criteria, care was taken to ensure that any changes did not require significant changes to the learning and teaching in the course. Thus, the task itself and the nature of the assessment criteria have not changed. Instead, the markband descriptors have been streamlined, making the application of the assessment criteria more delineated in skill assessment. All requirements of the task stay the same but are now more clearly articulated in the criteria and level descriptors.

*I notice the emphasis on comparing and contrasting has changed to comparing “and/or” contrasting. Does that mean the students should only do one or the other? Will a student who does both score higher?*

The change to “and/or” allows for more genuine engagement between the texts that students have chosen and the question they are responding to, meaning the necessity to establish connections for the sake of quantity rather than quality should be alleviated. Students are still required to have a balanced analysis of both texts.

As the clarification boxes below criteria B1 and B2 stipulate, marks are awarded based on the depth of analysis of the selected works not on the quantity of similarities and differences discussed in the response. Therefore, it is the analysis and evaluation of the similarities and/or differences in the texts that will be assessed.

*“Interpretation” and “analysis” are prominent in criteria A and B respectively; how do I explain the difference between them to my students?*

The glossary of terms for studies in language and literature defines **interpretation** as the process by which one uses “knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information”. To **analyse** is to “break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure”.

For paper 1, students are **interpreting** (drawing conclusions about) the meaning conveyed by the works from the collective textual features and authorial choices of the works. The **analysis** of these individual textual features and authorial choices examines them as a supporting part of the interpretation. It may help to think of interpretation as the meaning conveyed by the whole of the work and analysis as the detailed examination of the individual elements of the works.

*I see that compare and contrast has been removed from criterion A. Does this mean that students must no longer compare and contrast the “what” of the works chosen for the question?*

The criteria previously asked for comparison of the texts in both criteria A and B. This change clarifies what will be assessed (A: knowledge, understanding and interpretation; B1: analysis and evaluation; B2: comparative analysis).

Criterion A measures how well the student knows what the works are about, the meanings the works convey and their appropriateness for the question answered. The removal of the compare and contrast strand in criterion A situates the comparison of the texts in criterion B, which focuses on analysis. The comparison and/or contrast of the interpretations is now assessed by criterion B2: comparative analysis.

*Will there be student-assessed work and examiner commentary available on the PRC?*

Yes. Examiners will revise the commentary available on the PRC to reflect the streamlined criteria. As the assessment task remains the same, all paper 2 examinations and student-assessed work that appear on the PRC currently will remain—only the commentary will be updated. These updates are expected to be published on the PRC sometime early to mid-2025. The first assessment with the new assessment criteria will be in May 2026.