A Glossary of IB Terms and Abbreviations

Every organization has its jargon; IB is no exception. Below are some of the terms you may hear your student or your student’s teachers using. The glossary below refers to some of the general terms used by IB.

**Candidate:** this is the term used by IB to refer to students who are in the IB diploma program; they are candidates for the IB diploma until their exam results are finalized, usually after graduation.

**Candidate session number:** every IB candidate is assigned a candidate number, The first digits are the Beacon school code, 050937, followed by an individual number for each candidate.

**CAS:** Creativity, Activity, Service. This is the major “out of class” requirement for the IB students. Essentially, students in grades 11 and 12 are required to complete a senior long term project with documented activities in the areas of creativity, action and service and meet 8 learning outcomes. An oral presentation in March will be the culminating activity for their CAS requirements.

**Coordinator:** the title of the person who oversees the day to day operations of the IB program, arranges schedules and examinations, advises students and communicates the IB philosophy to students, faculty and parents.

**Course Candidates:** Students who do not try for the full Diploma will still test in their course and receive scores to earn a certificate verifying their scores in each subject. If a Course Candidate scores a score of 4 or better in an HL course, they may receive college credit.

**Core:** The center of the IB Diploma Program that includes TOK, EE and CAS.

**Diploma Candidates:** Students taking six IB subjects are pursuing the IB Diploma, sometimes called the “full Diploma.” The subjects include the core of Math, Science, English and History, plus a Foreign Language and an IB elective (most often in the Arts), and completion of TOK, EE and CAS.

**DP:** Diploma Program, or the final 2 years of high school for an IB student pursuing the full diploma.
EE: Extended Essay. During the two years of the IB Program, students write an original essay including research of up to 4000 words on a topic of their choice with supervision from an IB teacher who mentors them in the research for the essay.

Groups (1 – 6): What we often call subjects, IB refers to as groups.
- Group 1: Literature.
- Group 2: Second Language (French and Spanish).
- Group 3: Individuals and Societies (social studies).
- Group 4: Experimental Sciences.
- Group 5: Mathematics.
- Group 6: Arts or Electives.

Group 4 Project: An interdisciplinary science group project designed and presented by the students with the supervision of their science teacher.

HL/SL: Higher Level/Standard Level. Diploma students take a combination of 6 IB courses: 3 Higher Level (HL) and 3 Standard Level (SL) courses. Both types of courses are always two-year courses culminating in May of the senior year.

IA: Internal Assessment. These refer to various assignments in each subject that are conducted during the course, assigned and evaluated by the teacher, and then a sample set is sent off to a moderator to validate or modify the marks assigned by the classroom teachers. In history, for example, the IA is a research project on a topic of the student’s choice.

IB: International Baccalaureate, a shorthand for the International Baccalaureate Organization which authorized schools around the world to offer the IB Diploma Program, as well as the IB Middle Years Program, the IB Primary Years Program, and the IB Career-Related Certificate.

IB Diploma: Specifically, this refers to the piece of paper students earn when they achieve certain scores in six IB subjects. IB students in grade 11 and 12 taking all 6 subjects are commonly referred to as “diploma students”. Students who achieve satisfactory scores on IB exams and complete CAS/TOK/EE will earn the IB Diploma.

Moderation: The process by which IB validates or moderates the marks on internal assessment that are graded by the classroom teacher. We send the moderators samples of graded work on each IA and those marks are then moderated up or down to arrive at final marks/grades for that component.
Papers (1, 2, 3): This is essentially an IB term for examination papers. Each subject takes at least 2 and sometimes 3 papers as part of the IB exam for that subject. Almost all of these are essay questions (sciences have one multiple choice paper out of 3 papers total in science).

Predicted grades: IB teachers submit predicted scores for each student in their classes. The predicted score is submitted to IB, but is NOT factored into a student’s actual, final score. Predicted scores are used to gauge the classroom teacher’s standards against those of IB examiners and moderators. Teachers arrive at the predicted scores (1-7) based on the students’ overall classroom performance, quality of their IAs and professional judgment of the student’s ability in the subject.

Scores: Sometimes referred to as grades or marks, the scores for each IB subject range from 1 – 7, with 7 being the highest. The IB scores for a subject is achieved by a combination of the student’s performance on both internal assessment (IA) and external assessment, usually called exams, which students take in May at the end of the course. A passing score in a subject is a 4, which represents “satisfactory” work. Students generally need to achieve a minimum overall score of 24 (6 subjects x 4) to earn the IB Diploma although there are several exceptions and conditions (students must compete CAS, if a student scores a 2 in an HL subject then he/she must make a 28 overall to earn the diploma).

TOK: Theory of Knowledge. An epistemology class that focuses on the question ‘how do we know what we know?’ While each class touches on aspects of TOK, the actual course is taken second semester junior year and in the first semester senior year. Students complete a TOK presentation and TOK essay as part of the course.