

Overview of the OIB



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Overview of this Presentation

This presentation is meant to serve as a general overview for students (and their parents) who are planning to take American Option of the International Option of the French Baccalaureate (OIB).

The presentation draws largely from the Examinations Handbook for the American Option authored by the Franco-American Commission and the College Entrance Examination Board Advanced Placement Program in cooperation with the Ministère de L'Éducation Nationale.

While this presentation strives to present the most accurate and complete picture possible of the OIB, information contained herein is subject to modification without prior notification.

A Word on French Style and Philosophy of Teaching for the Uninitiated

- French students study more subjects, often to a higher standard, than their British or American peers.
- Student workload is heavy: 30 hours of class per week in eight or nine subjects with classes often meeting on Saturday morning.
- Classes are teacher-centered, with little group work and frequent class tests to monitor progress.
- Aspects in presentation and method in academic work are well-learned; general standards are high.

The International Option

- In 1981, the French government responded to increasing demand for more widespread bilingual education by authorizing the creation of international sections. These options share two important characteristics:
 - The subjects taught in the option have the same status and validity as all other subjects in the French curriculum; and
 - The subjects in the international option are taught and examined to a standard comparable to that of the Advanced Placement Program used in US high schools.

Administrative Structure of The Option

- The Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board in New York was chosen as the American educational reference.
- The Franco-American Commission (Fulbright Office) in Sèvres is the administrative intermediary with the French Ministry of Education for the American Option.
- Inspectors appointed by the two above-mentioned groups work with the French Inspection Générale to set the conditions for the written examination.

OIB Section Subjects

- English Language and Literature
 - Shakespeare play, fiction, poetry, drama, non-fiction and world literature
 - Six common works studied in depth by all participating schools
 - Six works chosen by individual schools
- History and Geography
 - The course is co-taught by English-speaking International Section teachers and French *Education Nationale* teachers both of whom follow a common curriculum.
 - For details on the academic program (in French), visit: <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid45677/programmes-d-histoire-geographie-au-lycee.html>

The French Baccalaureat

- Commonly known as the Bac
- National exam that most French students take at the end of secondary school
- The Bac *général* is the Bac that leads to admission to university education.
- The *Option Internationale du Baccalaureat* (OIB) is an option for the Bac général.
- There is no connection with the IB (International Baccalaureat), nor with the European Baccalaureat.

The Different Bacs

- There are three kinds of *séries* of Bac *général*
 - Bac L: Language and literature, with concentration in French language and literature, philosophy and foreign languages
 - Bac S: Science and mathematics
 - Bac ES: Economics and mathematics
- All students are examined in French, philosophy, history/geography, mathematics, a foreign language, and physical education with two more subjects added depending on the *série*.

The Bac Examination

- The Bac takes place in June and lasts several weeks.
- Written and oral exams marked on a scale of 0 to 20, with individual scores being multiplied by a coefficient to indicate the weighting of a particular subject in the overall Bac (see below for more detail).
- Marking is anonymous to guarantee fairness
- Marking standards are strict and rigorous: marks above 16 are rare with results of 19 or 20 usually reserved only for math and science.
- Marks below 10 are common, even for good students.

Format of the American Section OIB Examination

- As a reminder, the extra subjects taught in the American OIB Section are English Language and Literature and History and Geography.
- There is a four-hour written examination in each of the two subjects plus an oral in each.
- Oral examinations take place after the written examinations. They are given by outside examiners from another school's American Section.

English Language and Literature

- Curricular aims
 - To encourage and develop the enjoyment of an appreciation of literature in English based on an informed personal response
 - To develop the ability to critically analyze and discuss texts in a cogent and organized manner
- Examination objectives
 - To assess candidates' knowledge, understanding, analysis/insight, judgment, cultural awareness and expression of a body of literature

Curriculum for the Language and Literature Examination

- Twelve literary works are studied for the examination:
 - Six of these are studied in common by all candidates.
 - The remaining works are chosen freely by individual sections/schools.
 - Hamlet is the in-depth text studied in common by all schools.
 - The remaining two in-depth texts –one poetry and one fiction – are chosen freely by each section/school.

Literary Works Studied for the Language and Literature Examination

1. One Shakespeare play: *Hamlet*
2. Two 19th/20th/21st English-language prose fiction works (one of which should be American)
3. Two English-language plays (one of which should be American)
4. Two English-language poets (one of which should be American)
5. Four works of world literature (i.e., not American or English), which may be in translation
6. Two or more works of English-language non-fiction

English Language and Literature

Written Examination

- Candidates must choose either option A or option B (two hours for each essay or commentary):
 - A) Write on one of four essay topics given in Part 1 and write a commentary on one of the two passages given in Part 2 (either poetry or prose).
 - B) Write on two of the four essay topics given in Part 1. Candidates are instructed NOT to use the same work in both essays.
- Part 1: Four essay topics are given to choose from.
- Part 2: Two passages are given; one is previously unseen poetry, and one is previously unseen prose (the prose passage may or may not be fiction).

English Language and Literature

Oral Examination

- The oral exam lasts 30 minutes and is structured as follows:
 - A) Presentation (10 minutes): candidate gives detailed presentation on a passage assigned by the examiner from one of the set texts;
 - B) Intertextual analysis (5 minutes): candidate is asked to find links between the assigned passage and other works studied; first, to at least one other text studied in depth, then to any other works studied.
 - C) Discussion of other texts (15 minutes): candidate engages in a dialogue with the examiner concerning other works studied in the two-year program, emphasizing the works from the *terminale* year. Three or four works from the program are selected by the examiner for this in-depth discussion.

English Language and Literature Examination – Things to Remember

- Examiners are looking for what candidates know (versus what they do not know) about a given body of literature.
- Examiners are looking at candidates' grasp of analysis, content, structure and expression.
- Examiners are looking for candidates' ability to explore meaning, themes, characters and relationships, point of view, imagery and metaphor, symbols, stylistic devices, etc.

History and Geography

Curricular Aims

- To extract and classify information from a variety of sources
- To assess the values and limitations of available evidence
- To place historical and geographical material in its relevant context
- To separate the essential from the peripheral
- To discern similarities and differences across distinct periods and places
- To make a coherent synthesis of historical and geographical material in written and oral form
- To develop cogent written and oral arguments
- To use pertinent and precise examples in the illustration of oral and written answers

History

Curricular Aims

- To analyze the major themes that have characterized the 20th century and to provide a clear explanation of that period
- To increase knowledge and comprehension of the past
- To develop an imaginative and sympathetic approach to people and events in the past
- To see history from the points of view of those in the past

Geography

Curricular Aims

- The central concern of the geography curriculum is to study the relationship between people and their environment and to explain the spatial organization of the world.
- More precisely, it seeks:
 - to increase knowledge and understanding of contemporary problems at the regional, national and supranational levels;
 - to develop an understanding of the importance of temporal and spatial scale to the distribution of geographical phenomena in the environment;
 - to enhance knowledge and understanding of different socio-cultural groups, their spatial organization and their interrelationships.

History and Geography

Written Examination

- Test length is four hours. Candidates are expected to devote two hours to each of the two subjects of the exam. Candidates may write in English or French; both subject area exams must be written the same language.
- Examination structure: (**Important note:** The structure of the written exam and the nature of the essay-based and document-based questions are the same as in geography as they are in history.)
 - Two questions are set, one an essay-based question and one a document-based question, which may include extracts from speeches, statistics, maps, cartoons and other such sources. Students are required to answer one of these questions.
 - The essay-based question will normally cover a broad section of the curriculum and will enable candidates to support their arguments with examples of their own choosing.
 - The document-based question will typically present four to five sources that students will realistically be able to read and analyze in approximately 45 minutes. It will also contain more precise queries structured into two sections.

History and Geography

Written Examination

Part One will ask candidates to address up to a maximum of five relatively specific questions about the document collection at hand, questions that may ask them to do the following:

- to define terms, concepts and other elements found in a given document
- to analyze the possible message a particular document might be conveying or the
- potential light a given document might shed on the context being studied
- to compare and/or contrast the themes contained in two documents
- to assess the values and limitations of a particular document as a source of information

History and Geography

Written Examination

- Part Two requires students to use their own knowledge and the documents being studied to write an essay related to the central subject of the document collection.
- So that they might manage their time as effectively as possible, candidates should know that approximately eight points will be granted for Part One and roughly twelve points will be given for Part Two, though these marks will not appear on the exam itself.
- It should also be noted that examiners will take into consideration the overall quality of an examination before attributing a final grade out of twenty points possible.

History and Geography

Oral Examination

- The oral examination includes twenty minutes of preparation and fifteen minutes of testing.
- Candidates draw one question from an envelope containing approximately 50 questions in both history and geography. After students have copied out their topic, the question is returned to the envelope for future use.
- Candidates have 20 minutes in a supervised preparation room to develop a presentation on the subject chosen.
- Students are allowed to speak from prepared notes, but the reading of a written text is discouraged. This presentation lasts between five and six minutes with little or no interference from the examiner.
- The remaining 10 minutes of the session are devoted to examining students on topics chosen by the examiner from the rest of the program. There is no set formula in this segment.
- The purpose is to test breadth and depth of knowledge, as well as clarity and rapidity of thinking.
- Students are encouraged to engage in a lively give and take with the examiner.

History and Geography

Examination: Things to Remember

- Candidates are being examined on what they know, not on what they do not know!
- Examiners approach the examination both equitably and sympathetically, with an eye toward encouraging candidates rather than challenging them.
- Examiners ask mainly open rather than closed questions. These open-ended questions require candidates to develop an argument to defend their ideas.
- Examiners assess candidates according to the criteria outlined below:
 - Content and relevance: is the student in command of facts and context?
 - Analysis: has the student managed to make connections between the various aspects of a given topic and to show evidence of a personal understanding of the related issues?
 - Expression: has the student used the correct terminology and presented the essay in a clearly structured form?

Bac Coefficients

- Different subjects are weighted depending on the *série*
- It is possible to do optional extra subjects which earn bonus points for marks over 11/20
- The OIB subjects are added to the list of subjects studied in each of the three *séries* and have their own coefficients which are very heavily weighted
- For history/geography, OIB students may choose to write in either French or the language of the Section.
- The OIB language/literature examination replaces one of the foreign language examinations taken by non-OIB students.

The Importance of Coefficients

- **It is crucial to have high marks in subjects which have high coefficients on the Bac.**
- The subject marks of each candidate are multiplied by their coefficients and added together to produce the candidate's total marks.
- An overall pass requires that students have a minimum overall average of 10 out of 20 points
- By comparing the coefficient details on the following two slides, one can see the relative importance of the coefficients for the subjects studied in the OIB Section

Coefficient Comparison for OIB Language and Literature and Non-OIB LV1

OIB Language and Literature Coefficients

Série	Written	Oral	Total
S	5	4	9
ES	5	4	9
L	6	4	10

Non-OIB LV1 Coefficients

Série	Written	Oral	Total
S	3	–	3
ES	3	–	3
L	4	–	4

Coefficient Comparison for OIB and Non-OIB History/Geography

Non-OIB History/Geography Coefficients

OIB History/Geography Coefficients

Série	Written	Oral	Total
S	4	3	7
ES	5	4	9
L	5	3	8

Série	Written	Oral	Total
S	3	-	3
ES	5	-	5
L	4	-	4

The Jury

- All candidates' point totals are confirmed by regional juries chaired by a President which is appointed by the Ministry of Education and include examiners and school officials of the candidates being tested.

The Bac Examination cont'd

- The Bac pass rate of 80% is deceptive; in general, only 20% of all students take the Bac *général*.
- At the CIV in 2009, 101 students in the Anglophone OIB Section took and passed the Bac *général* for a pass rate of 100%.
- 17 students (16.9%) received highest honors (the national average is 6%)
- 37 (36.6%) students received high honors

Pass Results

- The only possible pass results are:
 - Passable: 10/20
 - Mention assez bien: 12/20 (honors)
 - Mention bien: 14/20 (high honors)
 - Mention très bien: 16/20 (highest honors)

Note: Marks are not rounded off; a grade of 15.8 out of 20 would only be a *mention bien*. However, if a candidate's marks are just below a higher mention or just below the minimum pass mark for the Bac itself, the President and the Jury will make every attempt to see if additional points can be found and awarded.

Rattrapage or second chance exam

- A student who has failed the Bac has the chance to sit for an oral *rattrapage* (second chance exam) in up to two subjects if he or she has a mark of 8/20 in those subjects. Students near 8/20 may also sit the oral *rattrapage* if the Jury approves after consideration of student records.
- The subjects chosen for the *rattrapage* must come from the common core subjects in his/her Bac *série*. Both International option subjects fall into this category for all three *séries*. The result of the oral(s) replaces a candidate's original written score

For further information regarding the Bac, coefficients or French education in general, please visit:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baccalaur%C3%A9at>
- <http://www.lycee-international.com/structur/bacSESL.htm>
- <http://www.lalettredespaparents.com/s/ldp/1114782229648651.html>
- <http://www.france-examen.com/infos-pratiques-resultats-points-avance-331171.html>