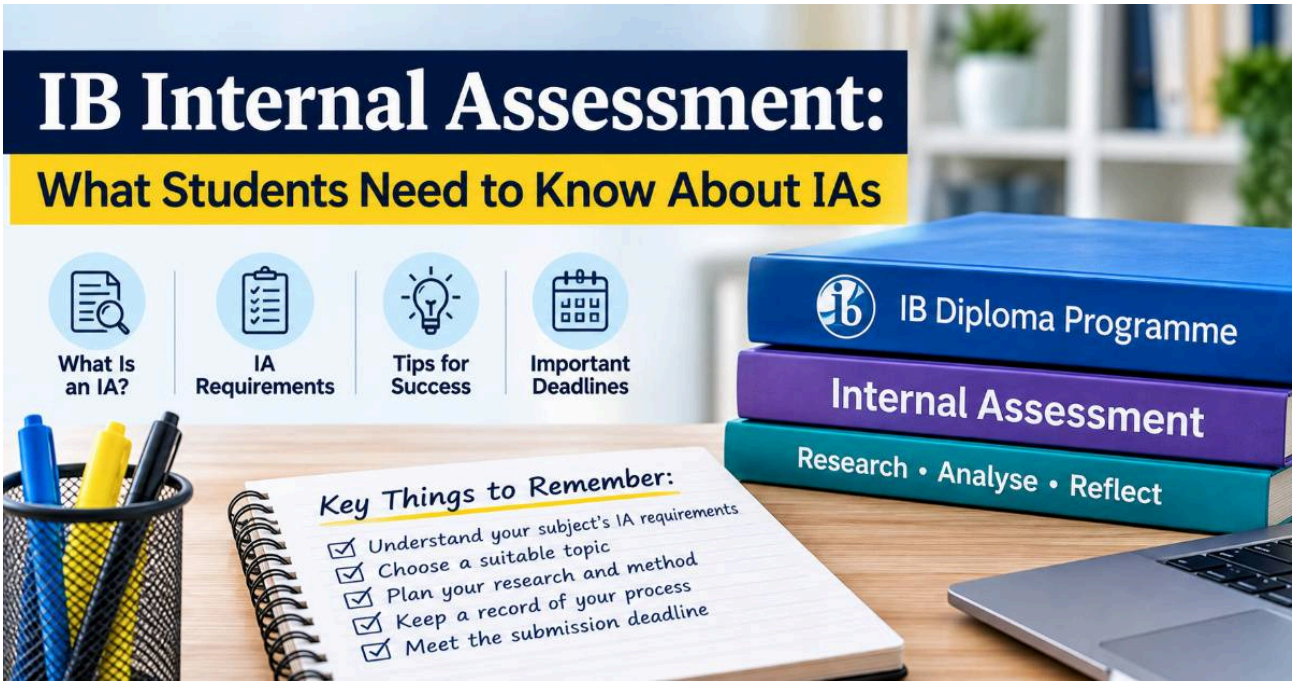
# IB Internal Assessment: What Students Need to Know About IAs

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An **IB Internal Assessment (IA)** is an internally assessed component of an IB Diploma Programme subject. The exact task depends on the subject. It may involve a scientific investigation, mathematical investigation, fieldwork, oral work, written analysis or another subject-specific assessment.

This is important because there is **no single IB IA format or marking system for every subject**.

The assessment requirements, criteria, format and weighting depend on the course you take. The IB currently uses both internal and external assessment across the Diploma Programme.

For students, the first step is therefore not finding an IA example online. It is understanding what your own subject requires.

## What Is an IA in IB?

IA stands for **Internal Assessment**.

In the IB Diploma Programme, internal assessment is used to assess different types of student work completed as part of a course. The IB gives examples including oral work in

languages, geography fieldwork, laboratory work in the sciences, investigations in mathematics and artistic performances.

The form of the assessment depends on the subject.

For example:

| IB subject | Internal assessment approach |
|---|---|
| Biology | Scientific investigation |
| Chemistry | Scientific investigation |
| Physics | Scientific investigation |
| Mathematics | Mathematical investigation |
| Geography | Fieldwork |
| History | Historical investigation |
| Economics | Subject-specific internal assessment |
| Languages | Oral assessment components |
| Arts | Subject-specific practical or performance work |

The table is only a general guide. Students should always check the current requirements for their particular **IB course** because assessment components can change between subjects and course versions.

## How Is IB Internal Assessment Assessed?

IB assessment is **criterion-related**. This means student work is assessed against defined standards rather than being graded according to how well other students performed.

For internally assessed work, the assessment process depends on the component.

Some work is assessed by the teacher and then moderated by the IB, while other assessment tasks are externally assessed.

This is why the phrase **“IB internal assessment criteria”** should always be understood in the context of the particular subject.

There is no universal IA marking rubric that applies to every IB course.

Your subject requirements determine what the examiner or teacher is looking for.

## How Much Does an IB IA Count Towards Your Grade?

There is no single percentage that applies to every IB IA.

The weighting of internal assessment varies according to the subject and assessment structure. The IB states that most DP courses use written examinations as part of their assessment, while teacher assessment is also used for many courses.

Therefore, students should avoid relying on statements such as “every IA is worth 20%” or “all IAs are worth 30%.”

Instead, check the assessment information for your current subject.

Your final IB subject grade is reported on a **1 to 7 scale**, with 7 being the highest grade.

## When Should You Start Your IB IA?

Your school determines its internal deadlines, so there is no single IA deadline for every IB student.

However, the start of the school year is a sensible time to find out which subjects will require substantial internal assessment work and when your school expects each stage to be completed.

This is particularly useful for DP students because IA work can overlap with other major IB commitments, including examinations, the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge.

A simple approach is to:

1. Check the IA requirements for each relevant subject.
2. Record your school’s deadlines.
3. Decide when you need your topic or research question approved.
4. Allow time for research, investigation and data collection.

5. Leave enough time for analysis and editing.
6. Check the final work against the current assessment criteria.

The important part is to know the requirements **before** you begin writing.

## How to Choose an IB IA Topic

A good IA topic has to work within the requirements of your subject.

Before committing to an idea, ask:

- Can I investigate this question properly?
- Can I access the required data, sources or equipment?
- Is the topic narrow enough?
- Does it fit the subject?
- Can I complete the work within the required timeframe?
- Will the investigation allow me to demonstrate the skills being assessed?

A topic can sound interesting and still be unsuitable for an IA.

For example, a broad topic such as climate change, artificial intelligence or globalisation may contain plenty of information but still be difficult to turn into a focused investigation.

The question needs to give the IA a clear direction.

## IB Chemistry Internal Assessment

An IB Chemistry IA involves a scientific investigation within the requirements of the Chemistry course.

A workable investigation needs more than an interesting chemical reaction. You need to consider the variables you will investigate, the equipment available, safety requirements, the amount of data you can collect and how you will analyse the results.

Before choosing an experiment, check whether your school can provide the materials and equipment you need.

A method that works in an online example may not be practical in your laboratory.

## IB Biology Internal Assessment

For Biology, students need an investigation that allows them to collect and analyse appropriate biological data.

Important considerations include:

- the variables being investigated
- how measurements will be collected
- sample size
- controls
- reliability of results
- data analysis
- limitations of the investigation
- ethical or safety considerations where relevant

A common problem is choosing a question that is too broad to investigate properly within the available time and resources.

## IB Mathematics IA

The Mathematics IA has a different purpose from a science investigation.

Students investigate a mathematical idea, relationship, model or problem and demonstrate appropriate mathematical understanding and reasoning.

A useful starting question is:

What mathematics will I actually investigate?

If most of the proposed IA would consist of general background information and very little mathematical work, the topic needs to be reconsidered.

The mathematics should be central to the investigation.

## IB History Internal Assessment

An IB History IA requires a focused historical investigation.

The quality of the investigation depends heavily on the question, the sources selected and the historical analysis.

Avoid turning the IA into a general history essay that simply describes events in chronological order.

Your evidence should help you investigate the specific historical question you have chosen.

When evaluating sources, consider why a source is useful for your investigation as well as its limitations.

## How to Use the IB IA Criteria

The assessment criteria should be part of your planning, not something you look at for the first time immediately before submission.

Start by identifying what your subject's criteria require.

Then check your work against those requirements as you develop it.

For example, if your subject requires analysis, adding more background information is unlikely to solve a weakness in your analysis.

If your subject requires appropriate data, collecting more unrelated data will not necessarily improve the investigation.

The criteria should influence the decisions you make throughout the IA.

## Common IB IA Mistakes

### Choosing a topic that is too broad

A broad subject can make it difficult to provide detailed analysis within the required format.

### Starting with an IA example instead of the assessment requirements

Examples can help you understand what completed work looks like, but your own IA must follow the requirements of your subject.

### Collecting too much irrelevant information

Research should support the investigation. More sources do not automatically produce a stronger IA.

### Describing instead of analysing

An IA should demonstrate the skills required by the subject. A long description of background information can leave too little space for the actual analysis.

### Ignoring practical limitations

Consider your available time, equipment, data and sources before committing to the topic.

### Leaving the assessment criteria until the end

If you only check the criteria after writing the IA, you may find that substantial sections need to be changed.

### Using someone else's work

An IA must be your own work. The IB's academic integrity requirements emphasise authentic student work and appropriate acknowledgment of sources and ideas.

## Can You Use AI for an IB IA?

This depends on what the assessment rules and your school permit.

Students should not present AI-generated material as their own work. The IB's academic integrity requirements place responsibility on students to produce authentic work and appropriately acknowledge the contribution of other sources or people.

If your school permits certain uses of AI, follow those instructions carefully and keep a clear record of what you used it for where required.

For assessed work, the safest approach is to make sure that your research, analysis, writing and conclusions genuinely represent your own academic work.

## What If You Are Struggling With Your IA?

The problem is often easier to solve when you identify exactly where the difficulty is.

If you cannot settle on a topic, discuss whether your idea is realistic for the subject.

If your research question is too broad, narrow it before continuing with extensive research.

If you have collected information but cannot turn it into analysis, return to the question and identify which evidence actually helps answer it.

If you are unsure about the assessment criteria, ask your subject teacher to clarify what each criterion requires.

For students who need additional subject-specific support, an IB tutor can also help you understand the academic requirements, refine your approach and improve your understanding of the subject. The work itself, however, must remain your own.

## IB Internal Assessment FAQs

### What is an IA in IB?

An IA, or Internal Assessment, is an internally assessed component of an IB Diploma Programme subject. The format varies by subject and can include investigations, fieldwork, oral work and other subject-specific tasks.

### What is IA in IBDP?

IA in the IB Diploma Programme refers to internal assessment. It forms part of the assessment structure for many DP courses, with the exact task and weighting depending on the subject.

### What are IB internal assessment criteria?

IB internal assessment criteria are the subject-specific standards used to assess eligible internal assessment work. The criteria are not identical across all IB subjects.

### How much is an IB IA worth?

The weighting varies by subject. There is no single percentage that applies to every IB Internal Assessment.

### Can I use AI for my IB IA?

Only where its use is permitted under the applicable IB and school requirements. Students must not submit AI-generated work as their own, and they remain responsible for the authenticity of their assessed work.

## IB Internal Assessment FAQs

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