



IB ENGLISH LANG. & LIT.

The Ultimate Study Guide



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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was created with one purpose: to give you the ultimate resource for mastering your IB subject. It's built on the invaluable advice of our fantastic Lanterna tutors—the very best in the field.

These tutors not only achieved top grades in the IB themselves but also have years of experience helping students like you succeed. Their insights, strategies, and tips are pure gold—insider knowledge you won't find anywhere else online.

Whether you're a current student or trying to decide if this subject is right for you, this guide has everything you need to thrive.

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WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

The tutors whose information we compiled to create this guide have not only conquered the IB but they are experts in simplifying the learning journey for you. The most common score for our IB tutors is the full 45 points. More specifically, they have received a 7 in this particular subject.

42.3

Average IB score of
our tutors

150K+

Hours tutored



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OVERVIEW: ENGLISH LANG & LIT

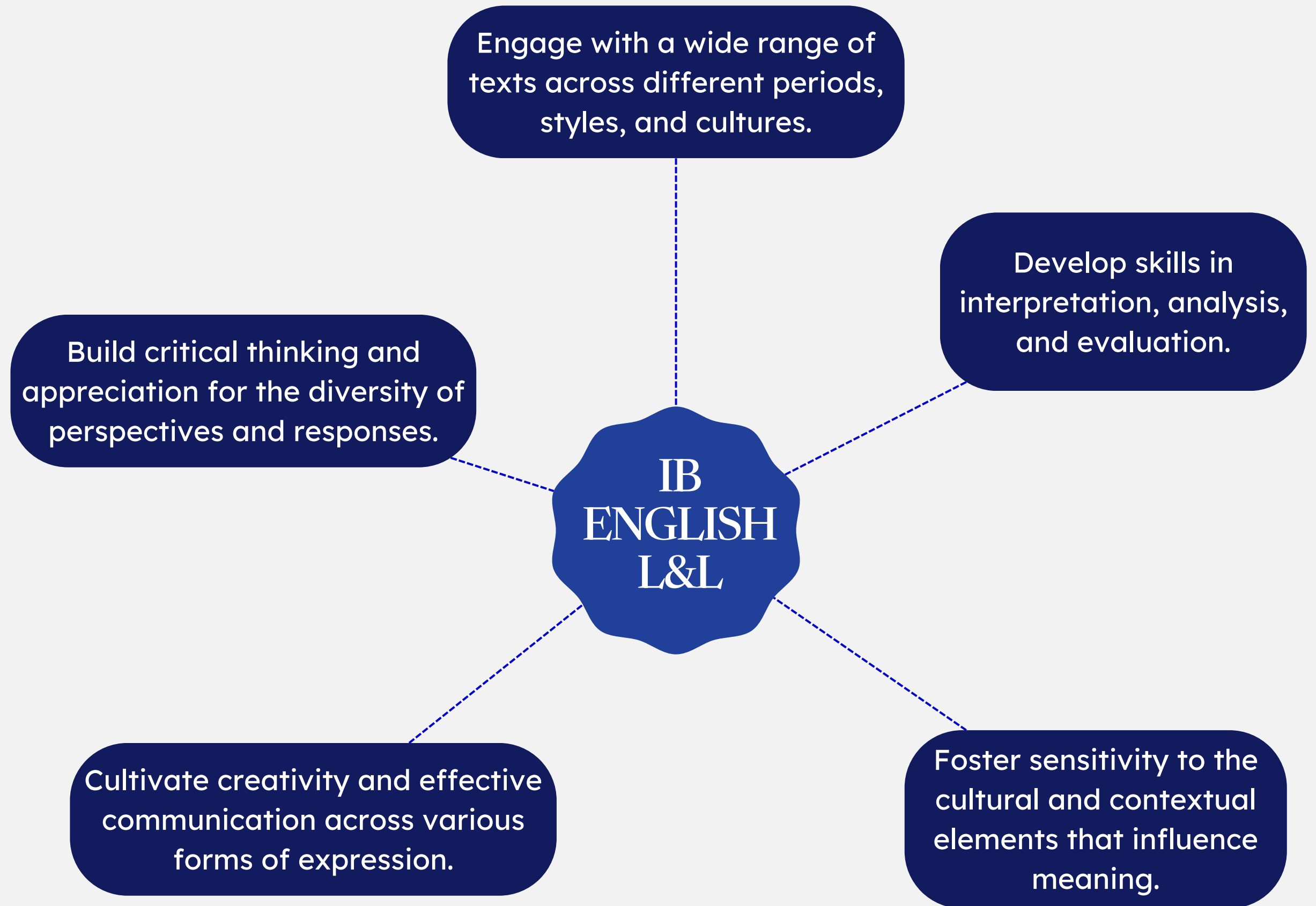
English Lang & Lit explores the complex nature of language and its role in shaping meaning, identity, and culture.

The course encourages students to analyze a variety of texts across different media, styles, and cultures—considering both personal interpretations and diverse critical perspectives. Through this exploration, students develop essential skills in communication, critical thinking, and creative expression.

By examining how language choices and contextual elements influence meaning, students gain insight into global issues and cultural diversity. This course equips students with the tools to engage thoughtfully with the world, fostering a lifelong appreciation for the power of language and literature.

COURSE AIMS

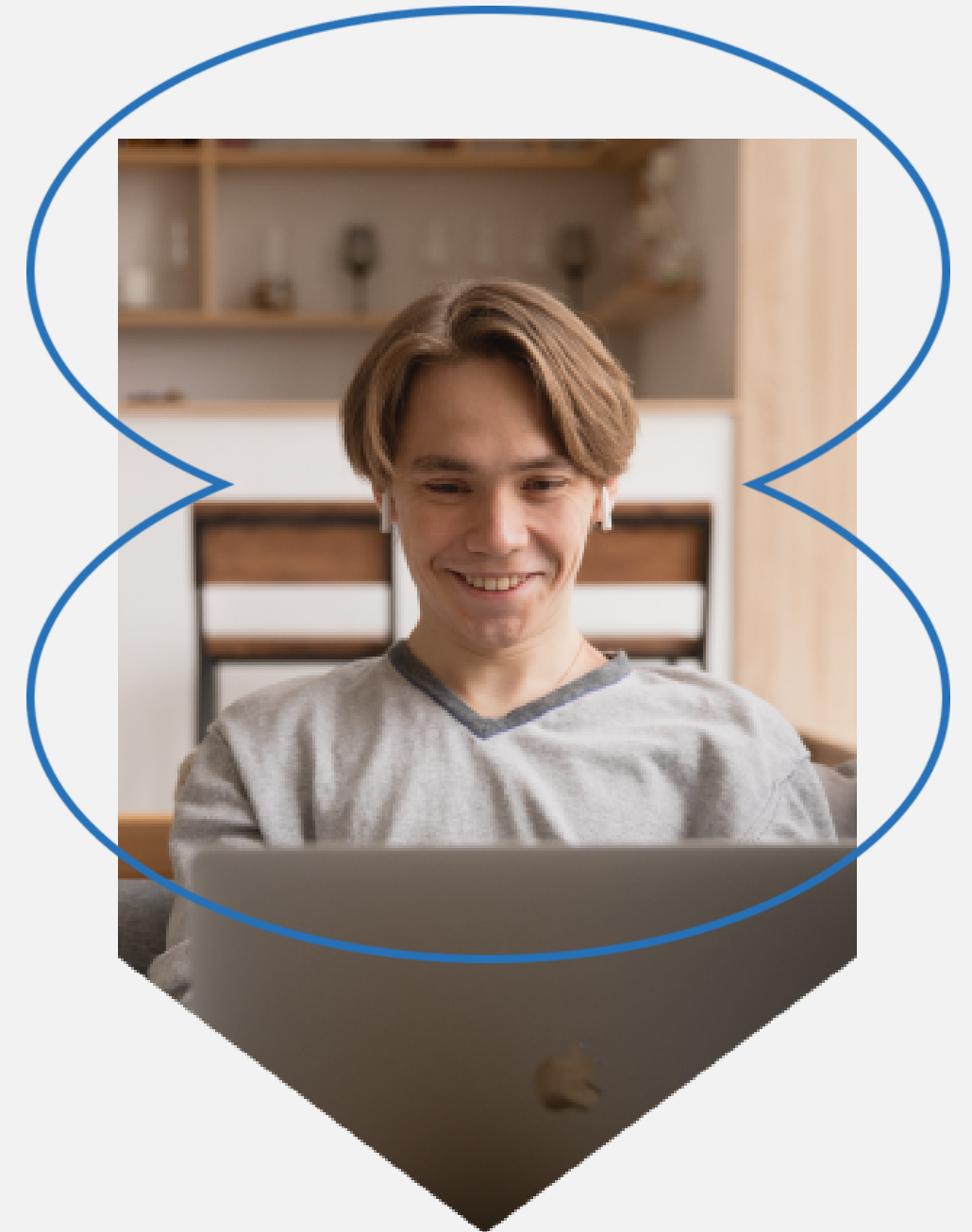
IB Language A: Language and Literature aims to explore the nature of language, its role in shaping the world, and its practical and aesthetic dimensions.



WHO SHOULD CHOOSE IT?

IB Language A: Language and Literature is perfect for students who are passionate about language, communication, and the power of stories in shaping our understanding of the world. This course is ideal for you if:

- You love reading, writing, and exploring a variety of text types and media.
- You are interested in analyzing how language and literature reflect cultural, political, and social issues.
- You enjoy debating ideas and discussing different perspectives on the meaning of texts.
- You are considering careers in journalism, media, education, or creative writing.



SL

Teaching Hours **150**

Exams **3 hours**

Syllabus Components

- Readers, Writers and Texts
- Time and Space
- Intertextuality (Connecting Texts)

HL

Teaching Hours **240**

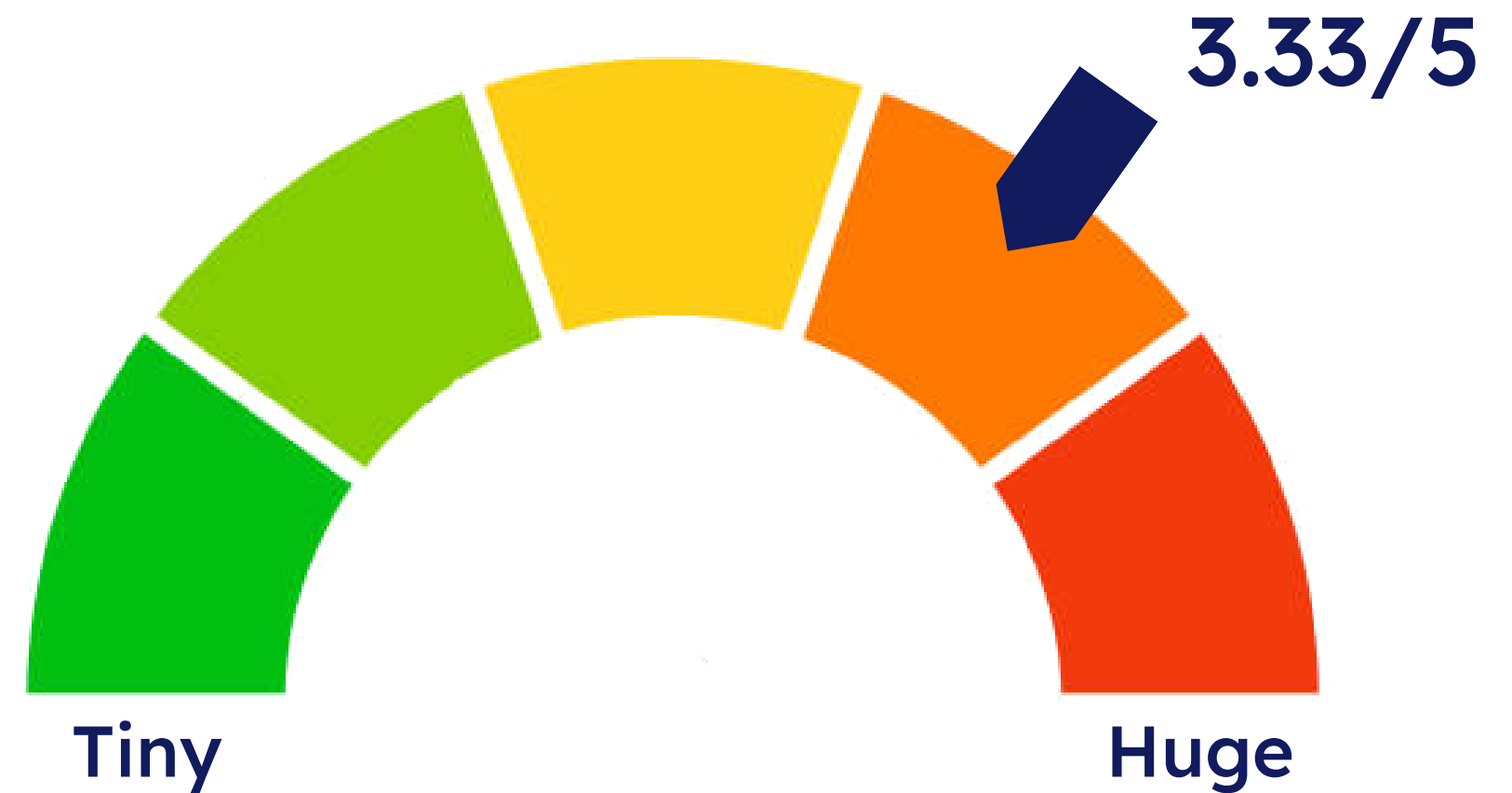
Exams **4 hours + HL essay**

HL students cover more texts and a wider range of perspectives in "Readers, Writers and Texts," "Time and Space," and "Intertextuality."

HOW BIG IS THE JUMP FROM SL → HL

The difficulty increase from SL to HL in English Language and Literature is moderate, rated 3.33 out of 5.

HL demands deeper analysis, more extensive writing, and a greater understanding of literary and non-literary texts.



Compiled from our best IB English L&L tutors

WHO SHOULD PICK HL?

Enjoys Deep Literary and Textual Analysis

Likes deconstructing meaning, themes, and perspectives in both fiction and non-fiction.

Strong Writing Skills & Academic Independence

Comfortable with extended essays and formulating well-supported arguments in long-form responses.

Engaged in Critical Thinking & Global Issues

Enjoys discussing the role of language in society, politics, and culture.

Interested in Humanities, Journalism, or Law

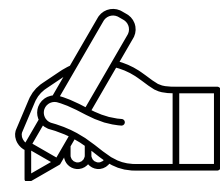
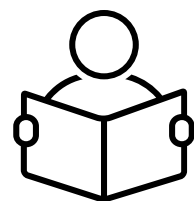
Ideal for students considering university studies in literature, communications, international relations, or law.



CORE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

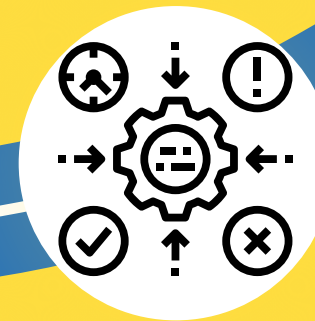
Be a Critical Reader and Thinker

Develop an eye for analyzing texts deeply, identifying literary techniques, and connecting them to broader themes, contexts, and authorial intentions.



Hone Analytical and Evaluation Skills

Go beyond surface-level interpretation by focusing on subtle nuances in texts. Analyze structure, tone, and language with attention to detail.



Understand Social Themes and Contexts

Engage with a variety of texts and media to explore current social issues and their portrayal in literature. Understanding these connections will enrich your analysis.

Master Writing and Communication

The ability to express ideas clearly and concisely is key. Build well-supported arguments in your essays and articulate insights effectively in oral presentations.

Build a Strong Vocabulary and Writing Style

Expand your vocabulary to write persuasively and support your ideas with relevant evidence and literary references.



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“WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A STUDENT TO DEVELOP?”

“



“Be an avid reader—developing a strong vocabulary and understanding of diverse texts helps you critically analyze current social themes and contexts.”

“Master clear, concise writing. Articulating your ideas effectively is key for essays and oral presentations.”

“Focus on critical thinking. Connect literary techniques to broader themes and contexts, and support your arguments with strong evidence and examples.”

MEMORIZATION



4 OUT OF 10

The average rating our tutors gave for the importance of **strong memorization** for IB English L&L

Good news for those with bad memory!

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

PAPER 1

External — 35% final grade

Guided analysis of unseen non-literary passage/passages from different text types

For SL: 1 hour 15 min

For HL: 2 hours 15 min

PAPER 2

External

Comparative essay on two studied literary works

For SL: 1 hour 45 mins.
35% of final grade

For HL: 1 hour 45 mins.
25% of final grade

INDIVIDUAL ORAL (IO)

Internal

Prepared oral response on the way that one literary work and one non-literary body of work studied have approached a common global issue.

For SL: 30% of final grade

For HL: 20% of final grade

HL ESSAY

Internal

Written coursework component: 1,200–1,500 word essay on one literary work or a non-literary body of work studied.

HL ONLY. Completed over time

Worth 20% of final grade

TRICKS FOR YOUR PAPER 1

Do's

- **READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY BEFORE WRITING.** Identify key themes, stylistic devices, and the overall purpose.
- **STRUCTURE YOUR RESPONSE CLEARLY.** Use an introduction, body paragraphs analyzing techniques, and a conclusion.
- **FOCUS ON HOW MEANING IS CREATED.** Discuss language, style, and literary/rhetorical devices with specific examples.
- **USE TECHNICAL TERMINOLOGY ACCURATELY.** Terms like tone, diction, syntax, and metaphor should be used correctly.

Don'ts

- **DON'T SUMMARIZE THE TEXT.** Your task is analysis, not retelling.
- **DON'T IGNORE THE TEXT TYPE.** Consider whether it's an article, speech, advertisement, or other form and analyze accordingly.
- **DON'T BE TOO GENERAL.** Avoid vague statements—support every point with textual evidence.
- **DON'T RUSH INTO WRITING.** Spend a few minutes planning before you begin to ensure a coherent argument.



TRICKS FOR YOUR PAPER 2

Do's

- **CHOOSE A STRONG COMPARISON.** Ensure your two selected texts have enough common ground for a meaningful discussion.
- **USE A CLEAR THESIS STATEMENT.** Your argument should be evident from the introduction.
- **ORGANIZE YOUR ESSAY EFFECTIVELY.** Use a comparative structure (point-by-point or block method).
- **INTEGRATE QUOTES SEAMLESSLY.** Use textual evidence to support your claims without excessive quotation.

Don'ts

- **DON'T IGNORE THE ESSAY PROMPT.** Address the given question directly and avoid going off-topic.
- **DON'T ANALYZE TEXTS SEPARATELY.** This is a comparative essay—focus on connections between texts.
- **DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUTHOR INTENT.** Stick to textual evidence rather than speculation.
- **DON'T RELY ON GENERAL STATEMENTS.** Be specific in your comparisons and use precise examples.



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TRICKS FOR YOUR HL ESSAY

Do's

- **PICK A TEXT OR BODY OF WORK YOU UNDERSTAND WELL.** This essay requires depth, so choose a text you can analyze critically.
- **DEVELOP A STRONG RESEARCH QUESTION.** A clear, focused question will guide your analysis.
- **BACK UP CLAIMS WITH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE.** Use well-integrated quotes and references to support your argument.
- **PLAN BEFORE WRITING.** A well-structured outline helps ensure a logical progression of ideas.

Don'ts

- **DON'T BE TOO BROAD OR TOO NARROW.** Your topic should be specific but allow for detailed analysis.
- **DON'T IGNORE THE FORM OF THE TEXT.** Whether it's a novel, speech, or article, consider how its structure affects meaning.
- **DON'T WRITE A BOOK REPORT.** Focus on critical analysis, not just plot summary.
- **DON'T LEAVE EDITING UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE.** Proofread for clarity, coherence, and grammatical accuracy.

HOW TO ACE YOUR IO

CHOOSE A STRONG GLOBAL ISSUE

Select a global issue that is broad enough to link your two chosen works but specific enough to allow for detailed analysis. This will serve as the foundation for your entire presentation, so make sure it's relevant and thought-provoking.

BALANCE THE LITERARY & NON-LITERARY WORKS

Ensure that both your literary and non-literary works receive equal attention during your discussion. Highlight how each text contributes to your understanding of the global issue and provide balanced analysis for both.

SPEAK CLEARLY AND CONFIDENTLY

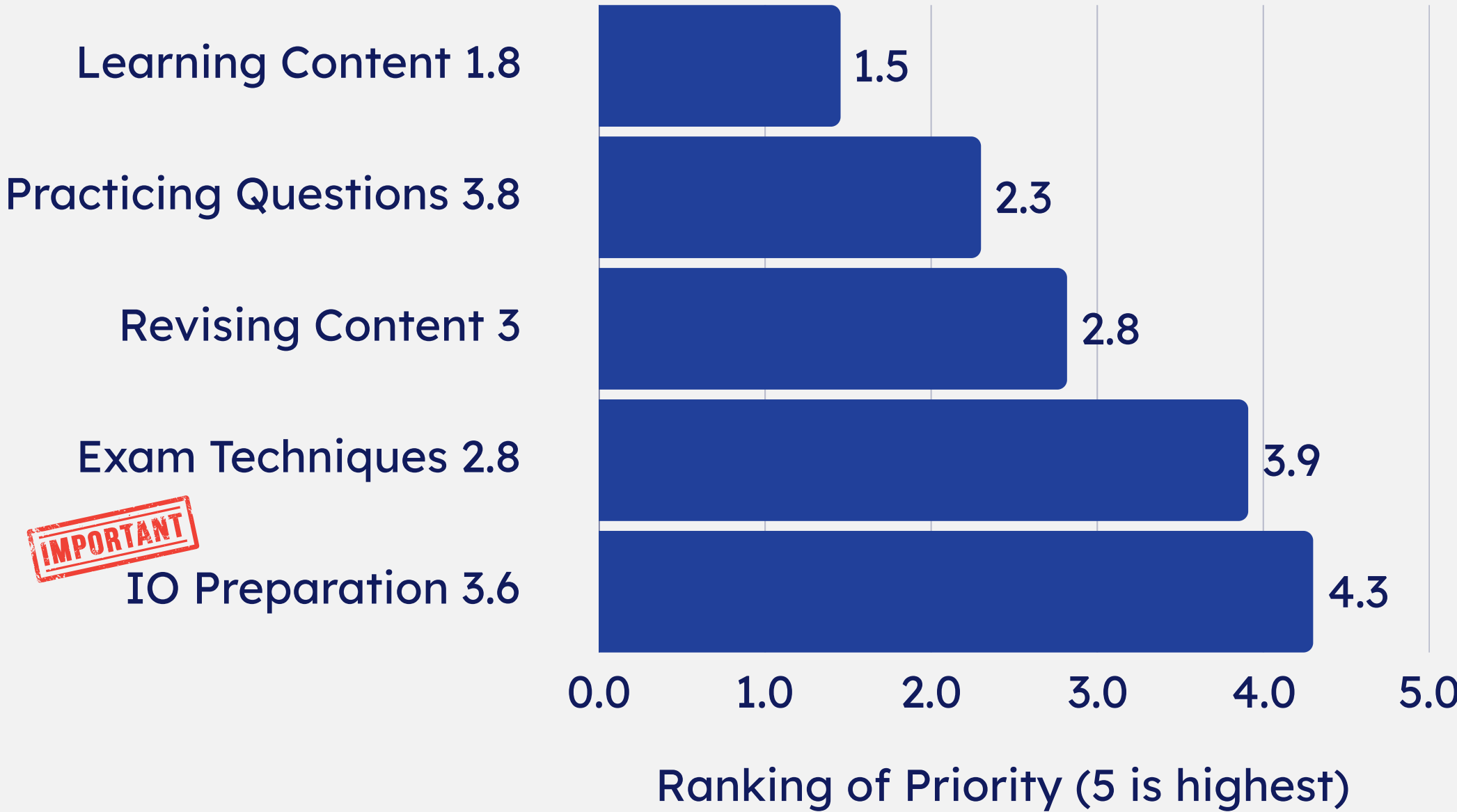
Even if you're feeling nervous, it's important to speak with confidence. Clearly articulate your points, and remember that you don't need to rush—take your time to express your analysis effectively.

STRUCTURE YOUR PRESENTATION

Organize your presentation with a clear introduction, main analysis, and conclusion. Avoid reading from a script, and use notes only as a reference to maintain eye contact and engage with the audience. Keep your presentation within the time limit to avoid rushing through important points.



EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES



WHAT SHOULD YOU PRIORITIZE IN YOUR STUDY TIME?

Based on tutor insights, practicing questions and IO preparation are key to success in IB English Language and Literature. Focus on analyzing texts and writing practice essays to improve your structure and style. For the IO, dedicate time to refining your oral commentary or written task, ensuring it reflects a deep understanding of the text. Regular revision will help strengthen your grasp of literary techniques and improve exam performance.

UNDERSTAND
THE CONTENT

1

REFINE YOUR
WRITING
SKILLS

2

PRACTICE,
PRACTICE,
PRACTICE!

3

THE 3-STEP REVISION STRATEGY



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1. UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT

The first step in your revision is mastering the core texts and literary concepts. Focus on breaking down key elements like themes, narrative structure, and literary devices while understanding how they connect to broader contexts.



STRUGGLING WITH CONTENT?

WE CAN HELP

Using a tutor is a great way to understand complex content and prepare effectively.

Lanterna Tutors have received a 7 in the subject they are teaching and are able to break-down complex tasks so that they become more understandable and relatable.

They also know exactly what the IB requires and can guide you on what's most important for exams.



2. REFINE YOUR WRITING SKILLS



Organize Your Essays

Focus on writing well-structured essays with strong introductions, coherent arguments, and clear conclusions.



Active Recall

Practice articulating key ideas and analyzing literary devices without your notes. This helps with retention and sharpens your critical thinking.



Target Feedback

Seek regular feedback from teachers to identify and correct style errors and improve thesis statements.



Timely Reflection

Identify your weak areas—whether it's a specific text or device—and allocate extra time for targeted improvement.



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3. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!



The most important part of your revision is practice. 80% of your entire grade comes down to just a few hours of exams, so mastering how to answer questions is key. Think of exams like video game levels—repeat them enough, and they’ll become second nature. The more past papers you practice, the more confident and efficient you’ll be.

LEARN IB’S “CRYPTIC” LANGUAGE

This is where the markscheme is your best friend. It shows you exactly what the examiners expect in each answer. If you train yourself to write responses based on the markscheme, you’ll know precisely how to get full marks every time. Our tutors fast-track students to master this skill, teaching them how to break down questions, understand command terms like describe, explain, and evaluate, and write answers that hit full marks every time.

TIMING MATTERS TOO

Simulate real exam conditions by practicing under timed settings, focusing on data-based questions and longer responses. Review your mistakes, check how your answers compare to the markscheme, and adjust your strategy. With enough practice, exams will no longer feel like a challenge—they’ll feel like second nature.



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BEST RESOURCES: WEBSITES



InThinking (inthinking.com)

Offers comprehensive, curriculum-aligned resources specifically designed for the IB English Lang and Lit course.



LitCharts (litcharts.com)

Breaks down key quotes, themes, and character analysis in major texts—great for deeper insights and exam preparation.



IB Blogs - Including our own

Provide guidance on how to structure responses and maximize points in exams.



Op-eds and Reviews

Great for Paper 1 practice and learning analytical writing skills by observing professional examples.

BEST RESOURCES: YOUTUBE



CrashCourse Literature

Engaging and informative videos on literary themes, character development, and devices in classic works of literature.



IB English Guys

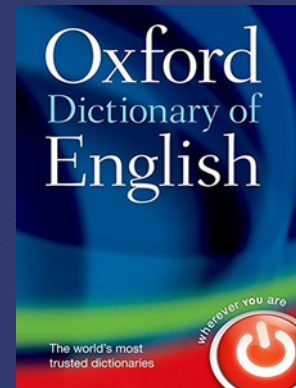
Breaks down exam components and rubrics, helping students understand what's expected in each assessment.



TED-Ed

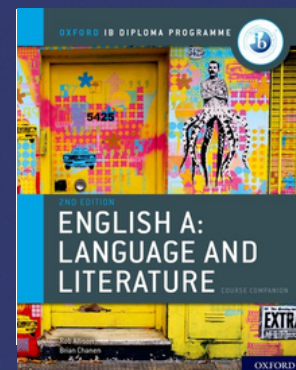
Offers short, thought-provoking videos that can help with critical thinking and analysis of different text types.

BEST RESOURCES: BOOKS



Oxford English Dictionary

Essential for understanding word meanings, etymology, and connotations in text analysis.



IB English Study Guides (Oxford/Cambridge)

Provide structured revision material for exam preparation.



Novels

Reading widely expands vocabulary and strengthens writing skills, improving overall performance in the course.

BEST APPS & TOOLS

MASTER ACTIVE RECALL

Use these flashcard apps to memorize effectively. Spaced repetition ensures key concepts stick in your long-term memory. Perfect for mastering definitions and tricky processes.



Quizlet



Anki

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Familiarize yourself with IB-style questions and learn how mark schemes are structured. Regular practice will help you refine your answers and boost confidence for exam day.



IB Questionbank & Past Papers



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ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS

“

"Master essay structure—start with a clear thesis, focus on one idea per paragraph, and support your points with strong evidence."

MASTER ESSAY STRUCTURE



ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS



“

"Actively engage with texts. Annotate key passages, analyze literary techniques, and practice writing concise, thesis-driven responses."

ENGAGE ACTIVELY

ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS

“

"Don't underestimate your Internal Assessments. They're crucial for success, so approach them seriously and choose comparative texts wisely."

CHOOSE TEXTS WISELY



ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS



“

“Practice makes perfect. Regularly write and revise your essays, expand your vocabulary, and memorize key literary devices—they are the foundation of strong analysis.”

PRACTICE REGULARLY

FINAL THOUGHTS

IB is challenging but totally achievable if you work smart. It's a content-heavy subject that requires consistent effort, but with the right strategies—like understanding concepts, building connections, and practicing effectively—you'll be on track for success.

WHAT IF I FEEL STUCK?

Sometimes all you need is a little extra guidance to save countless hours of frustration. Lanterna's tutors are IB experts who've been exactly where you are. More than just teaching content, they'll coach you on how to study smarter, manage your time, and build habits that lead to top marks. We've helped students go from 4s to 7s in a few months, and you can do the same with the right support.

WHO IS TUTORING FOR?

1

IF YOU FEEL STUCK AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO CATCH UP

When you've fallen behind, it can feel overwhelming. Having a tutor who's recently done your subject—and aced it—means you get targeted, personal guidance to catch up quickly and focus on what matters most. They'll help you minimise wasted time and maximise your chances of top grades.

2

IF YOU LACK GUIDANCE ON HOW TO STUDY OR TACKLE IAS

If you're unsure how to approach your IA, EE, or even how to revise effectively, a tutor can make all the difference. A lot of stress and time-waste comes from not knowing exactly what you're supposed to do and how to do it. Our tutors guide you step by step and make sure that things are done right the first time, and avoid the frustration later on.

3

IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH MOTIVATION, STUDY SKILLS, OR HABITS

Sometimes it's not about content—it's about knowing how to work efficiently. That's where our tutors at Lanterna stand out. With over 300 tutors, all recent IB graduates who scored 7s in their HL subjects, we know exactly how to help you best.

We don't just teach content—we coach you on building smart habits, managing your time, and studying effectively.



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SEE YOU AT THE TOP!

We hope you found this
guide useful.

Be sure to check out other our
study guides, as well as our
world class tutors.



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