

Visual arts

The visual arts are an integral part of everyday life, permeating all levels of human creativity, expression, communication and understanding. They range from traditional forms embedded in local and wider communities, societies and cultures, to the varied and divergent practices associated with new, emerging and contemporary forms of visual language. They may have sociopolitical impact as well as ritual, spiritual, decorative and functional value; they can be persuasive and subversive in some instances, enlightening and uplifting in others. We celebrate the visual arts not only in the way we create images and objects, but also in the way we appreciate, enjoy, respect and respond to the practices of art-making by others from around the world. Theories and practices in visual arts are dynamic and ever-changing, and connect many areas of knowledge and human experience through individual and collaborative exploration, creative production and critical interpretation.

The IB Diploma Programme visual arts course encourages students to challenge their own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. It is a thought-provoking course in which students develop analytical skills in problem-solving and divergent thinking, while working towards technical proficiency and confidence as art-makers. In addition to exploring and comparing visual arts from different perspectives and in different contexts, students are expected to engage in, experiment with and critically reflect upon a wide range of contemporary practices and media. The course is designed for students who want to go on to study visual arts in higher education as well as for those who are seeking lifelong enrichment through visual arts.

The course encourages students to actively explore the visual arts within and across a variety of local, regional, national, international and intercultural contexts. Through inquiry, investigation, reflection and creative application, visual arts students develop an appreciation for the expressive and aesthetic diversity in the world around them, becoming critically informed makers and consumers of visual culture.

The teachers



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Visual arts and TOK

The arts subjects complement the TOK ethos by revealing interdisciplinary connections and allowing students to explore the strengths and limitations of individual and cultural perspectives. Studying the arts requires students to reflect on and question their own bases of knowledge.

Questions related to TOK that a visual arts student might consider include the following.

- To what extent is artistic knowledge something which cannot be expressed in any other way?
- Are ways of knowing employed in radically different ways in the arts than in other areas of knowledge?
- To what extent does imagination play a special role in the visual arts?
- What moral responsibilities do artists have?
- How can the subjective viewpoint of an individual contribute to knowledge in the arts?
- What are the standards by which we judge artworks?

Visual arts and international-mindedness

International-mindedness represents an openness and curiosity about the world and its people. It begins with students understanding themselves in order to effectively connect with others. The arts provide a unique opportunity for students to recognize the dynamic cultural influences around them. Through making, investigating and critically analysing and appreciating differing art forms, students deepen their understanding of the visual arts, as well as their knowledge, understanding and experience of the visual arts within the global community. They learn to acknowledge the aspects that appear in all art forms and art cultures, and also to recognize the unique ways in which particular cultures express and represent their values and identity visually.

The table below shows how these activities link with the core syllabus areas at both SL and HL.

Skills and toolkit (ATL)	Topics	Assessments objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thinking skills• Communication skills• Social skills• Self-management skills• Research skills• Art-making skills	Areas of Exploration: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artworks, the viewer, the artist• Time and space• Intertextuality through the study of a range of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art making• Process reflection and comparing• curatorial work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding• Analysis and reviewing and refining• Skills and concept• Communicating through art and writings

Link to IBO subject brief

<https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/recognition/visualartshl2016englishw.pdf>