

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME · PHYSICS SL · FIRST YEAR

Your child is starting IB Physics SL

What the IB Diploma involves, what Physics SL covers and how it is assessed — everything a parent needs to know, in one place.

A guide for parents · by Evan Kotronis

examinerprep.com

1 The IB Diploma at a glance

6**subjects**

Three at Higher Level (HL) and three at Standard Level (SL)

3**core elements**

Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay and CAS

45**maximum points**

6 subjects × 7, plus up to 3 from TOK and the EE · Diploma from 24 points*

Two school years

Each subject graded 1–7

Final examinations: May of Year 2

2 Physics SL or HL: what is the difference?

	STANDARD LEVEL (SL)	HIGHER LEVEL (HL)
Recommended teaching time	150 hours	240 hours
Final written examinations	2 papers · 3 hours in total	2 papers · 4 hours 30 min
Content	Themes A–E (common core)	A–E plus additional HL material
Internal assessment (IA)	20% · same requirements	20% · same requirements

Both levels are graded on the same 1–7 scale and count equally towards the 45-point total.

3 What is taught: five themes

SL teaching hours

A	Space, time and motion Kinematics, forces, energy, momentum		27 hours
B	The particulate nature of matter Thermal physics, gases, circuits		24 hours
C	Wave behaviour Oscillations, waves, Doppler effect		17 hours
D	Fields Gravitational, electric, magnetic		19 hours
E	Nuclear and quantum physics Atoms, radioactivity, fission, stars		23 hours

+ 40 hours

Experimental programme: 20 hours of practical work · 10 hours for the Collaborative Sciences Project · 10 hours for the individual investigation (IA). Course total: 150 hours.

* Further conditions also apply for the award of the Diploma. Source: IB Physics guide, first assessment 2025.

© ExaminerPrep · examinerprep.com · Original material by Evan Kotronis. ExaminerPrep is an independent tutoring service. It has been developed independently from and is not endorsed by the International Baccalaureate Organization. "International Baccalaureate", "IB" and "IB Diploma Programme" are registered trademarks of the IBO, used here for descriptive purposes only. Pearson Edexcel and Cambridge are trademarks of their owners; ExaminerPrep is not affiliated with any exam board.