

## **Core Elements of the Diploma Program**

The Extended Essay is a 4,000-word independent research paper due in the second year of the program. Written in one of the subjects of the IB curriculum under the direct supervision of a qualified teacher at the school, the essay offers students an opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest and acquaints them with the kind of independent research and writing skills expected at the university level. The essay is externally assessed according to specific criteria.

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is a required interdisciplinary seminar intended to stimulate critical reflection upon the knowledge and experience gained inside and outside the classroom. TOK challenges students to question the bases of knowledge, to be aware of subjective and ideological biases, and to develop a personal mode of thought based on analysis of evidence expressed in rational argument. The key element in the International Baccalaureate Organization's educational philosophy, Theory of Knowledge seeks to develop a coherent approach to learning that transcends and unifies the academic subjects and encourages appreciation of other cultural perspectives.

Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) is a fundamental part of the diploma curriculum. The CAS requirement takes seriously the importance of life outside the world of scholarship, providing a refreshing counterbalance to the academic self-absorption some may feel within a demanding educational program. Participation in activities such as theatre productions, sports, musical performances, and community service encourages young people to share their energies and special talents while developing awareness of, concern for, and the ability to work cooperatively with others. The goal of educating the whole person and fostering a more compassionate citizenry comes alive in an immediate way when students reach beyond themselves and their books.