



Language Policy

1. PHILOSOPHY

1.1. As an IB World School, and as a member of the Global Network of RSHM Schools, Marymount International School London recognises that language is integral to “the education of the whole person”, promoting personal and intellectual growth through exploration of cultural identity (aided by the study of at least two languages) within a context of active and deepening intercultural understanding.

1.2. The School’s curricular practices are designed to implement fully the RSHM and IBO mission statements, in accordance with the principles enshrined both in its own published educational philosophy and objectives, and in IB documentation governing delivery of the Middle Years Programme (MYP, Grades 6-10) and the Diploma Programme (DP, Grades 11- 12). In relation to language-acquisition, linguistic development and literary understanding, these practices are rooted in an awareness that, as well as being the main medium of social communication, language-skills are tightly linked to cognitive growth, since they are the means by which meaning and knowledge are negotiated, constructed and shared.

1.3. In recognising that language is central to learning, the School acknowledges that all teachers are, in practice, language-teachers, with responsibilities in facilitating communication. In addition, the School believes that it is essential for all to have a strong foundation in one’s own language (mother tongue), and therefore encourages and supports this development, wherever possible, through an ethos of acceptance and celebration of linguistic diversity within a genuinely international community.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. Studies in Language & Literature. For Group 1/Languages A (Literature & Language and Literature), the emphasis is on the study of literary and (where relevant or appropriate) non-literary texts and on the development of mature powers of appreciation and analysis, as well as the ability to convey these effectively in speech and writing. Other forms of writing – creative, expository – are fostered and assigned, as integral elements in a balanced Language Arts curriculum, complementing studies in the main literary genres. As well as becoming acquainted with a range of major authors, which covers different epochs and (where applicable) the various countries where that language is spoken, students in each Language A are required to read works of World Literature in Translation, to develop international-mindedness through comparative literary studies.

2.2. Language Acquisition. For Group 2/Languages B/Ab Initio, the emphasis is on transactional linguistic competence and cultural studies. In both cases, curricula are sequentially designed (so that a student enrolled in Grade 6 – and continuing till she graduates in Grade 12 – will experience a comprehensive introduction to the field) but semestrally structured (so that a student who stays for only one semester – as not infrequently happens in mobile international families – will enjoy a balanced and transferable programme).

2.3. All students participating in either the MYP (Grades 6-10) or the DP (Grades 11-12) are required to study at least two languages: a Language A and one other language (either a second Language A or a Language B). Exceptions to this policy are made for ELD (English Language Development) students and/or those students who require additional English support. Such students will be required to take specially designed English Language Acquisition and/or ELD courses and, if deemed appropriate, to audit English A classes until such time as their English proficiency allows them to access the whole curriculum in a meaningful way. Language-combinations are arranged according to the needs of the student and the availability of language-teachers in the target languages. [See further, #3 below.]

3. LANGUAGE-PROVISION

3.1. ENGLISH

As the School’s language of instruction and the language of the host country, all students are required to take



courses each year in English, either as Language and Literature (mother-tongue speakers and functional bilinguals) or Language Acquisition (additional language). Students who, on entering the School, have limited competence in English are given additional initial language-support (schedule permitting) to enable them to learn effectively and confidently in their other subjects as soon as possible*. Faculty and Staff are provided with opportunities to learn about language-learning and language-teaching as part of the School's structured meetings times (i.e. presentations and updates from the English B coordinator) and CPD programme; classroom teachers are, thus, aware of ELD students' needs, and how to modify or differentiate lessons accordingly. In this way students are enabled to achieve competency in meeting academic goals, and to participate fully in the School culture, thereby becoming integrated members of the Marymount community.

**In very exceptional cases, ELD support of a more intensive nature may be needed. In Middle School (i.e. Grades 6, 7 & 8), this is provided by the School in the form of ELD classes. In High School, ELD support can be provided schedule permitting, otherwise short-term outside tuition to supplement the School's provision will be required. Parents will be notified in advance and informed that any such arrangement will be subject to an additional cost, to be agreed between them and a tutor, whether hired privately or through the School. See section 4 below.*

3.2. MOTHER-TONGUE INSTRUCTION OR SUPPORT IN OTHER FIRST LANGUAGES (LANGUAGES A)

The School actively seeks to support the mother-tongue development of its students, and in fulfilment of this commitment is able to offer scheduled Language A courses in a number of languages other than English. Depending on numbers, and schedules permitting, Language A* instruction in Chinese (Mandarin), French, German, Japanese, Korean and Spanish is available for students in Grades 9-12. Mother Tongue Support classes in these languages are also offered to students in Grades 6 to 8.

**In the DP, other Languages A, including Arabic, Czech, Italian, Polish and Russian, may be pursued with an external tutor (subject to an additional fee to be agreed between parents and tutor by private arrangement), and these studies are supervised by the School's Chair of World Languages and/or programme coordinator. At DP Standard Level only, an alternative option is available: School-supported Self-taught Language A, supervised as outlined above.*

3.3. ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES

3.3.1 All students (except, temporarily, those acquiring minimum functional competence in English) are required to take an additional language. As well as the obvious practical benefits, the intrinsic value of studying a language other than one's mother-tongue is that doing so enables a student to discover another culture at first hand, and so acquire another "window on the world".

3.3.2 For MYP English Language & Literature students, this second language will normally be French Language Acquisition or Spanish Language Acquisition. However, students who are bilingual, or nearly so, may – instead of a Language Acquisition course – opt for a second Language and Literature course, in languages where the School has mother-tongue teachers on its staff (currently: Chinese, Korean, French, German, Japanese, Spanish) or, when numbers warrant, employs a part-time tutor on a yearly basis. In MYP Language and Literature courses other than English, students of different grades (spanning usually Grades 9- 10, exceptionally Grades 8-10) may be grouped in one class in order to constitute a viable teaching- group.

3.3.3 MYP students in English Language Acquisition may, timetable and resource permitting, also opt for French Language Acquisition or Spanish Language Acquisition as their second language (this is particularly the case in the Middle School: Grades 6-8) rather than mother-tongue instruction; in such cases, mother-tongue support is provided where possible (as outlined in 2 above), to encourage maintenance of their cultural identity within an intercultural atmosphere. Instruction in other Languages B where the School employs teachers [viz., the languages listed in 3.3.2 above for Language A] is provided in the DP only. MYP students of French Language Acquisition or Spanish Language Acquisition are grouped according to age and lessons are differentiated according to needs of the students and their phase level: i.e., class-groupings by Phase (from 1 to 5/6) may span more than one grade (e.g.: Gr. 6-8 or Gr. 9- 10). Occasionally, a student proficient by Gr.8 in one language may opt to switch to another so as to broaden her linguistic horizons.



3.3.4 MYP students enrolled in a Language & Literature course other than English (typically in the first cycle of High School: Grades 9-10) where instruction is offered in School may take either English Language & Literature or English Language Acquisition as their additional language. Any student wishing to take a third language is encouraged to do so where teachers are available and timetabling permits. The timetable is structured in such a way as to promote and facilitate bilingual students and/or students proficient in English Language & Literature as well as their mother tongue, to study 2 x Language & Literature courses (i.e. their mother tongue and English A) and 1 x Language B course.

4. ELD PROVISION WITHIN THE MYP

4.1. Students entering Marymount London with limited proficiency in English receive appropriate additional support within the curriculum. Non-native speakers are assisted in reaching proficiency in English through an English Language Acquisition course offered in Grades 6 to 10 and a three-level ELD programme in Grades 6-8 (MYP). The levels offered are Beginner (open to Grades 6-8), Pre-Intermediate (open to Grades 6-7), Intermediate and Upper-Intermediate (open to Grades 9-10), Advanced (open to Grade 10). The Beginner (Eng. B1), Pre-Intermediate (Eng. B2) and Intermediate (Eng. B3) levels receive English provision of 5 x 1 hour periods per cycle provided by a qualified ESL/English B teacher. Upper-Intermediate (Eng. B4) and Advanced (Eng. B5) receive 6 x 1 hour periods per cycle, again provided by a qualified ESL/English B teacher. [See also grid-diagram in Appendix (#7) below.]

4.2. ELD students follow a full programme in all required subjects. [Exception: by being temporarily withdrawn from pursuing other language-options, students in Middle School English B are enabled to concentrate on achieving as soon as possible the level of functional competence in English needed to facilitate satisfactory learning in their “non-language” subjects, which are all taught through the medium of English.]

4.3. When a student is in transition from ELD/Eng. B to English A, she may – for a limited period only – take both English B and English A courses. During this transitional period, she may be dispensed from pursuing other language-options.

4.4. Teachers within the English B Department monitor the progress of ELD/English B students on a weekly basis, principally through English B meetings and through conversations with other subject teachers. Students transition from English B to English A on a flexible and reactive basis at any point in the academic year and always in conjunction with the students themselves, their parents and their teachers.

5. LANGUAGE-TEACHING

5.1. All languages (MYP Languages A and B; DP Languages A, B and ab initio) are taught by qualified native speakers.

5.2. Language plays a key role in interdisciplinary learning, and the School’s various departments of languages (English A; ESL/English B; World Languages) are ideally placed to play an active part in developing, designing and discovering valid cross-curricular links aimed at empowering students’ intellectual growth. For example, Language A and B teachers explore TOK topics in language classes, whilst Philosophy and Core teachers might investigate aspects of language and its influence on culture, identity, ways of thinking etc.

6. RESOURCES

6.1. The teaching of languages is supported by a wide range of audio-visual resources and the Library’s print holdings and online facilities. Instructional methods are enhanced by the deployment of appropriate and effective ICT resources. Student-led assemblies provide regular opportunities for all students to become confident communicators to a large audience. Participation in drama productions allow them to experience fully the expressive beauty and power of language skillfully used. Events such as International Day allow them to share their cultural riches with their peers. In these and other ways students come to appreciate the vital role of language as the major vehicle for thought and expression in their everyday lived reality.



References: This language policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and IBO documents:

- ‘Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes’ – IBO 2008
- ‘Language A: Literature School Supported Self-Taught Guide’ – IBO 2019
- Marymount International School London ‘School Language Profile’

RELATED POLICIES:

Curriculum Policy

Admissions Policy

Approved:	December 2024
Reviewed:	August 2025
Next Review By:	August 2028



APPENDIX

MINIMUM ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVELS FOR ADMISSION

	MMI COURSE	CEFR ⁵	IELTS ⁶	TOEFL ⁷	CAMBRIDGE ESOL
Grade 6	ENG B1 MYP Phase 1	A1 +	-	-	-
Grade 7	ENG B2 MYP Phase 2	A1/2 +	0-4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 8	ENG B3 MYP Phase 3	A1/2 +	0-4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 9	ENG B4 MYP Phase 4	A2 +	4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 10	ENG B5 MYP Phase 5	A2 +	4 +	-	KET ¹ +
Grade 11	DP ENG B SL Year 1	B1 +	4.5-5 +	57-86 +	PET ² +
	DP ENG B HL Year 1	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit SL Year 1	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit HL Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
	DP ENG A Lit SL/HL Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
Grade 12	DP ENG B SL/HL Year 2	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit SL Year 2	B2 +	5.5-6.5 +	87-109 +	FCE ³ +
	DP ENG A Lang & Lit HL Year 2	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +
	DP ENG A LIT Year 1	C1 +	7 +	110 +	CAE ⁴ +

¹ Cambridge Key English Test

² Cambridge Preliminary English Test

³ Cambridge First Certificate in English



- ⁴ Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English
- ⁵ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
- ⁶ International English Language Testing System
- ⁷ Test of English as a Foreign Language