

Organizing literature and language and literature courses

The learner portfolio

The learner portfolio is an individual collection of student work documenting the student's learning throughout the two years of both the literature and language and literature courses. It should be introduced by the teacher at the beginning of the course, and include a diverse set of informal and formal responses to the texts studied. While the portfolio is not formally assessed by the IB, it is a required, integral component of the syllabus and should therefore be given careful thought and consideration in the planning of the course.

Purpose of the learner portfolio

In addition to advice on the relevant language A guide, the following should be noted about the learner portfolio. It provides a space where students can:

- explore texts and reflect on them
- establish connections among different components of the course, such as the texts studied for the course, the areas of exploration and the central concepts
- reflect and create a range of different responses to the texts being studied following the three approaches suggested by the areas of exploration
- establish connections between their learning and elements external to the course, such as: previous works they have read; works they are currently reading in other courses; their perspectives and values as readers; theory of knowledge (TOK); creativity, activity, service (CAS); and issues in the world around them
- develop their approaches to learning skills, particularly those related to thinking, self-management and research skills
- document their preparation for the course assessment components (IA, paper 1, paper 2, HL essay).

Guidelines and format

Teachers are free to monitor and set their own guidelines for the learner portfolios, but students should be encouraged to shape them in ways that allow them to independently track and record their personal development. To ensure that the learner portfolios fulfil this function adequately, teachers should take the following guidelines into account.

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- The learner portfolio should be introduced early in the course, and its purpose and importance should be made clear to students.
- In planning courses and lessons, teachers should provide opportunities for students to be able to work and reflect on their learner portfolios in class time.
- There is no required format for the learner portfolio. It may be completed in an electronic format, and hosted on any platform readily available to students (for example Google Docs, Weebly, Wix, Evernote, OneNote, and so on), or it may be a paper collection of documents.
- Teachers requiring electronic learner portfolios should consider privacy and data restrictions in their schools before asking students to post portfolios online.
- The school must be able to access the portfolio for at least six months after students have taken the assessment leading to their diploma. The learner portfolios are not formally assessed by the IB but they may be required to check on the authenticity of a student's work or to assess the implementation of the syllabus in a school.
- Teachers can decide how extensive the portfolio is, but should consider the following.
 - The language A learner portfolio differs from a traditional portfolio assessment, which is limited to showcasing a student's best work. The learner portfolio should include a range of work representing the student's record of discovery, experimentation and development as a learner.
 - The learner portfolio does not need to include a record or documentation of every single activity completed by the student during the course.
 - Students and/or teachers can organize the portfolio in a variety of ways. Teachers may designate sections for students, or students may organize it in their own way. Some ideas are in the self-management section, but there is no fixed requirement about how this should be done. This flexibility is intended to allow students to create their own way of meaningfully organizing their learning.
- Teachers should remember that all portfolios should contain the works studied form where students indicate which texts and works they have studied (and how they have distributed them across assessment components in such a way that no work will have been used for more than one component). The works studied form should be signed by both teacher and student.

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Learner portfolio entries and activities

The learner portfolio must consist of a variety of formal and informal responses to the texts studied, which may come in a range of critical and/or creative forms, and in a range of different media. Examples of learning activities, responses, and records that could document the development of student learning are listed below, with some samples of teacher instructions and student work. The activities below are not prescribed, or all inclusive, but are meant to represent a range of possibilities. Some examples have been included to show the outcomes that can be expected from students in each subsection that follows (in some cases, templates and protocols have been included also).

Self-management

The learner portfolio can serve as an effective organizational tool to help students keep track of their learning. Students may wish to collate lists, tables or visual diagrams that summarize essential course content.

The portfolio can also aid students in recording key decisions they take throughout the course. Students may wish to articulate their thinking behind decisions such as which extracts, works and/or texts and global issue they will use for their individual oral, which works they will choose to prepare for the paper 2 comparative essay, and which works and/or texts and topics they will choose for their HL essay.

Useful activities, documents and entries may include:

- a list of text types and/or literary forms covered in the course
- a list of global issues arising from the study of texts covered in the course
- a glossary of literary terminology and stylistic terms relevant to material covered
- course maps linking texts to possible areas of exploration, text types or concepts.

The following PDF documents can be downloaded to help students plan their study of the works and/or texts. A blank course map and reading log tracker template which teachers may fill in themselves is provided in the [appendices](#) section.

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[Course map](#)

[Reading log tracker](#)

Individual responses to texts

Students can use the learner portfolio to record their responses to the texts studied. Entries may differ in terms of length, scope, focus and development, ranging from spontaneous reading notes recording a student's first impressions to a fully developed critical response. Responses may differ in register (from informal to academic), and medium (combining verbal, visual, and auditory entries). The following suggestions illustrate how students may record their thinking about a given text or task at hand.

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Type of entry	Example	Student entry
Reading log on a text read in preparation for class	First impressions after reading <i>Macbeth</i> act one scene 5.	This scene marks a key turning point in the play by introducing Lady Macbeth, who proves influential for the rest of the play. Her characterization and voice differ significantly from the other characters introduced in the play so far [...]
Responses to study questions or prompts	Discuss how emotions are evoked in an advertisement of your choice.	The UNHate campaign by Benetton is highly provocative and intends to shock audiences by displaying various world leaders of opposing factions kissing each other. The emotions viewers feel when faced with such images may range from disbelief or confusion to anger and resentment in view of the liberties Benetton takes with this campaign.
Annotations on a text	Glosses on the opening line from Carol Ann Duffy's poem "War Photographer".	<p>Opening line: "In his darkroom he is finally alone".</p> <p>Finally: odd emphasis; suggesting inner conflict, or trauma?</p> <p>Darkroom: symbolic of?</p>

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		His darkroom: stressing his isolation?
Close reading of a textual excerpt or of a shorter text	Analysis of five lines from Malala Yousafzai's speech to the UN assembly on 12 July 2013.	<p>Passage: from "So here I stand [...] one girl among many" to "their right to be educated".</p> <p>Analysis: in these lines Malala's speech gains intensity as she articulates the purpose behind her speech: to speak on behalf of all those "without a voice". The emotional impact of those lines largely stems from the simple sentence structure (simple clauses) coupled with effective rhetorical devices.</p>
Outline for a critical commentary on a shorter text or textual excerpt	Notes for a critical commentary on the opening page of <i>Persepolis</i> by Marjane Satrapi.	<p>Commentary on <i>Persepolis</i> (opening page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction: intention and purpose—grabbing attention, establish rapport, introduce narrative voice and main characters, introduce themes • Composition of page: <i>mis en scène</i>, size and pacing of panels • Use of light and darkness; absence of colours • Characterization and stereotypes

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning of visual and verbal elements (captions; speech bubbles)
Draft for written analytical response	<p>First version of a critical commentary on a satirical article from <i>The Onion</i></p> <p>(or a satirical article of your choice).</p>	(to be completed by student)
Final copy of coursework	Final copy of a comparative essay written in preparation for paper 2 (comparative essay).	(to be completed by student)

The following downloadable PDF document can be distributed to students and may help them reflect on and interact with the texts/works they read.

[Reading log protocol](#)

Post-classroom reflection

The learner portfolio can record reflections on how meaning is negotiated in a classroom context following an interesting discussion in class. Students may include documents arising from classroom activities such as:

- classroom discussion notes
- presentation slides and talking points
- blog posts and responses
- “we said” and “they said” (reflection on main points made during a debate)
- proposals on research to be conducted after class
- protocols for discussion groups or literary circles
- study notes taken in class
- thoughts on new concepts, texts, and theories introduced in class.

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The following activity, provided in PDF format, is an example of the kind of reflection activity that can be carried out by students after a class discussion.

Discussion mapping exercise

Self-assessment

The portfolio can serve as a reflection space allowing students to evaluate their own progress and identify areas for further study.

Entries may consist of:

- self-assessment activities where students analyse their progress by answering a questionnaire or by applying a rubric to a specific oral or written performance
- collaborative peer and self-assessment activities.
- reflective statements arising from the comparison and contrast between a first draft and the final draft of a comparative essay or a guided analysis written as practice
- reflections on creative tasks
- suggestions for further study identifying areas worth exploring
- suggestions on how to link areas of exploration, concepts and texts
- suggestions on how to link elements of the course with TOK or CAS.

The following downloadable PDF documents are examples of portfolio entries resulting from self-assessment or peer-assessment work carried out by students. They can be given to students to help plan their activities.

Collaborative peer and self-assessment

Self-assessment task

Creative tasks

The portfolio can showcase creative responses and serve as a medium for exploring texts or concepts creatively.

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Students may include the following.

- Creative or re-creative tasks, for example:
 - a pastiche of a work
 - internal monologues from a character’s perspective
 - imaginary dialogues between characters or authors.
- Transformation tasks, for example:
 - social media posts based on a dialogue from a play or a novel
 - a dramatic dialogue based on a prose text
 - an advertisement based on a literary work
 - an imaginary interview with a literary character
 - original poems written in response to a text
 - an animated version of a verbal text.
- Visual aids, for example:
 - mind maps
 - concept maps
 - visible thinking routines, such as “generate, sort, connect, elaborate”.
- Performance tasks, for example:
 - scripts
 - video or audio recordings.

The following downloadable PDF documents are examples of creative work of the type which can be carried out with students in response to works and/or texts.

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Pastiche exercise

Transformative task

