

ISS Language Guidelines

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ISS

SINGAPORE CAMPUS

Realising Potential





ISS Language Guidelines

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.

(Ron Ritchhart 2002)

Statement of Philosophy

At the International School of Singapore (ISS), students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language in an environment where they are actively engaged in asking questions and solving problems, making meaning, thinking reflectively and building enduring understandings. All teachers are responsible for both general and subject-specific language teaching at all levels. The diversity of languages within our inclusive community is a great asset and all teachers at ISS recognise their role as language teachers, who enable students to both pose and solve problems, research and express their understanding using multiple languages and forms of literacies.

ISS recognises that the acquisition and control of language constitutes genuine empowerment for individuals in society, and that in order to adequately equip students for success in their lives, it is crucial that they develop proficiency and expertise in listening and speaking, viewing, reading and writing in a wide range of modes and registers. Full academic literacy in English, Japanese, Korean, Chinese or other Mother Tongue languages is the ultimate goal of the Language A program.

In addition, the Language B program at ISS actively promotes additive bilingualism, which means that students learn an additional language without detriment to the development of their first language, or their culture.

ISS fosters the development of each student's full literacy potential through the integration of home, school and community. ISS is committed to ensuring that all students are successful in literacy and become skilled independent readers, writers and speakers. Through carefully planned reading instruction and a balanced literacy approach, students will learn strategies that support their continued growth as life-long readers, writers and speakers.

How literacy is taught at ISS

The development of essential literacy skills – reading, writing, viewing and presenting, listening and speaking– are a vital part of a student’s literacy development.

Elementary

With a focus on independent learning, time is allocated on a daily basis for the teaching of language. This designated time for instruction in reading, writing, listening and word study includes whole group instruction (focus lessons, read-alouds), small group instruction (differentiated groups, strategy lessons, shared reading and writing), and independent work (independent reading, writing and listening in order to practice and apply skills and strategies).

In accordance with the trans-disciplinary practice of Approaches To Learning (ATL) language is authentically incorporated into units of inquiry.

Additional Languages

To promote engagement with our host country, Mandarin instruction is provided three times per week to all students who do not require Beginner ESL support. Mandarin is delivered via whole class differentiated instruction from K1-Gr 1 and in phase groups from Gr 2 - Gr 5 based on the following phases; Phase 1 Beginning, Phase 2 Intermediate and Phase 3 Advanced/Native Speaker.

Mother Tongue Support

Whilst there is no specific Mother Tongue teaching programme in the Elementary School, the school places importance on Mother Tongue support. Our library houses children’s literature in the multiple languages that represent our diverse population. Parents are encouraged and welcome to share their language with the classes through shared reading and classroom activities. Where appropriate students can research and share their thinking in class with their mother tongue. Students are encouraged to use and develop their Mother Tongue at home.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Additional English language support is provided for students who require assistance to access the curriculum. In addition to differentiated assistance received from the class teacher and the ESL teacher in the mainstream class, beginner ESL students in Grades 1-5 receive ESL withdrawal lessons three times per week. This will occur at the same time as mainstream students receive Mandarin tuition. In addition, students from G1-5, who have exited beginner ESL support but still require additional support, receive 3 periods a week of in class support provided by the ESL teacher. (See also ESL Guidelines and Procedures for more information)

Middle School

The Language and Literature programme supports students as they work to achieve mastery in the skills of speaking, reading and writing in their most proficient language. At present, students participate in the Language and Literature programme in English and languages other than English (Mother Tongue).

As the Approaches To Learning (ATLs) are interdisciplinary, literacy is incorporated into units when authentically possible. With the aim to move students from supported to independent learning, reading, writing and vocabulary development is integrated into all units of study across all subjects employing a variety of literacy strategies. Reading, organisation and writing support (ROW) is available after school for students who require further support.

Additional Languages

The importance of the acquisition of an additional language is acknowledged in the Language Acquisition programmes. Language Acquisition programmes support students to develop skills in speaking, reading, writing, listening and viewing. Students participate in Language Acquisition classes in English, French or Mandarin.

Mother Tongue Programme

Students in Language and literature (other than English) are supported by a network of tutors who oversee, in close consultation with the teacher, the language component of the criteria. Regular training sessions are held throughout the year to train/guide Tutors in assessment in MYP criteria, particularly application of assessment criteria. Tutors of like languages, are encouraged to use school facilities to collaborate on assessment tasks. Tutors have the opportunity to contribute comments to reporting means.

MYP (ESL supported) Grades 6-10

(See also 'ESL Guidelines and Procedures Handbook' for more detailed information)

The MYP (ESL supported) at ISS prepares English as a Second Language Learners (ESLs) in grade levels 6-10 for pathways to the IB MYP and IB DP/DC program. The MYP (ESL supported) program provides a rigorous but rewarding educational programme which is aligned to the MYP. In addition, the content is modified and delivered in a sheltered and nurturing environment. Specifically, this program helps students improve in the four language domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing across all subject areas.

Students will take part in the programme if they are in the following MYP phases of English Language development;

Grade 6: Phases 1,2,3
Grade 7: Phases 1,2,3
Grade 8: Phases 1,2,3
Grade 9: Phases 2,3
Grade 10: Phase 3

WIDA's W-APT is used to place students and MODEL will be used to recommend phase movement.

Students Grade 6-8 Phases 1-3 and Grade 9 Phase 2 students who require language support in order to access the curriculum have additional English language instruction in lieu of a Language and Literature course. In addition, these students receive sheltered modified instruction for Science, Individuals and Societies, Design and Math. Phases 4-5 students in Grade 6-8 receive classroom support as deemed necessary.

High School

MYP Language and Literature and Diploma Programmes (DP) programs in the high school challenge students to become literate readers and writers. In the MYP students enrol in Language A English, Japanese, Korean or Mother Tongue.

Within the Approaches To Learning (ATL), literacy is incorporated into all units when authentically possible, thereby encouraging students to become competent users of a variety of literacy strategies that aim to foster independence in all subject areas.

Additional Languages

Students receive MYP Language and Literature instruction in English, Japanese, and Korean. ISS offers a Mother Tongue program for students whose Mother Tongue is not explicitly represented. The focus is on developing independent language learning and text analysis skills in preparation for the rigours of the corresponding IB Diploma courses.

Language B programs support students in second-language acquisition. Language B course offerings include English, French, Mandarin, Japanese Ab Initio and Spanish Ab Initio.

Mother Tongue Support

Students in Grade 9 and 10 Mother Tongue Language and literature are supported by a network of tutors who oversee, in close consultation with the teacher, the language component of the criteria. Training sessions are held at the beginning of each

academic year to train/guide Tutors in assessment in MYP criteria, particularly application of assessment criteria. The Mother Tongue teacher provides ongoing support to tutors throughout the year via email and face to face. Tutors have the opportunity to contribute comments to reporting means.

Students in Grade 11-12 enrol in Language A English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean or 'School-Supported, Self-Taught' (SSST) programs. SSST students follow the Language A Literature SL program in their own language; they are provided with the same number of periods per week for self-study as their fellow students who are taught the other Languages A face-to-face by teachers in school. SSST students are supported by an external tutor in their studies and are supervised by the school's SSST Coordinator during their Language A lesson slots in school. At the end of the two year programme, SSST students sit official IB Language A Literature SL examinations in their mother tongue.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

To enroll into the MYP programme in Grade 9 students need to be working at Phase 4 or above. Students working at Phase 2 and 3 will be admitted into the MYP ESL supported programme outlined in the paragraph below.

In Grade 9-10 additional English language instruction is provided for students working in Phases 2 and 3 through our MYP ESL Supported Programme (see p 3 above and the separate ESL Guidelines and Procedures Handbook). Students in MYP ESL supported, receive sheltered instruction and push-in support for Science, Humanities, Music, Art, Drama and Design, as well as supplementary differentiated reading instruction. Only students in Phase 3 receive Mother Tongue instruction. Students in Phase 2 do not do Mother Tongue and receive additional English Language Support instruction.

In order to ensure that students are able to engage with the academic language required within the DP programme, the school requires students to be working in English at WIDA level 4 or above to be accepted into the DP programme.

Students in Grade 11- 12 receive differentiated support from their subject teachers where additional support is required for language needs.

Language Planning

Elementary School

Teachers are guided by the Language standards and benchmarks associated with the Program of Inquiry. Since every teacher is a language teacher, teachers work collaboratively to plan the Language programme to ensure balance and articulation across the grade levels. Faculty and Coordinator meetings are used as a platform for discussion of the Language curriculum and to ensure consistency of approach, standards and expectations.

Grade level teachers collaboratively plan on a weekly basis with Student Support Teachers and Integrators where appropriate.

Yearly overview planning involves:

- Grade teams
- Integrators
- Literacy Coordinator
- Student Support Coordinator
- PYP Coordinator
- Head of Elementary School

ISS teachers are provided with professional development to ensure an inclusive, differentiated approach that nurtures multiple learning styles. Student support staff plan collaboratively with teachers to ensure that all students are empowered to reach their potential.

Middle School

Since every teacher is a language teacher, teachers work together to plan the overall language programme for the school, ensuring balance and progression across the grade levels, following the Middle Years Programme (MYP) units and outcomes and benchmarks. Staff and team level meetings are used as a platform to discuss the language curriculum and to ensure consistency of approach, standards and expectations.

Student Support and Learning Group Leaders (LGLs) meet with language teachers and support staff as needed.

Yearly overview planning involves:

- Subject groups
- Student Support staff
- MYP Coordinator
- Middle School Principal

Students at ISS have a variety of learning styles and needs, therefore ISS provides staff with professional development opportunities to address the diverse needs of the students.

High School

Since every teacher is a language teacher, teachers work together to plan the overall language programme for the school, ensuring balance and progression across the grade levels, following the school's MYP and DP units with Outcomes and Benchmarks and Scope and Sequence respectively. Staff and subject group meetings are used as a platform to discuss the language curriculum and to ensure consistency of approach, standards and expectations.

Student Support and Learning Group Leaders (LGLs) meet with language teachers and Teaching Assistants (TA), as needed.

Yearly overview planning involves:

- Subject groups
- Learning Support and ESL Specialists
- Learning Group Leaders
- MYP and DP Coordinators
- High School Principal

Students at ISS have a variety of learning styles and needs, therefore ISS provides staff with professional development opportunities.

Reading

In order to develop lifelong reading habits, ISS learners are encouraged to read for pleasure, interest, and information, experiencing an extensive range of quality fiction and non-fiction texts. As learners engage with interesting and appealing texts appropriate to their experiences and developmental phases, they acquire the skills, strategies and conceptual understandings necessary to become competent, motivated, independent readers. At ISS we strive to incorporate current educational practices into our planning and teaching.

Elementary School

Students choose a variety of resources from class libraries which are supplemented by teacher and student selected resources from the ISS school library. Class libraries are rotated between classes on a regular basis during the school year.

The following reading practices are implemented:

- Students are exposed to a variety of genres and practise and develop reading skills daily through explicit teaching of strategies and through the Programme of Inquiry. There is an allocated time for independent reading, reading to a peer, or listening to reading each day.
- Teachers plan using a variety of resources to provide systematic, direct and explicit phonics instruction so that students master the essential alphabetic code-breaking skills required for foundational reading proficiency.
- The teachers provide an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension and the literacy of new technologies.
- Students are encouraged to take reading materials home daily to enable parents and carers to share and support them in the process of attaining reading proficiency.

Middle School

Reading materials are from a variety of sources, both fiction and non-fiction.

The following reading practices are implemented:

- Students are exposed to a variety of genres and have the opportunity to practise and develop reading skills. There is an allocated time for independent reading each week in language classes.
- Where possible, students are provided with an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary- building, grammar, reading fluency and comprehension skills.
- As part of the reading expectation, students are encouraged to read, with the support of parents and guardians on a daily basis. Through various means, students show a record and a reaction to their independent reading, providing opportunities for parent/guardian dialogue with the student's teacher.
- Many classrooms have a range of texts available to students.
- With the support of teachers and/or the librarian, students have access to online resources such as magazines and databases.
- Students visit the school library regularly to borrow books or use library resources.
- Students are encouraged to access reading resources regardless of language.

High School

Reading materials are from a variety of physical and digital resources, both fiction and non-fiction.

The following reading practices are implemented:

- Students are exposed to a variety of genres and have the opportunity to practise and develop reading skills daily through explicit teaching and through unit materials. There is an allocated time for independent or guided reading each week.
- The teachers provide an integrated approach to reading that supports the development of oral language, vocabulary, grammar, reading fluency, comprehension and the literacy of new technologies.
- Students are encouraged to read at home for pleasure to support them in the process of attaining reading proficiency.
- Diagnostic reading assessments are used.
- Students visit the school library regularly; the library has titles in a wide range of languages.
- Students have access to online magazines and readers as extended reading opportunities.

Writing

At ISS students are provided with opportunities to develop a variety of writing strategies. Students are encouraged to attempt new styles of writing, which are introduced and modeled by the teacher.

Elementary School

The following writing practices are implemented:

- Consistent use of the Writing Process as a structure and practice (planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing), as age appropriate throughout the grade levels.
- Consistent use of the 6 Traits of Writing (Voice, Ideas, Organization, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency and Conventions) as the core scheme with which to assess components of skillful writing, and to structure individual goals and associated strategies during Work on Writing.
- Students are provided with varied, challenging, authentic and meaningful opportunities to recognise the purpose of writing as a form of communication through a variety of text types that are integrated within the units of inquiry.

- Students are provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use written language specific to different subject areas and through the PYP.
- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing will be fostered by providing a daily opportunity to choose sustained writing in any form.
- Students are provided with opportunities to make the connection between learning to write and listening to reading.
- Students participate in modeled, shared, guided and independent writing activities.

Middle School

The following writing practices are implemented:

- Communication is fostered by providing students with challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities.
- Consistent use of the writing process across the grade levels (planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing).
- Students are provided with opportunities to express themselves in a variety of genres.
- Students are provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and apply correct and appropriate use of language.
- Students participate in guided and independent writing activities.
- Students are provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use written language specific to different subject areas.

High School

The following writing practices are implemented:

- Students' natural desire to communicate through writing is fostered by giving real purpose to their writing, and by exposing them to varied, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities.

- Consistent use of the writing process as a structure and practice across the school (planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing), as appropriate throughout the grade levels.
- Students are provided with opportunities to express themselves in writing through a variety of genres.
- Students are provided with opportunities to acquire, develop and use written language specific to different subject areas and through the MYP and DP.
- Students participate in modeled, shared, guided and independent writing activities.
- Students are led to reflect on their writing process and product.

Listening and Speaking/Viewing and Presenting

Elementary School

Students are offered a language rich environment where opinions are valued and students are given opportunities to speak within formal and informal situations and for a variety of audiences. Regular practice is provided in speaking and listening to develop confidence and self esteem. Students are encouraged to listen, discuss, review and develop their own ideas in co-operation with others.

- Students are provided ample opportunities to develop and utilise oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, online activities and dialogue.
- Teachers model language usage in conversation, while being sensitive to the social context, students' cultural backgrounds and mother tongues.
- Teachers plan activities that expose students to conventions of oral language and aid them in responding appropriately to a range of contexts and audiences.

Middle School

Students are offered a language rich environment where opinions are valued and students are given opportunities to speak in formal and informal situations. Regular practice is provided in speaking and listening to develop confidence and fluency.

The following practices are implemented:

- Students are encouraged to listen, discuss, re-enact and develop their own ideas in collaboration with others.
- Where possible, students are provided with ample opportunities to develop and utilize oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, online activities and dialogue.
- Students learn to use the conventions of oral language through activities that expose them to a range of contexts and audiences.

High School

Students are offered a language rich environment where opinions are valued and students are given opportunities to speak in formal and informal situations. Regular practice is provided in speaking and listening to develop confidence and fluency.

- Students are encouraged to listen, discuss, re-enact and develop their own ideas in co-operation with others.
- Students are provided ample opportunities to develop and utilise oral language beyond everyday classroom conversations through oral presentations, debates, speeches, role-play, poetry recitations, songs, online activities and dialogue.
- Students learn to use the conventions of oral language through activities that expose them to a range of contexts and audiences

Spelling/Word Study

Elementary School

At ISS, spelling is considered a vital part of language development. Spelling conventions are consistently modeled and displayed throughout the school.

The following spelling/word study practices are implemented:

- In Kindergarten 1-2, differentiated and developmentally appropriate spelling is taught in authentic contexts in multi-sensory forms and with reference to Words Their Way: Word Study For Phonics.
- In Grades 1- 5, Students will have an explicit differentiated spelling programme guided by Words Their Way: Word Study For Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction. Spelling will also include relevant words from independent writing and the units of inquiry. Teachers model a variety of methods and resources for learning and checking spelling and to enhance their spelling program.

Middle School

Development of vocabulary and spelling is contextualised according to the unit of study.

Teachers use online resources to enhance spelling and vocabulary knowledge.

High School

Development of vocabulary is contextualised according to the unit of study.

Teachers use online resources to enhance spelling and vocabulary knowledge.

Presentation

Elementary School

In recognition of the diverse existing handwriting styles practiced in international schools, ISS recognises a goal of legibility for all students. For the purposes of a whole school approach to the teaching of handwriting, the D'Nealian handwriting scheme has been adopted. Both printed (manuscript) and cursive handwriting and keyboarding skills will be taught using a differentiated approach according to need through individual, small group and whole group instruction.

- Students in K1-2 will practice fine motor skills using a variety of materials alongside the D'nealian handwriting formation on a daily basis
- Students in Grades 1-2 use a variety of resources including the appropriate Grade level D'nealian resource book.
- Students in Grade 3 use a variety of resources including the Grade 2-3 D'nealian resource book.
- Students in Grades 4-5 use a variety of resources with a focus on legibility
- Students in Grades 2-5 receive keyboarding instruction.

Middle School

Not applicable

High School

Not applicable

Learning/Literacy Support/Inclusion

Elementary School

ISS is committed to personalising and supporting learning that enables all students to realise their own learning journey within a supportive environment. Curriculum materials and resources are designed to promote international mindedness and to realise the learner profiles. Classroom and Learning Support Teachers collaborate to support all learners within the extent of the school's resources, as well as recognising the need for further expertise that may be provided by outside agencies.

Middle School & High School

ISS is committed to personalising and supporting learning that enables all students to realise their own learning journey within a supportive and inclusive environment. Curriculum materials and resources are designed to promote international mindedness and to realise the learner profile. Teachers and support staff collaborate to support all learners within the various programmes. Where necessary, outside agencies are involved.

Assessment

ISS has common assessments across the grade levels at scheduled times throughout the year to assess student progress and development.

Elementary School

ISA testing (Mathematics, Reading and Writing) for students in Grades 3 to 5 is conducted once a year.

WIDA Testing is conducted from Grades 1 – 5 for ESL students. The W-APT test is used to screen and place new students into the ESL programme, while the MODEL on-line assessment is used to track these students' progress.

Students' reading skills are evaluated during Daily 5 conferencing, and through using the PM Benchmarks/Probe Scheme.

All students from Kindergarten 2 to Grade 5 are assessed using the appropriate spelling inventory from Words Their Way: Word Study For Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction.

- Students in Kindergarten 2 are assessed using the Primary Spelling Inventory from Words Their Way: Word Study For Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction.
- Students from Grades 1 to 3 are assessed using the Elementary Spelling Inventory.
- Students from Grade 4-5 are assessed using the Upper Level Spelling Inventory.
- These assessments may be differentiated according to ESL or Learning Support needs.

All students from Grades K2 to Grade 5 receive a Writing Prompt assessment twice a year which is scored using the ISS 6 Traits rubrics (K-2 and 3-5).

Formative assessment, carried out by the class teacher is used on a regular basis to inform future planning. It involves identifying goals and strategies from the CAFE, 6 Traits of Writing, learning objectives and ISS Standards and Benchmarks to inform next steps.

The ccpenseive is used as a means to share information with support staff, track progress, record achievements and to highlight future teaching and learning.

Middle School & High School

Formative Assessment is used to assess student progress and to inform planning. In addition to teacher generated assessment, ISS administers standardised diagnostic tools to inform learning. These are currently:

ISA testing (Mathematics, Reading and Writing) for students in Grades 6 to 10 is conducted once a year.

STAR Reading diagnostics for students in grades 6 to 10 is used to assess reading levels and to guide student choice of reading material.

Summative tasks are administered to assess student achievement and are based on IB MYP and DP assessment requirements and these are used to inform planning. All students take exams and complete unit assessment (HS: Semester exams and MS: Yearly exam, E-Portfolio, and E-Assessments). The Language Acquisition students receive WIDA's W-APT and MODEL to aid placement and movement of students in the MYP Language Acquisition phases.

Terminology:

Literacy: For the purposes of this document, literacy incorporates reading, writing and viewing.

Mother Tongue: Non-English Language A courses.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Terminology

- MYP = Middle Years Programme
- DP = Diploma Programme

Programme Nomenclature by sector	ES	MS	HS
PYP	Literacy	-	-
MYP	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Language and Literature● Language Acquisition In this document Language A: Refers to English only (in Middle School) as opposed to Mother Tongue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Language and Literature● Language Acquisition
DP	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Language A● Language B

Reference:

Ritchhart, R. 2002. *Intellectual character: What It Is, Why It Matters, and How To Get It*. San Francisco, CA, USA. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.