



**ISS**

SINGAPORE CAMPUS

**Realising Potential**

Language Guidelines  
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## ISS Language Guidelines

# 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.

ISS recognises that the acquisition and control of language constitute 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.

## Primary School

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-aloud), 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.

To promote intercultural understanding, communication and respect, Mandarin instruction is provided to all students.

Currently, students who require English language support in order to access the curriculum have differentiated assistance provided by the class teacher and the EAL teacher in the mainstream class. Beginner EAL students in Grades 1-5 receive EAL withdrawal lessons with the EAL teacher. This occurs at the same time as Literacy lessons for non-EAL students.

## High School

The Language and Literature courses in both the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP) in the high school supports and challenges students as they work to achieve mastery in the skills of reading, writing, viewing and presenting, listening and speaking in their most proficient language. In Grade 6, students continue with the model from Primary School where all students take English and Mandarin. In Grades 7 and 8 students all take English and have the option to either take Mandarin or French Acquisition (provided they are an English Language & Literature student, not English Acquisition) or take a Mother Tongue class in which their Home Language is supported through a school teacher and a home tutor. In Grades 9 to 12, students can take Japanese, Chinese or Korean as a Literature subject taught by an ISS teacher. They can also continue with learning their Home Language through a tutor and the Self-taught course.

The importance of the acquisition of an additional language is acknowledged in the Language Acquisition programmes on offer in the DP and MYP. Language Acquisition courses allow students to develop skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking in languages other than their mother tongue. At present, students participate in Language Acquisition classes in English, French or Mandarin unless they take two languages at Literature level (eg. English Language & Literature and Japanese Language & Literature).

The Mother Tongue programme mentioned above is 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.

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.

Currently, students (Phases 1-3) who require English language support in order to access the curriculum have additional English language instruction and are also supported in core subjects by an EAL Specialist teacher wherever possible. For more details refer to the EAL Guidelines and Procedures document.

# Language Planning

## Primary School

Teachers are guided by the Language standards and benchmarks associated with the Program of Inquiry. They collaboratively plan the Language programme to ensure balance and articulation across the grade levels. Collaboration Meetings between Faculty and the PYP Coordinator occur weekly and 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 regular basis with Learning Support Teachers and Integrators where appropriate.

Yearly overview planning involves:

- Grade Teams
- Integrators
- Learning Support Staff
- Head of EAL

- PYP Coordinator
- K-12 Principal

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

## High School

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.

The Learning Support & Wellness Team and the Teaching and Learning Literacies Team (TLLs) also meet with language teachers and support staff as needed.

Yearly overview planning involves:

- Subject Teachers
- EAL Specialists/Teachers
- Learning Support staff
- TLLs
- Head of MYP
- Head of DP
- Head of EAL and HSD
- K-12 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.

## 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.

## **Primary 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.

## **High School**

Reading materials are from a variety of 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 each unit.
- There is an allocated time for independent or guided reading each week, either in language lessons, Kampong or ECAs.
- 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. Through various means, students can show a record and/or reaction to their independent reading.
- Students are encouraged to 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.
- EAL Supported students have access to a literacy intervention programme delivered online exposing them to differentiated fiction and non-fiction (Achieve3000).
- Other diagnostic reading assessments are used at various points for various purposes (CAT4, ISA, ReadTheory).

## 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.

### Primary 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.

## **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 modelled, shared, guided and independent writing activities.
- Students are led to reflect on their writing process and product.

# Listening and Speaking/Viewing and Presenting

## Primary 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 cooperation 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.

## High School

At ISS, 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 cooperation 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

## Primary School

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

The following spelling/word study practices are implemented:

- In Kindergarten, 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 reading, 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.

## High School

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

Teachers use online resources to enhance spelling and vocabulary knowledge.

# Handwriting

## Primary 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 Kindergarten will practice fine motor skills including 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 with a focus on legibility
- Students in Grades 4-5 use a variety of resources with a focus on legibility
- Students in Grades 2-5 receive keyboarding instruction.

## **High School**

Not applicable

# **Learning/Literacy Support/Inclusion**

## **Primary 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.

## **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.

## Primary 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 EAL students.

Students' reading skills are evaluated during Daily 5 conferencing, 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 conducted in August and May.

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 EAL or Learning Support needs.

Assessments are conducted twice a year.

All students from Grades Kindergarten 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) and administered in August and May.

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.

## 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 9 is conducted once a year.

Achieve3000 Literacy and Read Theory diagnostics for students in grades 6 to 10 is used to assess reading Lexile 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. The English Language Acquisition students receive regular end of semester WIDA Assessment to aid placement of students in the MYP Language Acquisition phases.