



**Option Internationale du Baccalauréat (OIB) – France
(British Option): English Language and Literature
A guide to standards for university admissions tutors**

Candidates for the OIB British Option take **first language (English) examinations** in English Language and Literature and History-Geography, in addition to the standard subjects of the French Baccalauréat.

What do the OIB English Language and Literature examinations tell an admissions tutor about the candidate's achievement in English?

The OIB English Language and Literature examinations are **first language** examinations. The **literature component is examined and assessed at a level equivalent to A-level English Literature**, and language is assessed **by reference to appropriate educated mother tongue usage**. The linguistic demands of these exams are focused on the **use of English in an academic context**; this makes them an excellent preparation for university study in any subject. Expected levels of language use for successful candidates are equivalent to C1 or C2 on the CEFR, or 'educated native speaker/writer'.

OIB candidates study in special international sections in French schools. Many will already have taken IGCSE First Language English and English Literature in Year 11. From Year 7 to Year 10, students follow a first language programme in English Language and Literature and History. This special programme for international sections, published by the French Ministry of Education, states that the expected CEFR level of English language use in Year 10 is B2. The course is based strongly on literary and cultural content and thus, like the OIB, focuses on the use of English in an academic context*.

In terms of **reading**, the OIB English examinations demand the comprehension and analysis of complex literary works in their entirety. Examples of writers set in 2016: John Donne, George Eliot, Aphra Behn, Harold Pinter, Pat Barker. All students also have to study a Shakespeare play and a synoptic topic (currently Writers and Writing of the Romantic Age or Postcolonial Writing). Oral and written assessments focus on understanding, close reading, analysis, personal response, and awareness of the ways in which style and form convey meaning. Candidates are also required to respond to an unprepared text in a critical appreciation exercise in the written examination.

In terms of **writing**, the OIB English examination demands extended analytical responses in essay form to A-level-style questions about works of literature. Qualities of argument and use of formal and critical language are assessed, as well as structure and clarity of expression.

The 30-minute OIB oral examination gives a full assessment of the candidate's **speaking and listening** through an analytical, reflective response to literature. The candidate is required to give a formal presentation analysing an extract from the Shakespeare play prepared for the exam. (S)he then faces questions on the presentation, and on the play as a whole. An exploratory discussion of the synoptic topic, through detailed reference to the texts studied, follows.

More information about the international sections and the OIB can be found at: www.asiba.fr

*French Ministry of Education: Programme de langue et littérature des sections internationales britanniques et américaines
http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_officiel.html?cid_bo=73092