

IB Educating for Excellence.

Information for 9th and 10th Grade Students

Yes, DP Students DO Have A Life!

Even while pursuing the IB diploma, your last years in high school will be just what they are supposed to be — the best years of your life.



Time For Everything

When considering whether or not to choose the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program (DP) as their course of study in their junior and senior year of high school, some students might think, "It's too much work, and I want to be able to enjoy my last years in high school." It is true that the course work is rigorous in the DP, and that the community service requirement adds one more item to the list of things you can choose to do with your time. If you decide to pursue the IB diploma during 11th and 12th grade, you are likely to face choices about how much you can **really** squeeze into one day. When you think about it, college students and adults have to juggle their time among many different priorities each day, too. So, you see, the DP is a really good training ground for the responsibilities you will have in just a few short years.

Even though you will be busy if you choose the Diploma Program, please don't let your concerns about time stop you from pursu-

ing the IB diploma if you are planning to go to college. Here's why:

- **Current DP students find their community service work to be fun and interesting.** They often wind up being glad they were required to do this fulfilling work that they might not have chosen on their own.
- A lot of the time you already spend on activities like **school plays, music, sports and clubs, count toward your two-year service requirement of 150 hours.**
- In a survey of District 9th and 10th graders, 80 percent said that preparing for college is very important. **No academic program prepares high school students for the rigors and responsibilities of college like IB—hands down.**
- In a survey of C-PP Diploma Program students, 63 percent said earn-

ing college credit during high school is important. **Students who graduate with the full IB diploma are eligible on average for 30 hours of college credit.**

- **Want to get into your dream school?** In the highly competitive college application process, admissions officers sometimes question the choices of capable students who do not pursue the IB diploma when it is offered in their high school.

Nobody knows you and your values better than you do. Ultimately, the choice about taking the Diploma Program is yours. You will need to think carefully about your short- and long-term priorities before deciding whether or not to take the responsibility of the Diploma Program along with the great opportunities it gives you. Your parents and teachers can help you think it through if you are struggling with the decision.

If you do choose the DP, chances are you will feel busy and, sometimes, that won't be a comfortable feeling. You might have to say no to a social outing here or there because of an assignment deadline. But, rest assured, you will be able to relax and enjoy time with your friends more often than not.

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Reflections of an IB Student

The following excerpts from reflection papers of East High DP student Daniel Moscaritolo will give you an idea of how DP students feel about their experience:

"Prior to becoming an IB student, I will admit that I did not partake in many community services or activities. My family was always active in the community, but as for myself, I was somewhat lazy when it came to that stuff. I think IB has made me realize that engaging with the community actually enhances my ability to interact and get-along with many different people and has helped me shaped my perception on what being a valuable citizen actually is."

"This is by far the most challenging aspect of the IB DP program, which is that of balancing work with service hours. Some advice is to spread it out: the DP students have two years to complete 150 hours of community service. One should try to set things in motion early so that when the time comes, you can engage in the activity, and it fits in nicely with the work schedule. This is definitely a tough aspect of IB, but it is probably the most beneficial."

"Making a difference in the lives of others is such a great feeling. The fact of knowing that you have improved somebody's life by your actions gives me a fulfilling feeling; like I have actually done something useful with myself. Community service not only gives you great college and professional credentials, but it also helps the lives of many different people and makes you realize how important it is to help out the community you live in."

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Nightmares Don't Have To Happen

People always talk about that nightmare where you get to your final exam and you haven't studied, you didn't bring your pencil and you leave the test two hours later without writing a thing on the page. About now, your worst fear might be that you rack up some serious college credit and academic know-how in the Diploma Program, only to reach the end of high school in a panicked frenzy to earn the service hours you've been blowing off for the last two years. At the last minute, you are forced to pick up garbage in the park for a whole weekend while the entire senior class watches you in pity. **Good thing stuff like this is all in your head, huh?** And, here's another point to consider — YOU actually control whether or not a last-ditch, nightmare project has to happen. You could certainly *choose* to pick up garbage — maybe the environment is your cause and freeing the parks of litter is precisely what you want to do to meet your service requirement. If it is, that's admira-

ble! If not, though, the big message from IB to you is, "YOU DON'T HAVE TO." Either way, letting it go until the last minute will be no fun at all. (Ask anyone who has procrastinated on a big project.) So, it's a good idea to get enthused about something and start the work early.

Finding a Service Project That's Right for YOU

The service project you choose can be as individual as you and your latest ringtone. You can match your talents with your interests so your project will be something you *want* to do. That's the easy part. Coming up with a project idea takes a lot of creativity and a little bit of leg work, too. To get your ideas flowing, here are some examples of what current C-PP Diploma Program Students have done to meet their service requirement:

- One East High student organized a collection and delivery of care packages to troops in Iraq;
- Two East High students teamed up to scan and catalog historical photos of Corning for a local civic group;
- One West High student became a buddy to an elementary school student who needed an extra positive role model;
- One West High student taught baton-twirling to a group of 5-7 year-olds and helped them prepare to perform in parades, and
- Several students have volunteered at local museums to help with a variety of tasks.

So, you see, the possibilities to serve are limited only by your own imagination and your effort to seek out opportunities that suit your style. When looking at your service options, try to keep an open mind so you will be able to see both the obvious *and* the more "outside-the-box" possibilities. When you consider your talents along with who in the community might need your skills, the ideas will start flowing faster than you might think.

What Counts Toward the DP Service Requirement?

- The activity must somehow benefit others.
- The student must not receive payment for the activity.
- The student must not receive school credit for the activity.
- Time spent on almost all student extra-curricular activities can be counted toward the DP service requirement.
- Students can apply up to 25 hours per extracurricular activity toward the total DP service requirement.

Suggested Leads on Service

- **Think about your neighbors.** Are there elderly folks who might need help with their garbage removal, yard work or grocery shopping?
- **Think about community organizations.** Does the Red Cross need help with Web site management? Does the Library need help re-shelving returned books? Do the regulars at the Senior Center need tips on using e-mail? Do elementary students need homework help? Does the SPCA need dog-walkers?
- **Go with your gut.** What do you most care about? What do you love to do? Ask yourself what you can contribute to make a difference for a cause that is close to your heart.

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