World dance studies

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Dance · SL

IB Diploma Programme Dance SL (first assessment 2016; 2014 guide). This topic equips the externally assessed DANCE INVESTIGATION (20% at SL): a formal written report of no more than 1 500 words analysing the similarities and differences between two dance styles drawn from different dance cultures and/or traditions, one familiar and one unfamiliar to the student. This handout teaches the comparative method, the elements to compare and the report. All worked examples are original.

Must-know for world dance studies:

Family	Content
styles	two styles from different cultures or traditions: one familiar, one unfamiliar
elements	actions, space, dynamics, relationships: what to compare
contexts	historical and current: how each style lives now
report	formal written report, at most 1 500 words, sources attributed
analysis	similarities AND differences, explained not listed

Choosing the two styles

The **dance investigation** compares two styles from different **dance cultures** or **traditions**, one familiar to the student and one unfamiliar: the pairing must have contrast value (styles so alike that the comparison is decorative) and shared instruments (so the comparison is fair: both have communicative movement to analyse). The unfamiliar style is studied through research AND physical engagement: the course's physical and theoretical understanding.

> **Worked example.** A student trained in studio contemporary (familiar) investigates hula kahiko (unfamiliar): both use the torso as the primary communicator, but the training, function and transmission differ.

The comparison: elements and contexts

The comparison runs on the **dance elements**: actions (what the body does), space (level, direction, pathway), dynamics (weight, time, flow), relationships (to partners, group, audience). Each similarity or difference is then explained through **context**: the historical context of each style and its current context (who performs it, where, for whom, how it is taught).

Worked example, continued. Element: both styles centre the torso (similarity); context: contemporary isolates the torso as trained mechanics for an audience that watches, while hula kahiko's torso carries text (the hands speaking the chant), performed within a living ceremonial practice (difference explained by function and transmission).

The report

The report is formal written work of at most 1 500 words: a comparison with a spine (the two styles named, the elements chosen, the contexts researched), sources attributed throughout. The discipline: every claim about a style is evidenced (described movement, cited source); the similarities and differences are analysed (explained by context), not listed; and the conclusion weighs what the comparison taught, including the student's physical engagement with the unfamiliar style.

Worked example, concluded. The report's conclusion: studying hula kahiko physically changed the student's own contemporary practice (the torso as carrier of meaning, not only of technique): the investigation's finding is a connection, not just a catalogue.

Checklist

- Two styles, different cultures, one familiar and one unfamiliar (styles).
- Claims made through the elements, described and evidenced (elements).
- Historical and current contexts researched, differences explained by them (contexts).
- The comparison analysed, sources attributed, engagement included (report).
- The worked contemporary-and-hula investigation understood (worked). Boundary notes: the examiner must see the making: compositional decisions visible, sources attributed, the performance interpreted. All worked examples are original.