Course notes

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Global Politics · HL

IB global politics first assessment 2026

Use the 2026 core/thematic model and HL stimulus paper, not the retired 2017 HL presentation. School approves a safe, non-partisan engagement and bounded case selection.

SL: Paper 1 75 min 30%, Paper 2 90 min 40%, engagement project 30%. HL: Paper 1 75 min 20%, Paper 2 90 min 30%, stimulus Paper 3 90 min 30%, engagement project 20%.

Core · Power, legitimacy and source analysis

Power includes capacity to shape actions and agendas. Legitimacy concerns accepted justification for authority.

A source has a perspective and purpose; identify its claim before evaluating its evidence.

> ■ **Checked example**
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> Compare the organizations' formal rights with their ability to commission research and set meeting agendas.
> This separates rule-based authority from practical influence and shows where another actor might challenge a decision.

■ Limits and practice

Do not treat legitimacy as popularity alone, or assume a source is false because it has an interest.

Explain how origin, purpose and content affect the claim's usefulness for your question.

What best demonstrates agenda-setting power?

Answer: An actor's ability to decide which issues receive consideration.

Thematic studies · Rights, development, sustainability and peace

Rights and justice concern entitlements and fair treatment; development and sustainability concern well-being over time.

Peace is more than the absence of direct violence: institutions and unequal access can sustain tensions.

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■ Checked example

Map the actors' needs and responsibilities. Compare a negotiated access agreement with a restriction imposed without consultation.
Explain which conditions could make each option durable, fair and enforceable.

■ Limits and practice

A single case is not proof that every conflict has the same cause.

State the relevant concept, evidence and counter-perspective before reaching a judgement.

What makes a peace agreement more durable in the resource case?

Answer: Credible enforcement and arrangements that address the parties' underlying needs.

Engagement project · Engagement and reflective research

Engagement brings experience into inquiry but must be complemented by research.

Ask whose perspective you heard, whose was missing and how your own role affected access and interpretation.

■ Checked example

With school approval, attend a permitted consultation or interview responsible staff about access arrangements. Compare the experience with policy documents and users' voluntary accounts.
Analyse power and competing needs, then reflect on what the evidence cannot establish.

■ Limits and practice

Participation itself is not analysis; avoid a diary that only recounts events.

The teacher approves the real activity and authorship; a fictional engagement report cannot satisfy IA requirements.

Which reflection is strongest?

Answer: Explain how access to only staff perspectives limits conclusions about users' experiences.

HL extension · Global challenges and case synthesis

HL examines interconnected global political challenges and their responses.

Use researched cases to compare mechanisms, scale, actors and limits; connect these explicitly to the stimulus.

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■ Checked example

Compare a local water-management case with a transboundary allocation case. Identify where cooperation depends on authority, trust and resource asymmetry. Evaluate institutions by outcomes and constraints, rather than assuming cooperation is either always effective or always impossible.

■ Limits and practice

The current HL requirement is a stimulus-based Paper 3, not the old oral case presentation.

Case synthesis needs specific evidence from both cases and the provided sources.

Why can an institution's formal mandate be insufficient?

Answer: It may lack resources, enforcement or agreement among actors needed to achieve the outcome.

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