

Chinese B

Nature of Chinese B

Chinese B is a language acquisition course 'designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to enable them to communicate successfully in an environment where the Chinese language is spoken. This process encourages the learner to expand an awareness of the world and foster respect for cultural diversity' ¹

'The course gives students the possibility of reaching a high degree of competence in the Chinese language while exploring the Chinese culture. The course aims to develop the students' linguistic competence and intercultural understanding' ²

Learning the Chinese language helps students prepare themselves with value-added skills for their future life and career.

Teaching Approach

Students are expected to develop skills in several areas, including receptive skills (understanding through listening and reading), productive skills (using the language that you have learnt to produce a message through speaking or writing) and interactive skills (being able to interact socially). The Chinese B course uses a balance between approaches to learning that are teacher-centred (teacher-led activities and assessment in the classroom) and those that are learner-centred (activities designed to allow the students to take the initiative, which can also involve student participation in the evaluation of their learning). ³

Students would normally have completed the Chinese language course in Year 10 and progress into this course. They will study 3 core topics of Social Relationship, Communication & Media and Globalization. Students are also introduced to 2 topics from the 5 optional topics of Cultural diversity, Customs & Traditions, Health, Leisure and Science & Technology.

Where does it lead to?

Studying a new language allows students to discover and understand a new culture. Knowledge of a new language goes hand-in-hand with whatever profession a student chooses to pursue. From international organisations, foreign companies, journalism and many more, communicating in another language can no longer be confined to the classroom but is a living language that can be used in any situation.

In terms of global business and international diplomacy the ability to speak another language apart from English is an advantage. The knowledge of Chinese opens the doors to Chinese

companies in China and other parts of the world. Chinese is both a working language and is one of the official languages of the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and international courts.

In addition to becoming a foreign language teacher, the field of interpreting and translating is also an avenue to be explored. Although most interpreters are freelance many International organizations and large companies around the world employ staff interpreters within their organizations. Many well established interpreting and translation schools can be found in Universities around China. The American Translator Association has a list of approved schools around the world: https://www.atanet.org/certification/eligibility_approved.php#c

Student Reflection

Learning Chinese as a second language for IB has been a steep learning curve for me. Having to memorize a few thousand pictograms, their pronunciation and correct usage is no mean feat. The tonal nature of the language also makes it difficult for a non-native speaker to speak naturally, accurately and with fluency. The curriculum is in 3 parts: reading comprehension, written responses and oral presentation and conversation. Each of them comes with their own set of challenges – it is not uncommon during a reading comprehension paper for me to look down at the passage and have it look like complete gobbled gook.

Despite the challenge, I have to say that Chinese B has been one of the most enjoyable subjects to study under the IB. It gives one a sense of power and confidence to be able to communicate in more than one language. The Chinese Proverb sums up the experience nicely and translated it means , the beginning is bitter, but the end is sweet.

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