

Genesee Academy Language Policy

At Genesee Academy our mission is to cultivate caring and inquiring students who excel academically, socially, and spiritually and to enable students to succeed in their future roles as conscientious citizens within the larger community by providing a healthy and stimulating environment which adheres to Islamic principles and strives for continuous growth.

To meet this mission, all stakeholders recognize that “language is central to learning and that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers with responsibilities in facilitating communication” (IBO, 2008). Language learning includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Genesee Academy strongly supports the International Baccalaureate and adheres to the requirement that all MYP students participate in a foreign language.

Language A:

All students and staff speak and communicate in the English language. At Genesee Academy, the mother tongue and program of instruction is English. This is the primary language for most of the students. During the MYP years in grades six thru ten, all students are required to take Language and Literature in years 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. These courses are taught in English and support the best practices as outlined by the International Baccalaureate and prepare students to meet the requirements of the Michigan Common Core State Standards. Students attend Language and Literature classes daily in MYP Y1, Y2, and Y3 for 50 minutes for a total of 150 hours annually. In Y4 and Y5, students follow a daily block schedule also meeting 150 hours of instruction annually.

Language A is developed and maintained through:

- Reading across genres, cultures, and centuries
- Wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction
- Combining different kinds of writing to produce complex and nuanced writing
- Using technology and resources when creating, refining, and collaborating writing
- Gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing materials accurately
- Developing speaking and listening skills to make comparisons and contrasts and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in different disciplines
- Becoming skilled in determining the meaning of words and phrases and developing skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary

(Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, 2010)

English Language Learners at Genesee Academy are identified and provided additional support services to promote their Language A development.

Language B:

Since Genesee Academy is a faith-based school, the Arabic language - the language of the holy book, the Quran - is taught as a second language to all students from kindergarten to high school. Learning the Arabic language allows students to become more proficient in their religion and to become bilingual.

Students are immersed in the Arabic language in their Language B courses as well as in their Quran and Islamic Studies courses. Students attend Language B classes daily in MYP Y1, Y2, and Y3 for 50 minutes for a total of 150 hours annually. In Y4 and Y5, students follow a daily block schedule also meeting 150 hours of instruction annually.

In the MYP, there are 6 phases of Language B instruction. A student's placement in a specific phase is based on the student's ability and previous exposure to Language B. However, the phases do not correspond to age groups or MYP years. A student is placed in a Language B phase based on the student's ability to comprehend, read, and write the language.

Review of Policy

Genesee Academy's Language Policy will be reviewed annually at the initial orientation week at the beginning of the school year. Administration and MYP teachers will be involved in this review. The review will be guided by IB literature and effective teaching practices. Parent and student feedback will also be considered in this review.