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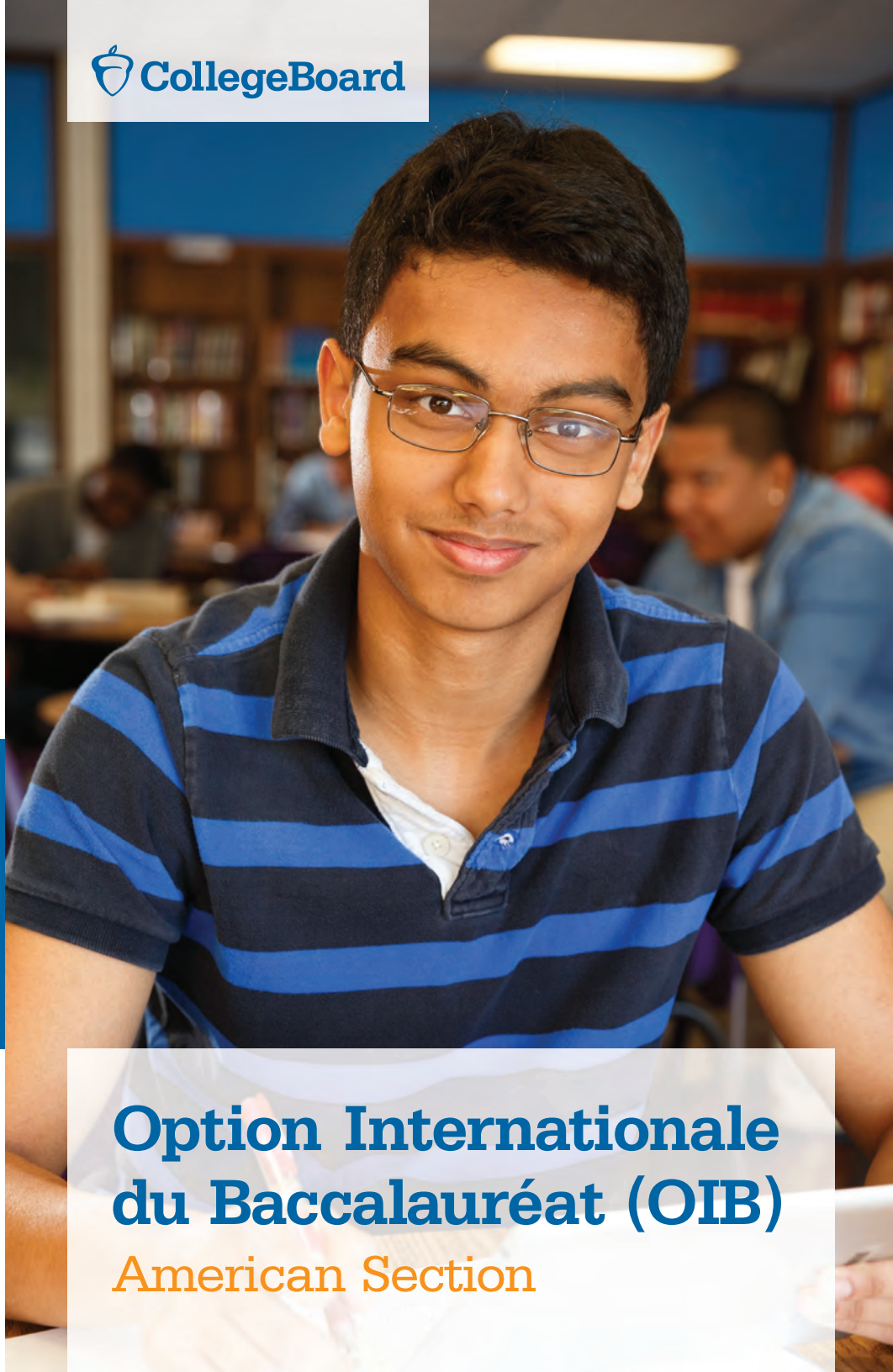
The College Board

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**Option Internationale
du Baccalauréat (OIB)**
American Section

What is the OIB American Section?

- The American section of the International Option of the French Baccalaureate (OIB) combines the **breadth and rigor of the French Baccalaureate with extra subjects taught and examined in English**, resulting in a bilingual, bicultural diploma.
- Students in the OIB program have the opportunity to take English language and literature and history and geography courses taught from an American perspective by certified American and French teachers.
- The OIB **provides students with a university entrance qualification valid in both the U.S. and France.**
- It makes academic and linguistic demands on **an equal level in English and French.**
- The College Board and the French Ministry of Education work in partnership to implement and ensure the quality of the American section of the OIB.

"The challenges presented by the OIB ensure that students graduate with superior critical reading, writing, and analytical skills, and a strong familiarity with American teaching and learning styles."

—Christine Pluta, *Director of College Counseling,*
Lycée Français de New York

OIB



French
Baccalaureate



English Language
and Literature



History and
Geography

Background

THE FRENCH BACCALAUREATE

The French Baccalaureate is a three-year college-preparatory program culminating in a rigorous examination that marks the end of secondary school studies and determines university eligibility. To succeed in this exam, students must demonstrate thorough knowledge in a wide variety of compulsory academic disciplines as well as in-depth understanding of their chosen field of specialization.

In France and in the United States, French schools prepare students for the Baccalaureate with academic concentrations in one of three streams, or *séries*, corresponding to their scholastic aptitudes or future college plans:

Languages and Literature (L)

Economics and Social Sciences (ES)

Mathematics and Experimental Sciences (S)

THE INTERNATIONAL OPTION OF THE FRENCH BACCALAUREATE — AMERICAN SECTION

France is the only country in the world to have officially incorporated an optional international component into its established secondary school curriculum: the OIB. **The *Option Internationale du Baccalauréat* is not a separate diploma but rather a specialization within the framework of the French Baccalaureate.**

The American section of the OIB consists of in-depth study of English language and literature, taught exclusively in English, and history and geography, taught both in English and French. **The ultimate goal of the OIB is to further the international dimensions of education by exposing students to bilingual and bicultural perspectives.**

French schools in the United States, as well as in France and in other countries around the world, offer the American section of the OIB. Classes are taught by certified American teachers or bilingual French teachers and are open to students who demonstrate thorough competence in English, regardless of national origin.



Students prepare for the American section of the OIB during the last two years of the Lycée (classes of Première and Terminale) and final examinations of the OIB cover the curriculum taught in these last two years.

The English language and literature segment of the OIB is a rigorous program taught entirely in English in seminar style classes, which include up to five hours of classroom time. The OIB history and geography program includes up to four hours of classroom per week. Both sections culminate in written and oral exams in English.

OIB (AMERICAN SECTION) BY THE NUMBERS

38

SCHOOLS

7

COUNTRIES



THE ROLE OF THE COLLEGE BOARD

The College Board and the French Ministry of Education regularly collaborate to promote the American Section of the OIB in the United States. As part of this work, the College Board provides guidance for identifying and training American teachers; advises on teaching curricula and pedagogy; supports the design and review of exam items; and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the OIB program.

Who Creates the OIB Courses and How Are They Assessed?

Following the academic curriculum established by the French Ministry of Education, and deployed on an international scale, the Baccalaureate has been in existence since the creation of French national public education. The OIB American section was created with the collaboration of the French-American (Fulbright) Commission and the College Board. The development and oversight of the OIB courses, examinations, and awarding of diplomas are assured by the Deputy Inspectors – or the *Inspecteurs Délégués* for each of the OIB subjects (English language and literature, history and geography) under the auspices of the French Ministry of Education and the College Board.

ASSESSING THE FRENCH BACCALAUREATE

The national French Baccalaureate examination consists of analyzing a set of texts — one in each of the subjects that comprise the *série* that the student has followed. Students are required to compose essays that demonstrate not only depth of comprehension and analytical ability, but also extrapolation from acquired knowledge to new situations. The written parts of the French Baccalaureate last a week, and depending on the students' *série*, encompass 17 to 23 hours of testing.

“The OIB permits students to develop American-style essays in history and geography. It also encourages students to develop their argumentative skills, since it includes a culminating oral exam, too.”

—Arthur Plaza, *Department Chair,
History-Geography, Lycée Français de New York*



OIB Courses and Exams

Students in the OIB American Section follow additional courses and examinations. Candidates studying English language and literature follow a curriculum set by the *Inspection Générale*, which is part of the French Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the subject-level Inspectors and the teacher-examiners. The curriculum comprises 12 literary works chosen from a variety of genres, representing diversity in the ethnic backgrounds and genders of the authors.

In history-geography, the teaching structure is bilingual, as the program of study includes American teachers who teach the history portion and French teachers or French-speaking teachers, who teach geography based on a French pedagogical tradition.

Candidates who study history and geography follow a themed-based curriculum established by the French Ministry of Education. Themes have included the social, political, economic, and foreign relations history of the United States, the conflict in the Middle East, and the rise to power of China. In geography, the course of study includes a methodology for the analysis of maps and geographic issues on a continental scale. The content is approved by subject-level Inspectors appointed by the French government and the College Board.

At the end of the multiyear course work, OIB students take a 4-hour written examination in each of the two subjects as well as a 30 minute oral examination in language and literature and a 20 minute oral examination in history and geography, in addition to the French Baccalaureate.



"The unique and innovative pedagogy of the OIB program was especially helpful in allowing me to unlock my full potential."

— Nicholas Trad, 2013 Lycée Rochambeau student
and a current sophomore at Princeton University



Why Do Students Choose the OIB American Section?

A HIGH LEVEL OF RECOGNITION

Universities in France, Canada, the United States, as well as throughout Europe and other areas of the world, welcome students with OIB diplomas. Individual student accomplishment in OIB courses is frequently recognized for advanced standing. OIB courses signify not only a student's rigorous academic preparation but also academic achievement above and beyond secondary school expectations.

A Curriculum Demonstrating Unique Balance

- The OIB, which respects both American and French traditions of teaching and assessment, is bicultural.
- The OIB courses and exams for history and geography are bilingual.
- The wide scope of compulsory subjects provided by the French Baccalaureate and the OIB give students general knowledge, indispensable in the era of globalization.

"OIB is about growing as a person and becoming capable of analyzing issues [and] understanding current events. [It has made] me reevaluate my beliefs, values, and cultural prejudices [...] the focus on world literature opens up my world to other ways of life and writing."

—OIB student 2015–2016, *Lycée Français de San Francisco*

How Do Colleges and Universities Recognize the OIB American Section?

In the United States, experienced college admission officers increasingly recognize the Baccalaureate, and particularly the OIB, as a **strong indicator of academic promise and achievement**. Successful OIB students have demonstrated the ability to attain academic goals above and beyond the already-rigorous college-preparatory program. In addition, the OIB courses and exams are frequently recognized for the purpose of advanced credit at many North American colleges and universities.



★ Benefits of the OIB

- OIB students learn to handle an unusually heavy workload, and to prioritize conflicting commitments.
- OIB students acquire a cultural mobility — the ability to think from a French cultural viewpoint or an American cultural viewpoint — that gives them different perspectives on their university studies, whatever the subject.
- OIB students have learned different approaches to thinking and methodology from two different education systems; this can give them unusual flexibility in problem solving or in adopting a suitable method for a particular task.
- The OIB is a rigorous program devoted to educational excellence and sets high performance standards for students and faculty.
- The OIB involves dedicated and creative teachers committed to their students, their disciplines, and their profession.
- The OIB attracts highly motivated students who wish to excel academically and attend the most selective colleges and universities.
- The OIB program provides for articulation between middle school and high school, terminating with the French Baccalaureate.
- In support of the academic program, the OIB offers professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators worldwide.