



Language Policy

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Salzburg International School (SALIS) is an Austrian state-funded school (Gymnasium) which follows the Austrian curriculum. The *Unterstufe* (Years 1-4 for students between the ages of 10 and 14) receive a bilingual education in German and English. The *Oberstufe* (Years 5-8 for students between the ages of 15 and 19) are taught in English.

At SALIS, we believe that language learning is key to fostering intercultural understanding and respect. First and foremost, it exposes learners to unfamiliar ways of thinking, communicating, behaving and learning, introducing them to entirely new worldviews. Through this process, curiosity is sparked, encouraging students to explore diverse cultural and social backgrounds more deeply.

Secondly, as learners begin to understand different perspectives, their open-mindedness and empathy are nurtured. This fosters international-mindedness and a genuine respect for others. Thirdly, by recognizing our shared humanity, learners are encouraged to reflect critically on their own cultural and social identities. This not only contributes to their personal development but also lays the foundation for lifelong learning.

At SALIS language learning is therefore a cornerstone in achieving the IB's mission to develop: "inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect¹".

Because communication is such a vital part of everyday life, we also offer a German conversation class for the parents of our students, highlighting the important role that language plays in building connections within our school community.

¹ [Our mission - International Baccalaureate®](https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/) <https://www.ibo.org/about-the-ib/mission/>

Our school library has a good collection of books and magazines in English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish, as well as graded readers in German and English to help students learn the language. The proximity to the Salzburg Library, (*Stadtbibliothek Salzburg*) the English Centre, Salzburg Global Seminar, and the Robert Jungk Library (*Robert-Jungk-Bibliothek für Zukunftsfragen*) provides our students with additional opportunities to practice their language skills. Moreover, several local cinemas show films in their original language, and there are theatres offering performances for schools, further enriching the language learning experience.

Language Profile

In the *Unterstufe* the percentage of international and bilingual students is on average 30%, whereas in the *Oberstufe* the percentage is around 50%. SALIS currently accommodates students of around 40 different nationalities. As of 2026 about 70% of students speak German as a first language and just over 10% speak English as a first language.

Other first languages include: Afrikaans, Chinese, Finnish, French, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Korean, Indonesian, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Ukrainian.

Teachers in our International Programme are either:

- Teachers whose first language is German with a university degree in English or who are competent in English.
- Teachers whose first language is German with a university degree in German Language and Literature for German A courses.
- Teachers whose first language is English with a university degree in English.
- Teachers whose first language is English with a university degree.
- Foreign language teachers (French, Spanish, Italian) with a university degree in the respective language with a good command of both English and German.
- Assistant teachers with a university degree and an English-speaking background.

The majority of our administrative staff is fluent in spoken and written English.

Pedagogy of bilingual education

In all content subjects, SALIS teachers strive to facilitate language learning and improve communication skills. In the *Unterstufe*, this is done by creating a bilingual environment where both German and English speakers benefit from each other's linguistic and cultural background. The degree to which bilingualism is used in the classroom depends on the respective situation of the class and is at the discretion of the content subject teacher. All aspects of teaching and learning (i.e. reading, writing, speaking, and listening) may occur in German and English, and we expect students to actively participate in both languages. Methods for creating a bilingual environment include Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), partial immersion teaching, and integration of English-speaking assistants in all aspects of teaching.

In the *Oberstufe*, all classes are taught in English (English as a medium of instruction, EMI) and less emphasis is placed on bilingualism, as this presents an increased challenge for

teachers and students alike. English language assistants continue to support the teachers of the *Oberstufe* in all aspects of teaching.

Foreign Language Assistants (French, Italian, and Spanish), school trips (such as Ireland, England, and America) and exchanges within the ERASMUS+ Programme ensure that our students get the best amount of immersion as possible.

Workshops

At SALIS we reserve the discretion to offer workshops and presentations in English, German, or a combination of both. The language of each session may vary depending on the specific workshop, reflecting our commitment to fostering a bilingual educational environment.

Academic Language - Language A: German and/or English

At SALIS students who have German as their Language A will sit both the *Matura* (Austrian school leaving certificate) and the IB Diploma. Students who have English as their academic language will sit the IB Diploma. Some students also have two academic languages (i.e. English and German). These students will also sit both the *Matura* and the IB Diploma.

Occasionally some students have a different first language. In this case the student may choose to study this language as a self-taught language (e.g. Mandarin, Serbian, Ukrainian). In order to sit the IBDP Language A Self-Taught examination, the SALIS programme recommends these students to attend external tuition in their first language throughout the entire SALIS *Oberstufe*. SALIS can assist in coordinating these courses, which must be funded by the parents. During the final two years of IBDP, the Language A Self-Taught procedures under the supervision of the school will apply.

Language A - English

For the students whose strongest academic language is English, we offer English as a First Language. The curriculum closely parallels the Austrian national requirements for German, focussing on the competencies needed for success in the IBDP English A courses. Students joining us during the *Unterstufe* and whose academic English is not yet at the level required for the IBDP English A course will need to receive external tuition in English. The school assists families in finding appropriate support. The cost of this additional instruction is covered by the parents.

Language A - German

This class is for students whose first language is German or who speak and write German fluently. All four years of the *Oberstufe* prepare the students for the *Matura* and therefore follows the Austrian curriculum. The final two years of the course incorporate the curriculum of the IBDP German A course in preparation for the IBDP German A examination.

Language B

As a bilingual school SALIS strongly promotes the value of speaking more than one language. For the German A students English is their Language B and for the English A students German is their Language B. A small number of bilingual students have two Languages A: German and English.

In the *Unterstufe* all subjects, except Languages A and B, are taught bilingually. In addition, SALIS also offers Active English lessons where German A and English A students learn together. This encourages German A students to accelerate their progress in English. At the same time, English A students benefit from being immersed in a German-speaking environment, which supports their acquisition of German. Students sit exams in both languages twice per semester, which is a requirement of the Austrian curriculum and ensures balanced language development.

The overall goal by the end of the *Unterstufe* is for all students to achieve proficiency in both German and English in the four skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing.

In the *Oberstufe* all subjects are taught in English with the exception of German A and B. By this stage, students demonstrate an excellent command of English, enabling them to engage fully with the curriculum and prepare for international, academic and professional contexts

Additional Foreign Languages

In Year 3 students choose between Latin and French. We recommend that English A students take French. In Year 5 students who chose Latin in Year 3 will learn Spanish or Italian and those who chose French will learn Latin. This is a requirement of the Austrian curriculum. This follows the regulations of the Austrian state curriculum for *Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen (AHS)*. In addition, we also offer Mandarin course which is an additional subject but not part of the Austrian curriculum.

Table A – Language Teaching SALIS *Unterstufe*

Year 1 (age 10-11)	Year 2 (age 11-12)	Year 3 (age 12-13)	Year 4 (age 13-14)
Languages of instruction: German and English	Languages of instruction: German and English, with the amount of English increasing	Languages of instruction: German and English, with English outweighing German	Language of instruction: predominantly English
Foreign language: 1st year of English or German (<i>Deutsch als Fremdsprache, DaF</i>)	Foreign language: 2nd year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>)	Foreign languages: • 3rd year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 1st year of 6-year French or Latin	Foreign languages: • 4th year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 2nd year of 6-year French or Latin

Table B – Language Teaching SALIS *Oberstufe*

Year 5 (age 14-15)	Year 6 (age 15-16)	Year 7 (age 16-17)	Year 8 (age 17-18)
Language of instruction: English	Language of instruction: English	Language of instruction: English	Language of instruction: English
Foreign languages: • 5th year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 3rd year of 6-year French or Latin * • 1st year of 4-year Latin, Spanish, or Italian	Foreign languages: • 6th year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 4th year of 6-year French or Latin • 2nd year of 4-year Latin, French, Spanish, or Italian	Foreign languages: • 7th year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 5th year of 6-year French or Latin • 3rd year of 4-year Latin, French, Spanish, or Italian IBDP: German A LIT, English A LANG/LIT, Self-Taught A, German B, English B, French B, German Ab Initio	Foreign languages: • 8th year of English or German (<i>DaF</i>) • 6th year of 6-year French or Latin • 4th year of 4-year Latin, French, Spanish, or Italian IBDP: German A LIT, English A LANG/LIT, Self-Taught A, German B, English B, French B, German Ab Initio.
Additional possibility to choose optional language subjects beginning in year 6 (Electives/ <i>Wahlpflichtfächer</i>) within the Austrian curriculum *Incoming international students who are not planning to graduate with the Austrian state examination (Matura) are exempt from 6-year French or Latin but have to start 4-year Latin (Latin Short Form/ <i>Latein Kurz</i>) beginners course.			
<i>Matura & IB Exams</i>			