

Mathematics Standard Level

for the IB Diploma

Exam Preparation Guide

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-65315-3 – Mathematics Standard Level for IB Diploma
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Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107653153

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First published 2014

Printed in the United Kingdom by Latimer Trend

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-65315-3 Paperback

Cover image: David Robertson/Alamy

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CONTENTS

Introduction	vi
1 Exponents and logarithms	1
1.1 Solving exponential equations	3
1.2 Solving disguised quadratic equations	4
1.3 Laws of logarithms	5
1.4 Solving equations involving logarithms	6
1.5 Problems involving exponential functions	7
2 Polynomials	9
2.1 Using the quadratic formula	10
2.2 Using the discriminant	11
2.3 The completed square form $y = a(x - h)^2 + k$	12
2.4 Getting quadratic functions from their graphs	13
2.5 Applying the binomial theorem	14
3 Functions, graphs and equations	17
3.1 Domain and range	19
3.2 Inverse and composite functions	20
3.3 Transformations of graphs	22
3.4 Rational functions	23
3.5 Using the GDC to solve equations	24
3.6 Solving pairs of linear equations	25
4 Sequences and series	28
4.1 Arithmetic sequences and series	29
4.2 Geometric sequences and series	30
4.3 Applications	31

5	Trigonometry	34
5.1	Transformations of trigonometric graphs	36
5.2	Using identities to find exact values of trigonometric functions	37
5.3	Solving trigonometric equations	38
5.4	Using identities to solve trigonometric equations	39
5.5	Geometry of triangles and circles	40
5.6	The ambiguous case of the sine rule	41
6	Vectors	45
6.1	Proving geometrical properties using vectors	47
6.2	Equation of a line and the intersection of lines	48
6.3	Angles between lines	50
6.4	Applying vectors to motion	51
7	Differentiation	54
7.1	Differentiation from first principles	57
7.2	The product, quotient and chain rules	58
7.3	Tangents and normals	59
7.4	Stationary points	60
7.5	Optimisation with constraints	61
7.6	Points of inflexion	62
7.7	Interpreting graphs	63
7.8	Kinematics	65
8	Integration	68
8.1	Integrating expressions	70
8.2	Finding areas	71
8.3	Volumes of revolution	72
8.4	Kinematics	73
8.5	Integration by substitution	74

9	Descriptive statistics	77
	9.1 Median and quartiles	80
	9.2 Mean, standard deviation and frequency histograms	81
	9.3 Cumulative frequency	83
	9.4 Box and whisker diagrams and comparing data sets	85
	9.5 Correlation and regression	87
10	Probability	93
	10.1 Calculating probabilities by considering possible outcomes	95
	10.2 Venn diagrams and set notation	96
	10.3 Tree diagrams	97
	10.4 Discrete random variables	98
	10.5 The binomial distribution	99
	10.6 The normal and inverse normal distributions	100
	10.7 Using the standard normal distribution when μ or σ is unknown	101
11	Examination support	104
	Common errors	104
	How to check your answers	105
12	Things you need to know how to do on your calculator	107
	Casio calculator	107
	Texas calculator	111
13	Worked solutions	115
	Answers to practice questions	144

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS BOOK

If you are using this book, you're probably getting quite close to your exams. You may have started off as a bright-eyed student keen to explore international perspectives in mathematics and the nature of mathematical knowledge, but now you want to know how to get the best possible grade! This book is designed to revise the entire core material that you need to know, and to provide examples of the most common types of exam questions for you to practise, along with some hints and tips regarding exam technique and common pitfalls.




Any common pitfalls and useful exam hints will be highlighted in these boxes.



This type of box will be used to point out where graphical calculators can be used effectively to simplify a question or speed up your work. Common calculator pitfalls will also be highlighted in such boxes.



If the material in a chapter involves maths outside of that chapter, this kind of box will direct you to the relevant part of the book where you can go and remind yourself of that maths.

The most important ideas and formulae are emphasised in the 'What you need to know' sections at the start of each chapter. When a formula or set of formulae is given in the Formula booklet, there will be a book icon next to it . If formulae are not accompanied by such an icon, they do not appear in the Formula booklet and you may need to learn them or at least know how to derive them.

For Mathematics Standard Level, each of the written papers:

- is worth 40% of the final grade
- is one and a half hours long (plus 5 minutes of reading time)
- has a total of 120 marks available
- contains 9 or 10 short questions and 3 or 4 long questions.

The difference between the two papers is that calculators are **not allowed** for Paper 1, but are required for Paper 2.



In this book questions which are designed to be done without a calculator are accompanied by a non-calculator icon.



Questions which are only sensible to do with a calculator are marked with a calculator icon.

All other questions should be attempted first without a calculator, and then with one.

Between Papers 1 and 2 the majority of the material in the Standard Level course will be assessed.

IMPORTANT EXAM TIPS

- **Grab as many marks as you can.**
 - If you cannot do an early part of a question, write down a sensible answer and use that in later parts or, if the part you could not do was a ‘show that’ task, use the given result. You will still pick up marks.
 - Do not throw away ‘easy marks’:
 - Give all answers exactly or to three significant figures. Each time you fail to do so you will lose a mark.
 - Do not use rounded intermediate values, as this can result in an inaccurate answer; store all intermediate values in your calculator.
 - Read the questions carefully and make sure you have provided the answer requested. For example, if the question asks for coordinates, give both x and y values. If the question asks for an equation, make sure that you have something with an equals sign in it.
- **The questions are actually worded to help you.**
 - Make sure you know what each command term means. (These are explained in the IB syllabus.) For example:
 - ‘Write down’ means that there does not need to be any working shown. So, for this type of question, if you are writing out lines and lines of algebra, you have missed something.
 - ‘Hence’ means that you have to use the previous part somehow. You will not get full marks for a correct answer unless you explicitly show how you have used the previous part.
 - ‘Hence or otherwise’ means that you can use any method you wish, but it’s a pretty big hint that the previous part will help in some way.
 - ‘Sketch’ means that you do not need to do a precise and to-scale drawing; however, you should label all the important points – at the very least where the curve crosses any axes.
 - If the question refers to solutions, you should expect to get more than one answer.
 - Look out for links between the parts of a question, particularly in the long questions.
- **Use your 5 minutes of reading time effectively.**
 - Decide on the order in which you will attempt the questions. It is very rarely most efficient to answer the questions in the order in which they are set; in particular, the last few short questions often involve a lot of work relative to the number of marks available.



Make sure you leave enough time for the long questions, some parts of which can be fairly straightforward.

- For Paper 2, decide which questions can be done easily or checked effectively on the calculator. Do not be surprised if this is the majority of questions.
- Try to classify which section of the course each question is about.



Practise using the reading time when attempting your practice papers.

Most importantly, there is nothing like good preparation to make you feel relaxed and confident going into an exam, which will help you achieve your best possible result.

Good luck!

The author team