

Uplift Atlas Purpose/Beliefs

At Uplift Atlas we believe that all scholars who pass through our doorway are language learners and all of our teachers are responsible for language development. Teachers will endeavor to inspire a love of language learning in scholars in order to enable them to reach their highest potential. Each of our scholars has his or her own background and unique contributions coming from different countries and cultures. Recognizing and supporting their mother tongue is crucial to their growth and to their perception of identity. For this reason, we are committed to the promotion and support of language diversity.

Mission Alignment

Uplift Education's mission is *"to create and sustain public schools of excellence that empower students to reach their highest potential in college and the global marketplace and that inspire in students a life-long love of learning, achievement, and service in order to positively change their world."*

We believe that in order to be college-ready, responsible citizens, our scholars' skills in English must be honed. In order to prepare our scholars for global citizenship, we must nurture and challenge their ability to wield language at the highest level. Meanwhile, the acquisition of a secondary language, in addition to the mother tongue, allows our scholars to foster an understanding and respect for our world and its people. Upon completion of the IB programs, we hope that Uplift Atlas scholars are poised to be truly international-minded through the mastery of multiple languages and exposure to global cultures.

Language Instruction and Learning at Uplift Atlas

The primary language of teaching and learning at Uplift Atlas is English. This decision arises from the importance of the English language in the global marketplace and the fact that, as a public school in the state of Texas, we are required to offer English language instruction. We also believe in the vital importance of the acquisition of at least one secondary language, and so we go beyond the state of Texas Distinguished Diploma requirement of four years of high school instruction in a single foreign language.

Literacy Instruction across all Subject Groups

At Uplift Education, we hold all teachers accountable for language development in the following ways:

- In addition to having content objectives for each lesson, teachers are required to plan corresponding language objectives from *Navigating the ELPS* by Seidlitz to ensure that language skills are being developed in every lesson.
- Teachers are trained on providing linguistic accommodations for scholars with varying ELPS proficiency levels
- Teachers plan and implement instructional strategies tied to language domains: reading, speaking, listening, writing, and media literacy
- Instructional strategies are in place for all scholars to augment subject-specific academic vocabulary, including explicit vocabulary instruction, word walls, Frayer models, and visual representations.

English Language Instruction (MYP Language & Literature)

The written curriculum for Secondary ELA courses at Uplift is based on the program model and requirements indicated in the 2014/2015 MYP Language and Literature Subject Guide. ELA courses take on a **balanced literacy** approach that actively engages all four domains of literacy: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The courses should balance explicit, direct instruction of skills and strategies with authentic opportunities for scholar inquiry, self-expression, analysis, and reflection. The end goal is to create lifelong readers and learners equipped with college-ready communication and critical thinking skills to become internationally-minded, responsible members of their local, national, and global communities.

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must be exposed to a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, novels, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. Meanwhile, through exposure to expository and informational texts from a variety of other disciplines, students will gain familiarity with non-fiction text structures while also building a foundation of knowledge in other content areas.

Spanish Language Instruction (MYP Language Acquisition)

The written curriculum for Secondary Spanish courses at Uplift is based on the program model and requirements indicated in the 2014/2015 MYP Language Acquisition Subject Guide. Foreign language courses involves much more than memorizing a system of grammatical rules. Language learners need to understand the structure and conventions of a language, but not through word-for-word translation or memorization of de-contextualized grammatical rules. Instead, scholars of a language need to master meaning in more holistic ways and in context. The goal of second language acquisition is to communicate effectively with and receive communication from speakers of another language in authentic cultural contexts through the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The end goal is to create lifelong readers and learners equipped with college-ready communication and critical thinking skills to become internationally minded, responsible members of their local, national, and global communities.

At Uplift Education, we aim to develop our scholars’ personal language acquisition levels by offering classes aligned to specific IB phase level objectives. For scholars for whom Spanish is the mother tongue, we offer courses at higher phase levels (seen below) in order to promote true bilingualism and biliteracy. Our long term goal is that at the end of their foreign language instruction, Uplift scholars reach their highest potential phase level.

Course Offerings by Phase Level

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6
Leveled Spanish	6 th / 7 th / 8 th Grade Emergent Spanish	6 th / 7 th / 8 th Grade Capable Spanish	6 th / 7 th / 8 th Grade Proficient Spanish			
	9 th / 10 th Grade Emergent Spanish	9 th / 10 th Grade Capable Spanish	9 th / 10 th Grade Proficient Spanish			
DP				DP Language B SL	DP Language B SL/HL	DP Language B HL

Enrichment of Mother Tongue and Second Language Acquisition

Though the primary language of instruction and communication at Uplift Atlas is English, we believe that mother tongue and heritage languages are important to a scholar’s identity. We endeavor to foster this through encouraging scholars to be aware of their culture and to share it with others. We believe this not only helps scholars to develop their own cultural identity but also broadens all of our horizons and moves us towards being more aware members of the world community.

In accordance with both research and best practice, we encourage our parents and scholars to continue to speak in their mother tongue at home. This strengthens the individual’s language skills and instills a sense of confidence and cultural pride, while enabling our school community to celebrate its differences.

We are conscious that more can be done to enrich mother tongue and secondary language experiences, and continue to investigate ways to improve our programs in these areas and internationalism in general. At the same time, we at Uplift Atlas believe we have made significant strides towards our goal of fostering self-identity, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, and international awareness amongst our diverse school community.

English as a Second Language Support

Scholars needing additional help in English due to limited fluency are eligible for ESL services from an ESL certified teacher. All scholars, regardless of the reason for their need of additional assistance in English may receive additional support through inclusion, small group instruction, academic intervention, and/or tutorials.