IB DP PHYSICS · EXAM SPECIAL · SL & HL · PAPER 1A, 1B, 2 AND IA · ~5 MIN READ

IB Physics Grade Boundaries (May 2025, new syllabus)

Every grade boundary for IB Physics from the IB subject reports: May 2025 time zones 1–3 (first new-syllabus session) and November 2024, SL and HL, overall and paper by paper.

Overall boundaries | Paper 1A | Paper 1B | Paper 2 | IA | % for a 7 | Time zones

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No tag = **SL and HL** HL ONLY HL students only DATA BOOKLET given in the exam

M1 A1 how marks are awarded highlight = comes up again and again HANDY worth memorising

Test yourself at the end

IN 30 SECONDS

- **A 7 in IB Physics in May 2025 needed 67–71 out of 100 at HL and 61–67 at SL**, depending on the time zone. This was the first session of the new syllabus (topics A.1 to E.5).
- **A 4 needed only 30–35 at SL and 34–36 at HL.**
- Paper 1 is now two parts in one sitting: **Paper 1A** (multiple choice) and **Paper 1B** (data-based questions, the same paper at SL and HL).
- Every number on this page comes from the IB's own subject reports for November 2024 and May 2025.

1 How IB Physics grades work (new syllabus)

Component	Weighting (SL and HL)	Marks
Paper 1A (multiple choice)	36% together with Paper 1B	HL 40, SL 25
Paper 1B (data-based)	(part of Paper 1)	20 (SL and HL)
Paper 2 (structured questions)	44%	HL 90, SL 50
Internal assessment (scientific investigation)	20%	24

- **Paper 1A and 1B share one time limit,** so time management between them matters. The subject reports noted more blank multiple-choice answers near the end of Paper 1A.
- **Grade boundaries are set after marking,** using the scripts and statistics. The three time zones sat different variants, so their boundaries differ.

2 Overall boundaries

- The lowest overall mark (out of 100) for each grade. November 2024 was the last session of the old (2016) syllabus, with Papers 1, 2 and 3; it is included for comparison.

Higher level (HL)

Session	2	3	4	5	6	7
May 2025 TZ1	13–23	24–34	35–44	45–55	56–66	67–100
May 2025 TZ2	14–24	25–35	36–45	46–57	58–67	68–100
May 2025 TZ3	14–22	23–33	34–45	46–58	59–70	71–100
Nov 2024 (old syllabus)	14–24	25–37	38–47	48–57	58–68	69–100

Standard level (SL)

Session	2	3	4	5	6	7
May 2025 TZ1	12–19	20–31	32–41	42–52	53–62	63–100
May 2025 TZ2	11–18	19–29	30–39	40–50	51–60	61–100
May 2025 TZ3	13–21	22–34	35–45	46–55	56–66	67–100
Nov 2024 (old syllabus)	14–25	26–39	40–48	49–57	58–68	69–100

3 Paper-by-paper boundaries, May 2025

- Each cell gives the **lowest mark for a 7** (and that as a percentage), then the **lowest mark for a 4**.

HL papers

Component (7 · 4)	May 2025 TZ1	May 2025 TZ2	May 2025 TZ3
Paper 1A	30/40 (75%) · 19	28/40 (70%) · 18	27/39 (69%) · 15
Paper 1B	14/20 (70%) · 7	14/20 (70%) · 7	15/20 (75%) · 8
Paper 2	52/90 (58%) · 24	57/90 (63%) · 27	61/90 (68%) · 25
IA (out of 24)	20/24 (83%) · 11	20/24 (83%) · 11	20/24 (83%) · 11

SL papers

Component (7 · 4)	May 2025 TZ1	May 2025 TZ2	May 2025 TZ3
Paper 1A	16/25 (64%) · 11	15/25 (60%) · 9	14/25 (56%) · 9
Paper 1B	14/20 (70%) · 7	14/20 (70%) · 7	15/20 (75%) · 8
Paper 2	28/50 (56%) · 12	27/50 (54%) · 12	34/50 (68%) · 16
IA (out of 24)	20/24 (83%) · 11	20/24 (83%) · 11	20/24 (83%) · 11

4 What these numbers mean for you

- **HL Paper 2 is where the 7 is won.** A 7 needed 52–61 out of 90 (58–68%), and the new 20-mark multi-concept questions at the end carry many of those marks. The reports noted many blank answers there, often from students running out of time.
- **Paper 1B is short but generous.** A 7 needed 14–15 out of 20, and the skills (uncertainties, gradients, error bars) are the same as in your IA. See Paper 1B data skills.
- **SL Paper 2 boundaries are low.** A 4 needed only 12–16 out of 50 in May 2025: most SL students lose marks on "explain" questions, not on calculations.
- **The IA needed 20/24 for a 7** in every time zone.

MEMORY TRICK

Multiple choice tip: there is no penalty for a wrong answer in Paper 1A. A blank is a guaranteed zero; an eliminated-and-guessed answer is not. See Paper 1A strategies.

LINKING QUESTION

For the skills behind these marks, see Paper 1A strategies, Paper 1B data skills, Paper 2 answers and the Physics IA guide.

Stuck on a question?

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