

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-009-19158-6 — Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS) for the IB Diploma Coursebook  
with Cambridge Elevate Edition: An Essential Guide for Students  
John Cannings , Maria Ines Piaggio , Peter Muir , Tom Brodie  
Excerpt  
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# Introduction to the book

## Introduction to the book

Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS) is meant to give you, the student, a chance to have a set of worthwhile and fun experiences that can be the highlight of your IB Diploma. Many graduates of the IB Diploma programme have shared with us that they feel some of their greatest achievements and learning came from CAS. They remember the special moments they had, trying to teach people English or working in an old people's home, and how much the residents looked forward to them coming each week. They say they got to know themselves and their fellow students much better when they worked together on a service project together. These anecdotes highlight their willingness to go outside of their comfort zone, try something and not give up. CAS is not an abstract activity: you are meant to 'get your hands dirty' and actually do things!

The Diploma Graduates who spoke to me all agreed that carrying out service activities changed them as people for the better. They said that working with other people helped them to be more aware of other people's feelings and also to learn about themselves. That is one of the challenges that you face over the next 18 months. In this book we shall outline many different examples of service.

A high point of the programme for many CAS students is the project that they will carry out. The CAS stages framework will help you to plan and carry out projects much better than in the past. We offer you some practical suggestions about projects and some activities to help you plan your own project.

This book supplements the 2015 CAS Guide and reflects the changes therein. It should help you to understand the requirements of CAS and has been written with you, the student, in mind. CAS still focuses on experiential learning, which requires you to reflect on the experiences that you have while doing it. There are many examples taken from students' personal reflections in the book and some photographs of them in action.

You will be encouraged in the book to see that CAS is not an isolated part of the IB Diploma, but that the skills and values developed in it will help your academic subjects. CAS encourages you to see the links between what you learn in class and the experiences you have outside of it.

There are many activities in the book that are designed to help clarify your thoughts about CAS and to challenge your own assumptions and ideas. This book is one that you will probably 'dip into' as you need ideas throughout the IB Diploma course. The authors have all had experience as CAS Coordinators and have provided examples from the three CAS regions (Europe and the Middle East, the Americas and Asia/Pacific).

We wish you a great CAS experience!

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# The nature of CAS

Chapter

1

## The nature of CAS

Alec Peterson, the first director of the IB, summarised the aims of the IB succinctly when he said:

The Educational aims of the IB programme: to develop to their fullest potential the powers of each individual to understand, to modify and to enjoy his or her environment, both inner and outer, in its physical, social, moral, aesthetic and spiritual aspects. *(Alec Peterson, 2003)*

From the very start, the IB Diploma Programme has been concerned with developing you as a whole person.

The key features of CAS from the IB's viewpoint are:

- a focus not just on what you have done, but how you have developed as an individual as a result of your involvement in CAS
- a move away from service being something you do for others, to doing something with others for mutual benefits
- a conscientious approach from you as a CAS participant to learn more about the communities with whom you work. More than this, to also contribute to the various communities in which you live.

For these reasons and more, CAS is considered one of the central pillars of the IB Diploma Programme. In many ways it is the IB Mission Statement in action, a factor that clearly distinguishes it from other university entrance courses. CAS really is the experiential part of the IB Diploma Programme that supports its claim to educate the whole person.

As American psychologist David Kolb said, 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.' John Dewey was the first person to write about experiential education, and he simply said 'Experience plus reflection equals learning.'

## 1

## 1.01 The purpose of this book

- 1 To help students understand the new CAS guidelines by explaining the language and ideas behind the guide in a student-friendly way (Chapter 1).
- 2 To present CAS as a blueprint for personal development in the IB Diploma Programme (Chapter 1).
- 3 To provide you, the student, with criteria and models to help you decide what is a valid CAS experience – in the authors' experience, this has always been something that has challenged students and IB teachers (Chapter 1).
- 4 To introduce you to the CAS stages model that will help you to plan and carry out CAS experiences and projects (Chapters 2 and 6).
- 5 To provide you with ideas about how to reflect on your CAS experiences and make this a more rewarding and richer experience (Chapter 3).
- 6 To demonstrate the links between CAS and the other parts of the core and provide you with a strategy for preparing a TOK presentation based on a valid and authentic CAS experience (Chapter 5).
- 7 To provide you with some thoughts of experienced CAS Coordinators about the programme (you will find this throughout the book).
- 8 To provide case studies and snapshots of good CAS practice from each of the three regions of the IB (IB in Africa, Europe and the Middle East, IB of the Americas and IB Asia/Pacific) (you will find this throughout the book).
- 9 To provide you with some ideas on how to develop your CAS portfolio and demonstrate your achievements in CAS (Chapter 7).
- 10 To show you the approaches to learning skills and how you might develop these through CAS (Chapter 9).
- 11 To show you how CAS relates to learner profile and how you can further develop these qualities.

## The nature of CAS

**Key point:** This is a book that you can consult as you work through the Diploma Programme, and it will help to make your CAS a more meaningful and fun experience.

# 1.02 What do the C, A and S stand for?

**C – Creativity:** ‘exploring and extending ideas leading to an original or interpretive product or performance’.

*CAS Guide (2015), page 8, IBO*

This is a great opportunity to do something that you have always wanted to do, or take things to a new level of accomplishment. It could be to finally put a band together.

### CAS SNAPSHOT

Creativity could also be getting up on stage. At Discovery College in Hong Kong, a group of students wrote a play, set in Germany during the Second World War, which became the school production for that year. The students developed the script, designed the set and costumes, and collaborated with their peers to develop the score and visual effects.

Creativity could also mean to learn how to salsa or tango, create your own app or website, write poetry, or develop a plan to reduce your family’s greenhouse gas emissions. It could be to take something you are already doing to a new level, or to try something you have never done before. The list of possibilities is endless – what is important is that you are engaged in the creative thought process.

## 1



**Figure 1.1** Students working creatively, painting a mural at an InterCAS (a conference for CAS students held annually in South America).

**A – Activity: ‘physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle’.**

*CAS Guide (2015), page 8, IBO*

The inclusion of this strand of CAS is to encourage you to do something physical that will benefit your wellbeing, to participate in something that you will enjoy and, hopefully, continue for the rest of your life. You might take up yoga or Pilates, go to the gym, or learn to dance salsa, or you might choose an outdoor activity like climbing, continue with a sport you already like or try a new sport.

### CAS SNAPSHOT

Students at Skagerak International School in Norway had the opportunity to learn the basics of climbing, and after this they ventured into ice climbing. This is an activity that they want to continue after they leave school.

## The nature of CAS



**Figure 1.2** A student ice climbing in Norway.

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### **S – Service: ‘collaborative and reciprocal engagement with the community in response to an authentic need’.**

*CAS Guide (2015), page 8, IBO*

In CAS, service is meant to be a social act, working with people outside of the family and not for profit. The aim is for you to contribute in your own way to making the world a better place and it will require some research to identify a specific need in the community. The next step requires collaboration with the community to see what you can do to service this particular need.



# 1

It is important to stress the idea of reciprocity and exchange (to avoid paternalism) and this, in our opinion, is the most challenging and yet rewarding of the CAS areas. It demands from you important social skills and a positive attitude. It requires you to develop a relationship with people in order to carry out a task. People with whom you are working will soon pick up from your body language and enthusiasm how keen you are to be involved.

Because Service has a direct impact on others, it is very important for it to be well-planned to ensure that this impact is positive. Chapter 6 on working with others, outlines what some negative impacts may be, and includes some guidance on how to avoid them.

## CAS SNAPSHOT

Margrit and Anna realised the need for people to go and read for blind people, so they signed up with the Red Cross to do this on a weekly basis. First they had to do a preparatory training course, which included being blindfolded for half a day in the home to get an understanding of what it is like to be blind.



**Figure 1.3** IB Diploma Programme Mexican students working with Habitat for Humanity in Mexico.

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## 1.03 Changes to CAS

The *CAS Guide* published in 2015 has made a number of important changes to this central part of the Diploma Programme:

- 1 There is no reference to an hour requirement, rather a continuous commitment to CAS over a duration of 18 months.
- 2 The three strands of CAS are now named Creativity, Activity and Service.
- 3 We now refer to CAS events as CAS experiences.
- 4 CAS experience guidelines have been introduced to help clarify what is, and what is not CAS.
- 5 You have to show evidence of having met seven learning outcomes at least once during the IB Diploma Programme. The evidence for this should be included in a CAS portfolio.
- 6 You are expected to use the CAS stages model in planning and carrying out CAS experiences (the five stages are: investigation, preparation, action, reflection and demonstration).
- 7 You are expected to collaborate with other students, to plan, initiate and carry out a CAS project in one or more of the CAS strands. This project should have a duration of at least one month.
- 8 There is a heavy emphasis on your reflection. However, this reflection can be in a variety of different media, NOT just in a written form.
- 9 CAS should involve enjoyment, choice and engagement. The CAS experiences chosen by you should be fun and beneficial.
- 10 You are expected to keep a portfolio of your CAS engagement. It can be in electronic form and is expected to include reflections in various formats, and other evidence of CAS experiences. Vital to the CAS portfolio is evidence of achievement in the learning outcomes.