

IB Physics IA

Topic-Picker & Top-Band Checklist - a free guide for IB students

Most Physics IA marks are won or lost in the choice of question. Use this to pick something that can reach the top band, then to pressure-test your draft against the actual criteria.

1 . Choose a question that can score

- * **Make it focused** - not a broad theme. A narrow, specific question beats a survey of a topic.
- * **Make it answerable** - you can answer with evidence, data or close analysis you produce yourself.
- * **Make it doable** - feasible with the time, sources, access or materials you actually have.
- * **Leave room to argue** - if the answer is obvious, there is nothing to analyse or evaluate.

2 . The five habits of every top-band IA

- * **Focus** - a narrow, specific research question or line of inquiry.
- * **Argue** - analysis and evaluation, not description or summary.
- * **Evaluate** - limitations or alternatives weighed by impact, with a forward step.
- * **Structure** - write criterion by criterion against the rubric; cover every strand.
- * **Discipline** - stay within the word/time limit and cite every source.

3 . IB Physics IA - the assessment criteria

- ☐ Research design (/6): a focused RQ naming the variables (range + units); the governing equation and the relationship it predicts; controlled variables; a reproducible method.
- ☐ Data analysis (/6): uncertainty propagation (incl. the rule for powers); a linearised graph with error bars and max/min gradients so the gradient yields a physical quantity.
- ☐ Conclusion (/6): extract the quantity from the gradient and compare with the accepted value within uncertainty.
- ☐ Evaluation (/6): limitations weighed by impact; the dominant % uncertainty; improvements + an extension.

4 . Using AI honestly

The IB permits AI tools provided you acknowledge them honestly. Anything an AI produces that you use directly must be cited like any other source; using AI to do the work and passing it off as your own is academic misconduct. The work must be your own.

Write it with a guided, examiner-written frame

IA Studio gives you a section-by-section writing frame with these criteria built in, worked examples, a live top-band readiness check, and 24 topic ideas for this subject.

Free to start: ibdp.ed-planner.com/physics — **24 ideas:** [/physics-ia-ideas](https://physics-ia-ideas.com)

