

# HOW TO BECOME A CAS GENIUS



From the IB graduates at



**Lanterna**  
education



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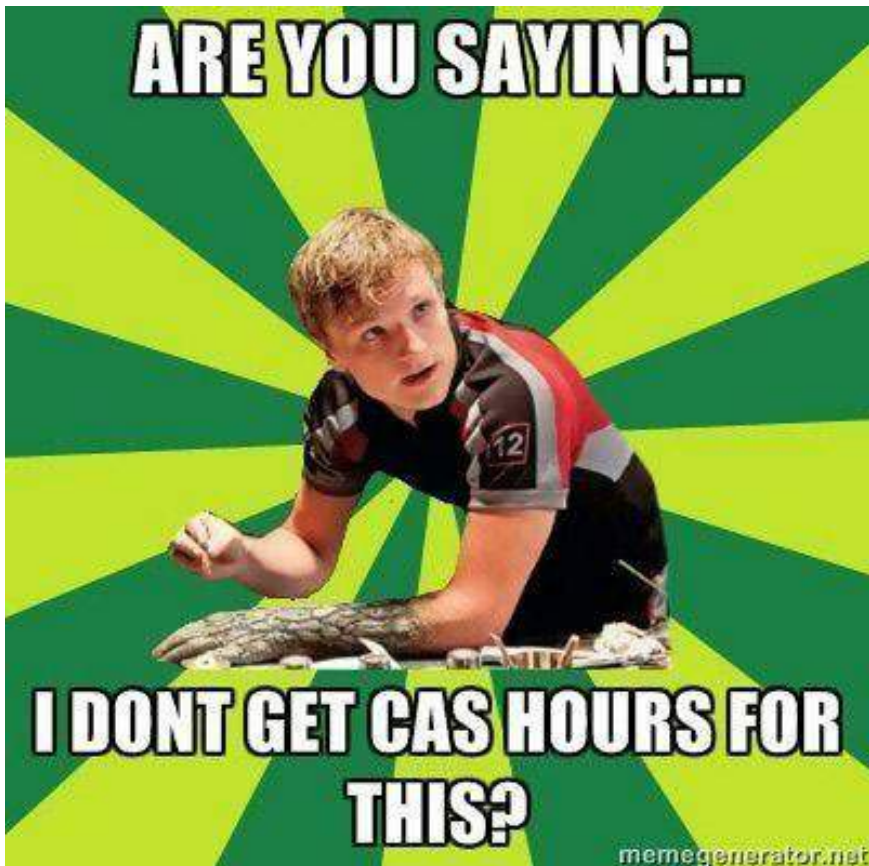
# HOW TO BECOME A CAS GENIUS





CAS. Be it your first month in the IB or halfway to the end, you're bound to have heard of it. We get it, CAS can be very frightening and boring. It's not like you have another 6 subjects to worry about, an Extended Essay, and TOK right (\*insert sarcasm\*)? However, we at Lanterna are here to tell that you shouldn't think of CAS as just another assignment. In fact, it might just be one of the most exciting parts to the IB Diploma!

Our IB Superstars at Lanterna have come together to help you gain a fresh perspective on CAS along with the latest tips and tricks that will make doing CAS look like a piece of cake.





## What is CAS?

Before we start brainstorming, let's start by reminding ourselves what CAS actually is.

In super simple terms, CAS (an acronym for Creativity, Action, and Service) is a program designed by the IB to incentivize you to gain exposure to a range of enjoyable and meaningful experiences outside of your academic studies. They fall into one of three categories (or can be a combination of several):

**Creativity** – the IBO defines creativity as something that lets you explore your own original thought and expression. Undoubtedly vague, but treat that as an advantage not a drawback. The IB is empowering you with freedom to decide what creative activity you take on. Music, Theatre, and Art are all classic examples falling into the Creativity category, but it doesn't stop there: Speech & Debate, Model United Nations, and learning a language are all examples of Creativity as well!

**Activity** – this is anything that contributes to your physical well-being. This includes school sports, dancing, running, and anything else you do which constitutes a genuine, challenging physical activity. Yes, even ping pong can count as long as you ensure it fulfils the CAS criteria.

**Service** – This category is the most elusive to IB students. Service is about contributing to your community and society. In other words, service is about doing things for others. Though charity work is popular, service can also be mowing your neighbor's garden or putting on a show at a care home for the elderly.

Below, we've prepared a list of steps to help you start planning out your CAS!





## Step 1: Inventory Check

Before rushing out to find CAS activities to add to your plate, reflect about the things *that you already do* and can capitalize on for CAS.

### Simply:

1. Take a piece of paper and brainstorm all the things you already do outside of your academic studies. For now, include even the ones that might not seem to fit anywhere, like reading comics or walking to school.
2. Go through your list and label each thing according to which CAS category it 'could' fall under.
3. Highlight the activities that you'd like to carry on with in some way throughout the IB. Remember that you don't have to carry on with it in exactly the same way (we'll get into this in just a moment).
4. Now look at the gaps. Have you got a balance of Creativity, Activity and Service? If you find that you're loaded with creativity but you're a couch potato when it comes to physical activities, take note and read on!

*Warning: Remember that CAS shouldn't overlap with your course requirements. This means that even if you spend 10 hours a week painting for IB Visual Art, it doesn't count as CAS unless you're doing a separate project. However, if you discover that you love charcoal drawings in one of your classes, you can then use this discovery to turn it into a CAS charcoal drawing project.*

## Step 2: Combine CAS with what you love

We'll be honest. We know that sometimes what you really want to do in your free time has nothing to do with what might directly be termed a 'CAS experience'. However, it is totally possible to combine what you want to do with what will count towards CAS. It's all about adding an element of planning and challenge to the mix.

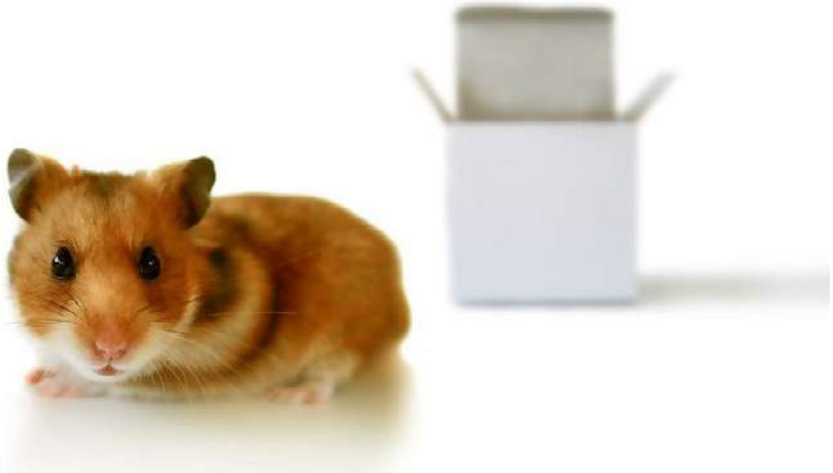
Let's say for example that you love baking. Why not organize a cake sale for charity? To stretch yourself even further you could set yourself a target of how much money you want to raise, which will naturally push you to bake more than you ever have before. Everyone wins!



Or, if you want to be extra sneaky, say all you really want to do is catch Pokémon. Why not organize a Pokémon Go hike that will take you to all the ideal Pokémon hiding spots. You don't even need to tell anyone that your productive CAS hike was actually to add to your Pokedex (We won't tell if you won't!).

Gotta Catch'em All!

### Step 3: Think outside the box.



While it's nice to make CAS fit into what you already do and love, it is also important to remember that CAS is also there to challenge you to try new things and broaden your horizons. So why not do that?! When else are you going to get the time and the school credit for trying new things? Take a chance and turn your comic book reading into comic book creating and get CAS for it! You don't have to draw the next Marvel comic book, but don't feel afraid to collaborate with someone who shares your passion for comics with you. For example, one of our Lanterna tutors turned his love for watching movies and TV shows into a CAS activity by creating a movie review website where he could write his critiques!



If you're the type of person who never doesn't anything you would call 'creative', or who never (willingly) does anything you would classify as exercise, take this chance to find a happy compromise. If you hate football and any kind of team sport, what about yoga? If you can't draw or act or do anything traditionally creative to save your life, think about what you can do to express yourself. One student we know didn't think of herself as creative until she started combining photography with science, and taking photos of different kinds of plants. Suddenly she was doing something creative while also thinking scientifically! We loved her project so much we gave her a scholarship to one of our [Mid-IB courses](#).

### Step 4: Tackle your Bucket List Using CAS

Finally, after you've looked at all of your activities and thought outside the box, why not take it one step further and use CAS as the perfect excuse to do all the things you've always wanted to do but never have. Yes, I'm talking about volunteering at a Donkey sanctuary, making your first feature film, and setting up your local Quidditch team (fun fact: Quidditch is a very popular University League Sport in the UK so would help you train to become an athlete superstar!). This is what CAS is all about (plus it'll be harder for your parents not to allow you to do these things if it factors into your IB Diploma).





# CAS BRAINSTORMING





Still can't think of any ideas? Don't worry, we know the IB can fry your brain at times, so we've put our creative juices together and come up with ONE HUNDRED EASY CAS IDEAS!

## 100 IB CAS IDEAS

### Creativity

1. Take up baking
2. Take up cooking
3. Take up vegan cooking
4. Create a recipe book for your latest bakes
5. Start a YouTube channel for your cookery
6. Host a dinner society (think of Come Dine with Me but for High Schoolers)
7. Take up knitting
8. Make your own clothes/accessories – [check out this video for some inspiration!](#)
9. Create a Depop account for your handmade clothes/accessories (then donate the money to a charity for it to also count under SERVICE!)
10. Take up photography
11. Produce a documentary – read about Ingrid's experience [here!](#)
12. Write for your school magazine, or start one if it doesn't exist!
13. Join/set up a book club
14. Write a novel or some short stories
15. Make a film of your novel/short story
16. Make a stop motion animation film (see the film Chicken Run for inspiration!)
17. Write poetry
18. Start a blog for your poems
19. Start calligraphy – [it's soooo pretty!](#)
20. Make handmade cards that feature your calligraphy
21. Join/start a choir
22. Organize an open mic event
23. Join/start a band
24. Join/start an orchestra
25. Learn a musical instrument



26. If you already play an instrument, try conducting!
27. Play video games (if you don't believe me, [check out this blog!](#))
28. Design a new video game
29. Make homemade candles
30. Take up sketching/painting
31. Create an Instagram account for your sketches and paintings
32. Make handmade bath bombs
33. Put on a play – how about one of the ones you might be studying for your Language A?

### Activity

34. Take up running – why not set yourself a goal of running a 10km race, or even a marathon?
35. Organize a Pokémon Go Adventure in the woods!
36. Go climbing, whether that be indoors or outdoors!
37. Spend a day at an outdoor adventure club – if you're UK based, the [Go Ape parks are amazing!](#)
38. Join your local gym
39. Try a Zumba class
40. If you enjoy dancing, try out some different styles of ballroom – foxtrot, waltz, cha cha etc...
41. Or give breakdancing a try. You could even organize your own dance show at your school!
42. Go on a yoga retreat
43. If you're an adventurous type, give windsurfing a go
44. Or try paragliding!
45. Skiing/snowboarding
46. Try kayaking
47. Or white water rafting
48. Go mountain biking
49. Commit to cycling to school for a certain number of days per week





50. If you like swimming, cycling and running, train for a triathlon
51. If you're already a swimmer, try diving
52. Take part in a team sport – netball, football, wheelchair basketball, hockey, etc...
53. Give blind soccer a go
54. Try archery
55. Take up orienteering
56. Horse riding
57. Try boxing, or a boxercise class
58. If you live near the coast, play beach volleyball
59. Or open water swimming in the sea
60. Give judo, taekwondo or karate a try
61. Spend an afternoon at a trampoline park (they look AWESOME)
62. Play tennis, or table tennis
63. Have a go at ice skating
64. Go on a hiking expedition
65. Try playing golf
66. Skateboarding

## Service

67. Volunteer at a local charity shop
68. Spend an hour a week volunteering at a nursing home
69. Volunteer at your local hospital
70. Start a Junior CPR Program, [like Kira!](#)
71. Or organize a talent show at school, charge an entry fee, and donate the funds to charity
72. Run in a charity fun run – check out the [Race for Life events in the UK](#)
73. Hold a bake sale at your school and raise money for charity
74. Or perhaps as something even bigger, hold a summer fair at your school for charity – have stalls such as face painting, a coconut shy, a second-hand book stall, hook-a-duck etc...
75. Organize a charity raffle
76. Or hold a 'Guess the Baby' charity competition at school. Ask you teachers to submit photos from when they were younger, and see if students can guess who is who! Charge a fee for entering, and have a prize for



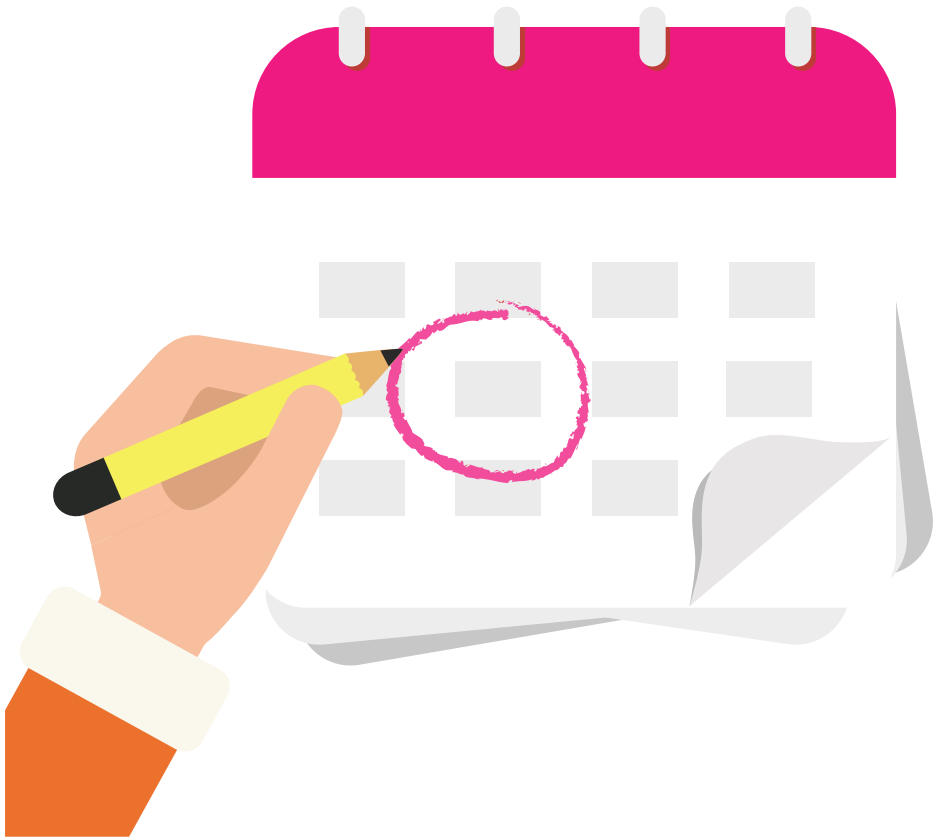
whoever gets them all correct.

77. Volunteer at an after school club, either at your school or another local school
78. Take part in a [Fridaysforfuture climate march](#)
79. Volunteer at your local government
80. If you have a local green area, set up a butterfly conservation space
81. Organize a tree planting event in your local community
82. Organize a plastic pick-up event at your school/local community
83. Or, if you live near the coast, arrange a beach clean-up event
84. Learn how to perform CPR
85. Go on a wildlife conservation volunteering trip
86. Or volunteer at an animal shelter
87. Do you have an elderly neighbor or relative? Offer to tidy their garden, or maybe walk their dog a few times a week.
88. Help out at a soup kitchen
89. Take part in Amnesty International campaigns
90. Volunteer at your local library
91. Or, if there's a local museum in your area, volunteer there
92. Apply to be an [Oxfam festival volunteer](#) – a free trip to a festival and CAS too!
93. Organize a CAS fair at your school. This is an event where your IB year group presents your CAS projects and activities to the years below. This should give them some help and inspiration!
94. If you're bilingual, volunteer to help someone or an organization with translations
95. If you're taking up knitting as a CREATIVE project, try knitting hats or clothing for premature babies
96. Organize a charity car wash at your school
97. Start, or join, a neighborhood watch program
98. Organize a clothes collection at your school, and then donate them to a local charity
99. Campaign for better recycling facilities at your school
100. Our last one is actually a fun fact: did you know that [Lanterna started out as a CAS project in 2002?](#) A group of older IB students decided to support younger students with their academic performance – everything



from helping out with homework to teaching whole topics that students had missed out or not understood. So, we're living proof that CAS is totally worth it in the end!

This list is guaranteed not to only fill up your CAS schedule but also the schedules of your classmates for the entire IB Diploma!



# THE CAS PROJECT





“Hey, how’s CAS going?”

“Really well thanks – I’ve got plenty of activities and experiences on the go so I should have enough to put in my reflections!”

“And how about your **CAS project**? How is that coming along?”

\*Internal panic – CAS project????! You mean there’s more to CAS than just my ordinary experiences? YIKES

If this scenario seems familiar to you, we’re here to help! Next up in our CAS series is our **advice for the CAS project**. We’re going to take you through what you need to do to fulfil this IB requirement. The CAS project might seem time-consuming on the surface, but I promise that it’s much more fun and rewarding than it may look written out on paper. So, read on for our simple guide to nailing the CAS project...







## What's a CAS Project?

**A CAS project differs from a normal CAS experience in that instead of being a single event or a long-term commitment to a particular event (e.g. swimming), a CAS project involves a collaborative series of CAS experiences lasting for at least one month.**

1. The important aspects to focus on here are: That a CAS project is **collaborative** – you must demonstrate teamwork and cooperation. This could be with a group of students or with members of the wider community.
2. That the project **must last for at least a month** – this includes the planning stages to the project's completion. Having said that, a project for longer than a month is absolutely fine too, and is likely to offer greater possibilities!

You must be involved in at least one CAS project during the IB Diploma program. Your project/s should address at least one of the required fields; creativity, activity and service, or they can combine two or all three. So, there are plenty of options!

## What do I need to do?

The IBO states that *“All CAS projects are designed with a defined purpose and goals”*. So your CAS project should have clearly defined, achievable results, which will hopefully make the process easier for everyone to follow. If you're running a charity event, your purpose could be your reasons for supporting a specific charity, and one of your goals might be the total amount you hope to have raised by the end. Or, if you're putting on a talent show or dance performance, your purpose could be to bring together multiple year groups in your school to enhance the community, and a goal could be to sell a certain number of tickets.

Like your other CAS experiences, you're expected to reflect on your progress throughout your CAS project/s. **As it is collaborative, your CAS project is a good opportunity for group reflection**, as this can give you different perspectives during the process. As I've said before, think about the ways in



which you can make CAS more fun. If you're creative, and enjoy using media, why not make a video diary documenting your project as you go along, and interview other participants to get varied reflections on what you have done. Or you could set up an Instagram account to document the progress of your project through photos!



## **An Extra Boost for University Applications**

With university application and personal statement deadlines just around the corner, having a good CAS project to talk about is certainly a positive. Engaging with the wider community, making a positive impact, or even just demonstrating leadership skills through your CAS project will impress admissions officers.

Don't forget that if you need more help on University Applications, Lanterna's IB Superstar tutors are here to help you through the process with their tips and tricks via Online Private Tuition!

For more information, click [HERE](#).



## Example CAS Projects

To help you get the ball rolling, here are a few example CAS projects, as suggested by the IBO:

- **CREATIVITY:** A student group plans, designs and creates a mural
- **ACTIVITY:** Students organize and participate in a sports team, including training sessions and matches against other teams
- **SERVICE:** Students set up and conduct tutoring for people in need ([this is exactly how Lanterna started!](#))
- **CREATIVITY AND ACTIVITY:** Students choreograph a routine for their marching band
- **SERVICE AND ACTIVITY:** Students plan and participate in the planting and maintenance of a garden with members of the local community
- **SERVICE AND CREATIVITY:** Students identify that children at a local school need backpacks and subsequently design and make a number of backpacks out of recycled materials
- **CREATIVITY, ACTIVITY AND SERVICE:** Students rehearse and perform a dance production for a community retirement home

For even more CAS project inspiration, [check out this story](#) about students in Indiana who organized a huge recycling drive to help an IB School in Flint, Michigan.



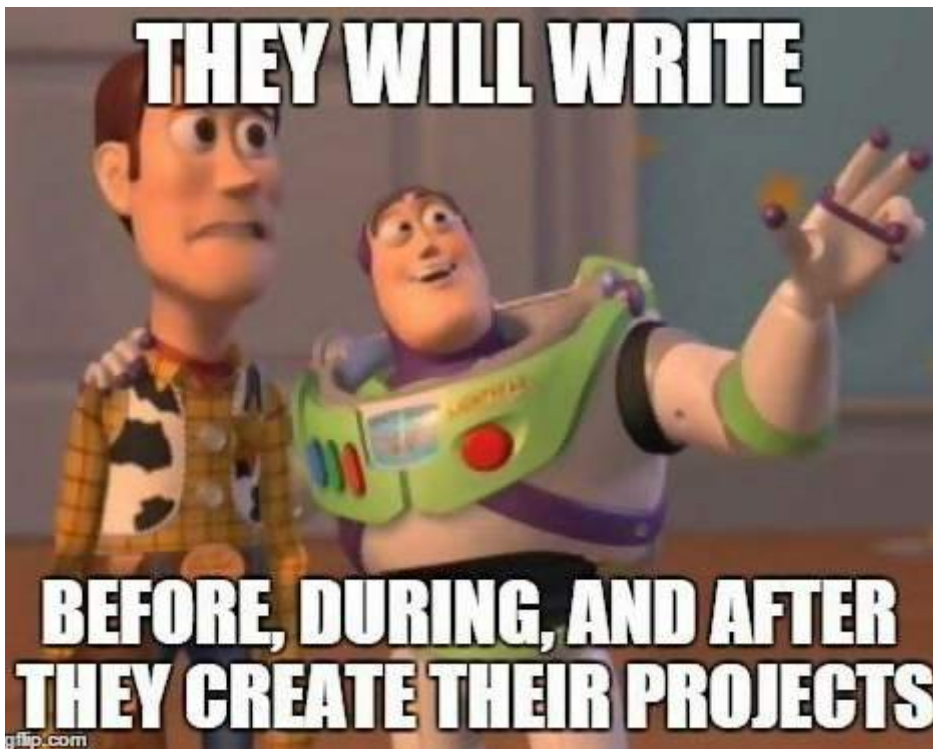
# REFLECTIONS





So now you've got your CAS activities and your CAS Project and you are super psyched to embark on these unique and fun experiences, but WAIT! The CAS fun doesn't stop there! The IB requires to write reflections on your CAS projects and experiences. Feeling stressed? Don't worry, we got you covered..,

## What is a CAS reflection?



Reflections are **thoughtful and honest accounts of what you've gained by completing CAS experiences**. A big part of CAS is being able to evaluate how your experiences and projects have led to personal development over the 18 months of the program. The IBO states that students should "*identify*



*goals, develop strategies and determine further actions for personal growth”.*

So, analyzing your goals, decisions, successes, problems, and ways of overcoming challenges are a few suggestions of what should be included in your CAS reflections. Here are the IBO’s top things to consider when producing your reflections:

- Describe what happened: retell memorable moments, identifying what was important or influential, what went well or was difficult, and any obstacles and successes.
- Express feelings: articulate emotional responses to your experiences.
- Generate ideas: rethink or re-examine choices and actions, as this increases awareness about self and situations.
- Ask questions: question processes or issues to prompt further thinking and ongoing inquiry

### **Other good questions to consider when producing your reflections include:**

- Why did I make this particular choice?
- How did this experience reflect my personal ideas and values?
- In what ways am I being challenged to think differently about myself and others?
- How did I feel about the challenges?
- What happened that prompted those particular feelings?
- What choices might have resulted in different feelings and outcomes?

### **Recording Reflections**

With so many things going on, it can be hard to keep track of your activities and write detailed reflections of what you did for each CAS commitment. That’s why some of our IB Superstars found keeping a CAS diary a lifesaver! The idea is simple: after completing a CAS commitment or a task of a CAS project, write down the date, what you did, and how you found the experience. Ideally you should be writing reflections:

- When you have discovered something new or interesting
- When a skill is mastered



- When a challenge is confronted
- When emotions are provoked
- When achievement deserves celebration

Sticking to these tips and tricks can not only save you time, but also make your CAS look amazing! Remember that **purposeful reflection is about quality, not quantity**. The IB isn't looking for you to account for every minute of your CAS experiences (otherwise you'd spend the whole time writing about CAS instead of DOING CAS!).

But also remember that while most choose to write CAS reflections in the form of written paragraphs, you don't have to follow suit. You should find the form of expression that best suits YOU and YOUR CAS experiences. This could be: a dialogue

- a poem
- a song
- a comic strip
- a dramatic performance
- a letter
- a photograph
- a video diary
- a dance

The list is endless!





## CAS Portfolio

Your reflections make up what's known as your CAS portfolio; this is your evidence of engagement with CAS. It not only includes your reflections, but you can also include images, posters, videos etc. In addition, your portfolio should include evidence of achievement of each of the seven learning outcomes. These are:

1. **Identify own strengths and develop areas for growth** – analyze your abilities, skills and weaknesses
2. **Demonstrate that challenges have been undertaken, developing new skills in the process** – this could be taking on a new experience or developing an existing one
3. **Demonstrate how to plan and execute a CAS experience** – describe the stages from conceiving an idea to executing a plan for an individual or collaborative CAS experience
4. **Show commitment to, and perseverance in, CAS experiences** – demonstrate regular involvement in CAS activities, and show how you work around or overcome challenges
5. **Demonstrate the skills and recognize the benefits of working collaboratively** – critically discuss the benefits and challenges of working with others
6. **Demonstrate engagement with issues of global significance** – show an understanding of global issues, make responsible decisions and take appropriate action in response to the issue either locally, nationally or internationally
7. **Recognize and consider the ethics of choices and actions** – show awareness of the consequences of choices and actions in planning and carrying out your CAS experiences

Some of these learning outcomes may be achieved many times throughout the CAS process, whilst others may be achieved less frequently. The most important thing is that you must provide evidence of having achieved each learning outcome at least once through your CAS journey. Read more about each outcome, [HERE](#).





Whilst your CAS portfolio is not formally assessed, it is a crucial part of your IB Diploma. Remember that if you don't pass CAS, you won't achieve your Diploma. That would be very sad after all of your hard work!

## RECAP

If you've made it to the end of this long document then congrats grasshopper, you are on your way to become a CAS Genius! We at Lanterna hope that you've gone away from this understanding that CAS isn't just another assignment. CAS is what you make of it. It's so open and flexible, CAS can be whatever you want it to be (within certain limits of course!). Take advantage of this moment and explore what you like, what you don't like, and how to express yourself. **Take advantage of this moment to *discover yourself*.**



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Whenever you are about to start your first or final year of the IB, use the summer to get ahead and on top of your IB subjects!



Questions? Email us at [info@lanternaeducation.com](mailto:info@lanternaeducation.com)