

The IB Middle Years Programme

The Middle Years Programme: preparing students to be successful in school and to be active, lifelong learners

What is an International Baccalaureate (IB) education?

The IB continuum of international education, for students aged 3 to 19, is unique because of its academic and personal rigour, challenging students to excel in their studies and personal growth. The IB aims to inspire a quest for learning throughout life that is marked by enthusiasm and empathy.

The IB aspires to help schools develop well-rounded students, who respond to challenges with optimism and an open mind, are confident in their own identities, make ethical decisions, join with others in celebrating our common humanity and are prepared to apply what they learn in real-world, complex and unpredictable situations.

The IB offers high-quality programmes of international education that share a powerful vision. An IB education:

- **focuses on learners** – the IB’s student-centred programmes promote healthy relationships, ethical responsibility and personal challenge
- **develops effective approaches to teaching and learning** – IB Programmes help students to develop the attitudes and skills they need for both academic and personal success
- **works within global contexts** – IB programmes increase understanding of languages and cultures, and explore globally significant ideas and issues
- **explores significant content** – IB programmes offer a curriculum that is broad and balanced, conceptual and connected.

Informed by values described in the learner profile, IB learners strive to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. These attributes represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond intellectual development and academic success.

What is the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)?

The MYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning that encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement—essential qualities for young people who are becoming global leaders.

The MYP is flexible enough to accommodate most national or local curriculum requirements. It builds upon the knowledge, skills

and attitudes developed in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) and prepares students to meet the academic challenges of the IB Diploma Programme (DP) and the IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC).

The IB Middle Years Programme:

- addresses holistically students’ intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being
- provides students opportunities to develop the **knowledge, attitudes and skills** they need in order to manage complexity and take responsible action for the future
- ensures breadth and depth of understanding through study in **eight subject groups**
- requires the study of at least **two languages (language of instruction and additional language of choice)** to support students in understanding their own cultures and those of others
- empowers students to participate in **service within the community**
- helps to prepare students for **further education, the workplace and a lifetime of learning.**

The curriculum

The MYP consists of eight subject groups: language acquisition, language and literature, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design. Student study is supported by a minimum of 50 hours of instruction per subject group in each academic year. In years 4 and 5, students have the option to take courses from six of the eight subject groups, which provides greater flexibility.

The MYP: a unique approach, relevant for a global society

The MYP aims to help students develop their personal understanding, their emerging sense of self and responsibility in their community.

MYP teachers organize the curriculum with appropriate attention to:

- **Teaching and learning in context.** Students learn best when their learning experiences have context and are connected to their lives and the world that they have experienced. Using global contexts, MYP students explore human identity, global challenges and what it means to be internationally minded.
- **Conceptual understanding.** Concepts are big ideas that have relevance within specific disciplines and across subject areas. MYP students use concepts as a vehicle to inquire into issues and ideas of personal, local and global significance and examine knowledge holistically.

Assessment in the MYP: rigorous criteria, applied consistently worldwide

MYP assessment standards are consistent around the world. In order to maintain the rigour for which the IB is renowned, the MYP assessment model is criterion-related. Teachers structure varied and valid assessment tasks so that students can demonstrate achievement according to objectives defined by the IB. Tasks are assessed against established criteria, not against the work of other students.

A good curriculum develops a range of student skills. The MYP encourages teachers to assess this acquired skill set, including how to succeed in written examinations. Typical MYP assessment tasks include open-ended, problem-solving activities and investigations, organized debates, tests and examinations, hands-on experimentation, analysis and reflection. MYP assessment is carried out by teachers, according to the criteria defined by the IB.

International standards for assessment: moderation and monitoring (through 2015)

All schools are responsible for developing appropriate assessments for their students according to published MYP objectives and criteria.

IB World Schools offering the MYP participate in either moderation or monitoring of assessment. The IB reviews and provides feedback on each school's internally-developed assessments, highlighting areas in which the school is performing well, along with areas for improvement.

External moderation validates final grades for records of achievement and can lead to the awarding of MYP certificates. For moderation, schools submit samples of assessed students' work from each of the MYP subject areas (along with the personal project) from the final year of the programme to independent external moderators appointed by the IB. Through this process, the IB ensures that schools and teachers are using international MYP standards in assessing their students.

Monitoring of assessment provides support and guidance to schools with regards to internal assessment procedures and practices. Schools benefit from the expertise of trained moderators and experienced MYP subject specialists. Monitoring of assessment helps schools apply MYP assessment principles to their own local practices. (Monitoring of assessment is not linked to validation of student grades.)



MYP assessment from 2016

Along with the introduction of mandatory moderation of the personal project, 2016 sees a change in the optional external assessment for the MYP. The new optional MYP eAssessment provides external evaluation for students in MYP year 5 (15–16 years old) that leads to the internationally recognized IB MYP certificate.

MYP eAssessment represents a balanced, appropriately-challenging model that comprises examinations and coursework.

Two-hour onscreen examinations in four subject groups (language and literature, sciences, mathematics, individuals and societies) and interdisciplinary learning are externally marked by IB examiners, as is a portfolio of student work for courses in language acquisition. Students also submit an ePortfolio of coursework for a performance-oriented subject group (physical and health education, arts, and design), which is moderated to international standards.

These innovative assessments focus on conceptual understanding and the ability to apply knowledge in complex, unfamiliar situations. They offer robust and reliable assessment of student achievement in the MYP.

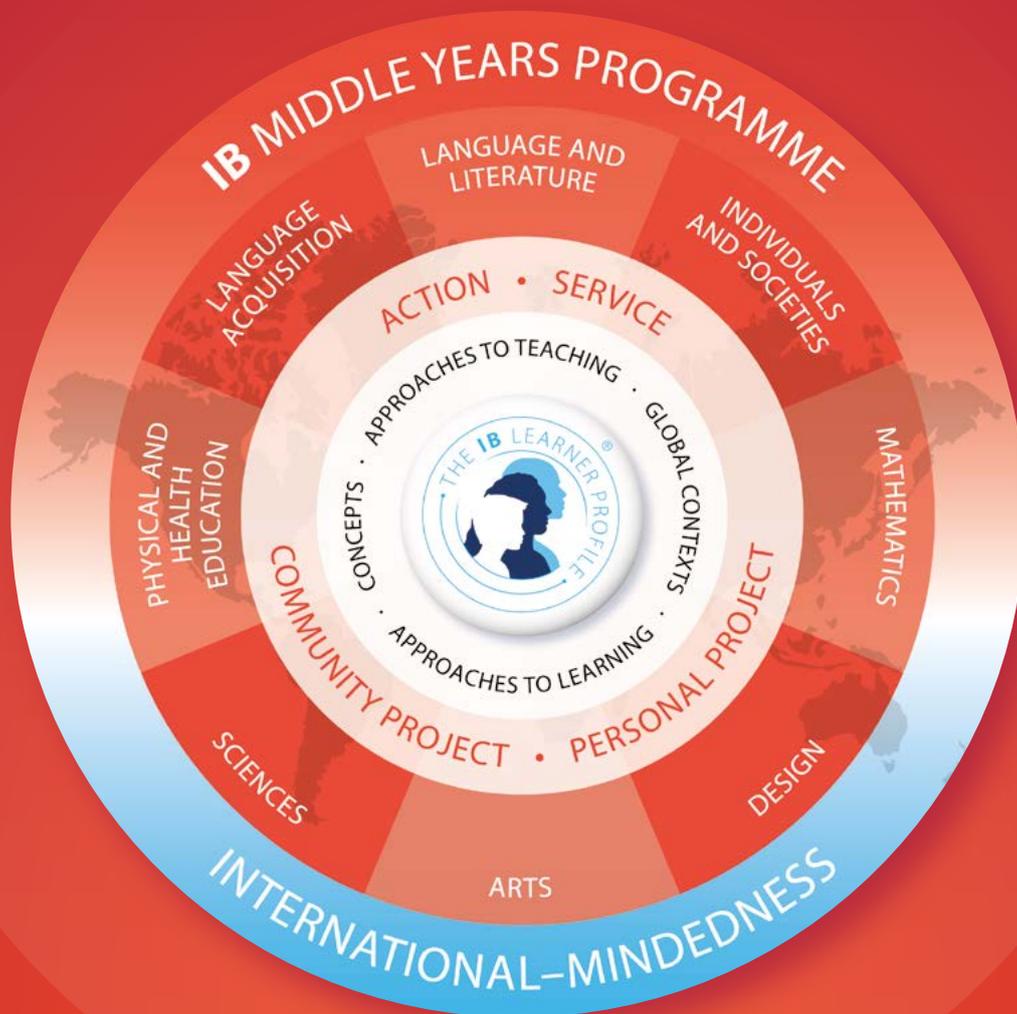
IB quality assurance

Any school, or group of schools, wishing to offer one or more IB programme must first be authorized to do so by the IB organization. The requirements are the same for all schools, and the procedure is designed to ensure that schools are well-prepared to implement the programme(s) successfully. All IB World Schools are required to participate in an ongoing process of review and development, using the same programme standards and practices.

Services and support for schools

As part of its ongoing commitment to the development of a highly skilled global learning community, the IB provides a wide range of high-quality professional development opportunities to help new and experienced school leaders and educators understand, support and successfully deliver IB Programmes. To further support professional development, IB educator certificates and IB leadership certificates are offered for completing an IB recognized course of study offered by a network of higher education institutions.

School leaders and educators can also serve as IB workshop leaders, school visitors, consultants, examiners, moderators or curriculum developers. Other ways to participate in the IB community include sharing good practices in the online *IB Journal of Teaching Practice* and through blogs and other social media networks. Other IB services include: access to curriculum materials and related publications, marketing support, networking opportunities, and assistance with university and government recognition.



- **Approaches to learning (ATL).** A unifying thread throughout all MYP subject groups, approaches to learning provide the foundation for independent learning and encourage the application of their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Developing and applying these skills help students learn how to learn.
- **Service as action (community service).** Action (learning by doing and experiencing) and service have always been shared values of the IB community. Students take action when they apply what they are learning in the classroom and beyond. IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a commitment to service—making a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment. Service as action is an integral part of the programme, especially in the MYP community project.
- **Language and identity** – MYP students are required to learn at least two languages. Learning to communicate in a variety of ways is fundamental to their development of intercultural understanding and crucial to their identity affirmation.

MYP projects

MYP projects provide students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned in the MYP. In schools that include MYP years 5, all students must complete the personal project. In programmes that include MYP years 4 or 5, schools may offer students the opportunity to do both the community project and the personal project. In schools that include MYP year 3 or 4, students must complete the community project.

- The **community project** encourages students to explore their right and responsibility to implement service as action in the community. Students may complete the community project individually or in small groups.
- Each student develops a **personal project** independently, producing a truly personal and creative piece of work that stands as a summative review of their ability to conduct independent work.

Key findings from research on the impact of the IB Middle Years Programme

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Global Research department collaborates with universities and independent research organizations worldwide to produce rigorous studies examining the impact and outcomes of the IB's four programmes: the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the Middle Years Programme (MYP), the Diploma Programme (DP) and the Career-related Certificate (IBCC). Areas of inquiry include, but are not limited to: **standards alignment, programme implementation, student performance and the learner profile**. The findings below come from IB-commissioned and independent research relating to the MYP.

A study within a large, socio-economically diverse school district in the **United States** explored **student engagement and performance** in five MYP schools in comparison to five non-MYP schools. Using state assessments as a benchmark, the results indicated that a higher percentage of MYP students achieved proficient or advanced performance on mathematics and science assessments than did the matched comparison group (Wade 2011).

	MYP schools			Comparison schools	
	Grade	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Mathematics Proficient or advanced	6	1,058	85.7***	1,090	82.6
	7	1,300	82.8**	1,115	78.9
	8	1,243	78.7***	1,228	73.1
Reading Proficient or advanced	6	1,034	90.9	1,071	90.8
	7	1,254	88.8	1,091	90.0
	8	1,208	88.7	1,182	88.2
Science Proficient or advanced	8	1,343	77.5***	1,293	72.0

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Table 1. Percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on mathematics, reading and science in MYP schools and non-MYP schools, 2009–2010 (Wade 2011).

In a subsequent study within the same **US** district, previous enrollment in the MYP appeared to have a positive impact on students' **global-mindedness**. Former MYP students responded more positively to statements in a global-mindedness survey than students who had attended a non-MYP school (Wade and Wolanin 2013).

Examining **student performance** on the International Schools' Assessment (ISA), this **global** study by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) explored PYP and MYP student performance—in comparison with non-IB students—in mathematics,

reading, and expository and narrative writing. The data from a total of 50,714 international students, 68% of whom were IB students, suggested that the PYP and MYP cohort performed better than their non-IB peers in all four assessment areas and at many grade levels. MYP students scored particularly well in grades 9 and 10 mathematics and reading, as IB student averages were significantly higher than OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) means for these subjects (Tan and Bibby 2012).

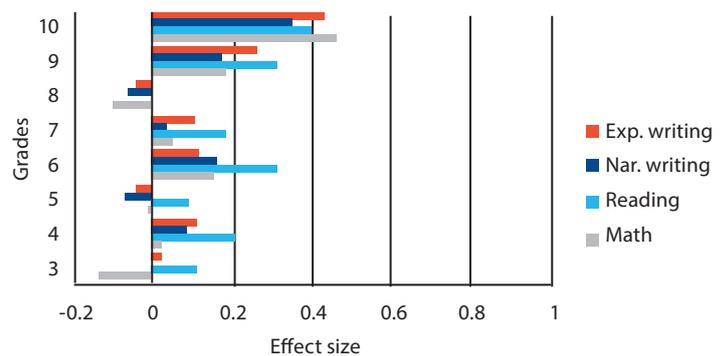


Figure 1. Effect size of difference in performance between IB and non-IB students by grade (Tan and Bibby 2012).

Researchers from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) conducted a curricular comparison of the MYP, the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) in the **United Kingdom**. Findings suggested that the content of the curricula was largely similar, although the MYP offered greater curricular flexibility and was more interdisciplinary in nature. Additionally, the study found that, in comparison with non-MYP students, MYP students generally rated higher in certain **non-academic attributes** such as international and civic-mindedness as well as global awareness (Sizmur and Cunningham 2013).

To read summaries or the complete reports of research projects conducted or commissioned by the IB Global Research department, please visit <http://www.ibo.org/research>, or contact research@ibo.org.

Key findings from research on the impact of the IB Middle Years Programme

In a study exploring the influence of the MYP on **student performance** and **teacher pedagogy** in the **United States**, teachers reported that on the whole they believed the MYP benefitted students by encouraging higher order thinking and educating the whole child. Teachers also suggested that the MYP improved teacher pedagogy by encouraging collaboration and teaching beyond tested material (Kobylnski-Fehrman 2013).

A quasi-experimental study was conducted in the **United States** to investigate the **science performance** of PYP and MYP students (n = 50) in comparison with their non-IB peers (n = 50). This study, based on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), found statistical differences in science performance between IB and non-IB students. IB students outperformed the comparison group on the CSAP across all three grade levels (Healer 2013).

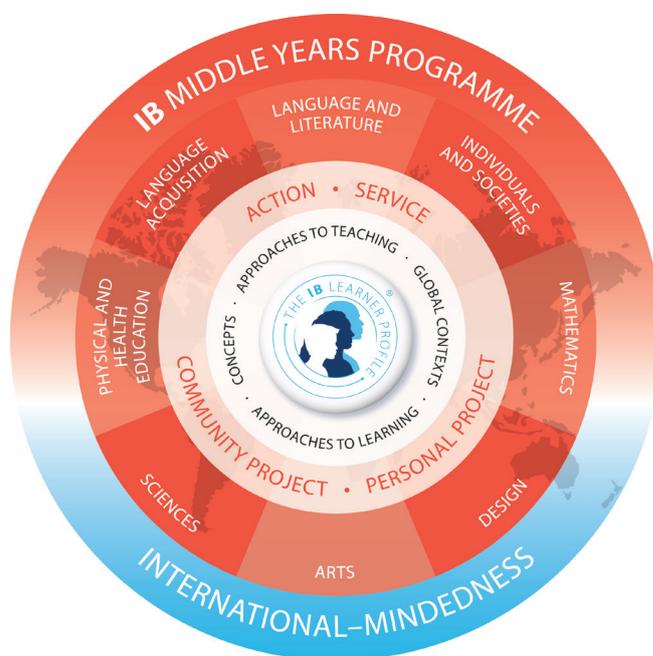
	5th Grade 2006		8th Grade 2009		10th Grade 2011	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
IB scores	600.28	39.147	551.20	44.202	543.28	41.007
Non-IB scores	581.32	45.256	528.46	47.315	523.08	58.707

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of IB and non-IB CSAP science scores during the years 2006, 2009 and 2011 (Healer 2013).

Systematic observation was employed in 85 classrooms within 8 Texas PYP and MYP schools in the **United States** to investigate **instructional practice** and **student behaviors**. Observations revealed generally active and engaging instruction and positive student learning behaviors. Further, IB students were “on-task” 87% of the time, in comparison with a similar study of

general education students who spent 73% of the time “on-task” (Alford, Rollins, Stillisano and Waxman 2013).

Exploring the influence of accelerated academic programmes on student **stress** and **psychological well-being**, this external study gathered and analyzed data from 134 IB Grade 9 students in the **United States**. Although IB students self-reported higher levels of stress than their peers in general education, the emotional well-being of IB students was statistically similar to, and in some cases better than, the psychological functioning of their non-IB counterparts (Suldo and Shaunessy-Dedrick 2013).



This sheet aims to provide a brief sample of findings from recent research. It does not attempt to represent all research on the MYP available in the field. As with all research, findings must be placed within the particular contexts in which the studies took place.

Alford, B., Rollins, K., Stillisano, J., & Waxman, H. (2013). “Observing classroom instruction in schools implementing the International Baccalaureate programme”. *Current Issues in Education*, 16(2)

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Wade, J and Wolanin, N. 2013. *Continuation Study of Student Performance and Engagement in the Middle Years Programme*. Bethesda, MD, USA. International Baccalaureate Organization.

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