



# The Middle Years Programme

Providing students with tools that  
pave the way to higher learning



## Our mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



*“The MYP definitely helped me prepare for the IB Diploma Programme like no other curriculum could. It made standard level courses much easier and offers a broad spectrum curriculum.”*

**Monischa Pongrujikhorn**, studying law at Bristol University

## The Middle Years Programme: Fostering skills and attitudes for academic success in the 21st century

The MYP is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning which encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasises intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and to the real world.

It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement, qualities that are essential for life in the 21st century.

Today, more than 1,000 schools in 79 countries offer the Middle Years Programme. MYP students are exceptional in that they develop a set of skills and attributes setting them apart from their peers, equipping them for a fulfilling and stimulating route through secondary education on their way to university. As the data in Figure 2 shows, students who have completed the MYP can have significantly higher pass rates in the Diploma Programme and show higher scores on assessments of their research skills, such as the extended essay.

The MYP provides students with:

- **international mindedness** starting with a foundation in their own language and culture
- a **positive attitude to learning**, demonstrating high levels of engagement, creativity, resourcefulness and active participation in their communities
- an **ability to make connections** between subjects and real world issues
- highly developed **communication skills** to encourage inquiry, understanding, language acquisition, and to allow student reflection and expression
- a **heightened awareness of their development** – physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

The IB authorizes schools to offer the Middle Years Programme. In order to become authorized, schools must demonstrate alignment of their curriculum to the IB standards. The curricular framework of the MYP allows schools to meet specific state, provincial or national requirements, while maintaining the IB mission and philosophy. Schools are evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they are meeting these and other requirements for the programme.

*“The MYP articulates a much needed bridge between what is typically learned in schools and the most pressing questions that concern our societies. Attentive to adolescents’ development, the programme emphasizes rigorous learning in the disciplines and interdisciplinary synergy, inviting students to tackle relevant issues – from climate change to globalization – thus preparing them for the work of the next generation.”*

**Veronica Boix-Mansilla** Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA.

The MYP requires schools to teach a broad and balanced choice of subjects in every year of the programme, organized into eight subject groups:

- language A (the student's best language)
- language B (a second modern language)
- humanities
- sciences
- mathematics
- arts
- physical education
- technology



Fig. 1

## The MYP programme model represents a framework that is broad yet balanced.

The Middle Years Programme is designed to:

- provide learning in **a broad base of disciplines** to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for the future
- provide objectives in each subject group to include **skills, attitudes and knowledge** in addition to the understanding of concepts; the aim is to ensure that students are not only knowledgeable about a subject area but also develop a genuine understanding of ideas and an ability to apply these in new contexts, in preparation for further learning
- promote the principle of **concurrency of learning**, whereby students deal with a balanced curriculum each year in which different subjects are studied simultaneously. As students mature and develop higher-order thinking skills, they explore the various disciplines in ever greater depth, identifying how each are linked and establishing their relevance to local and global issues
- encourage the use of a **variety of teaching and learning methodologies** fostering a climate in which students discover how they learn best in different situations
- emphasize the **development of the whole person**—affective, cognitive, creative and physical—and its effective implementation depends on the school's concern for the whole educational experience, including students learning opportunities beyond the classroom environment.

*“Candidates who wish to be stretched should, in my view, take the MYP. The rigour and work ethic it encourages will assist them strongly if they wish to progress to a degree that will require them to really engage with their subject discipline.”*

Mike Nicholson, Director of Admissions at Oxford University

**The MYP:** A unique approach to development of skills and attitudes relevant in today’s global society

The MYP has five areas of interaction which provide it with its unique core. Teaching subject areas through these contexts allows teaching and learning to focus on attitudes, values and skills.

**Approaches to learning** (ATL) represents learning skills that the student will develop and apply during the programme and beyond.

**Community and service** considers how students can learn about their place within communities and be motivated to act in a new context.

**Health and social education** is designed to help students identify and develop skills that will enable them to function as effective members of societies. They also learn about how they are changing and how to make informed decisions that may relate to their welfare.

**Environments** explores how humans interact with the world at large and the parts we play in our virtual, natural and built environments.

**Human ingenuity** deals with the way in which human minds have influenced the world and considers the consequences of human thought and action. Through this area of interaction students can develop ways of thinking that are a good preparation for the theory of knowledge course in the Diploma Programme.

**The personal project** is an important part of the MYP. Students learn to manage and direct their own inquiry and further develop the skills they have learned through the MYP. Under a teacher’s supervision, each student leads the process of developing the personal project. Assessment stands as a summative review of students’ ability to conduct independent work using the areas of interaction as contexts for their learning.

*“In survey responses, MYP students named the rigor and challenge of MYP courses as one of the top three benefits of being an MYP student. It may be that the opportunity to tackle a high level of academic work in MYP has an impact on students’ course selections in high school.”*

(Wade and Wolanin, 2013)



## How are students assessed?

An essential principle of IB assessment is that standards are the same worldwide.

The MYP assessment model is criterion-related in order to maintain the rigour for which the IB is renowned. Teachers are responsible for structuring varied and valid assessment tasks, based on the assessment criteria defined by the IB, that will allow students to demonstrate achievement according to the required objectives within each subject group.

The IB, in line with modern research such as that of Gardner (1999), Perkins (1995), Erickson (2002), Wiggins and McTighe (2005), and Adey and Shayer (2002), recognizes that a good curriculum will develop a range of student skills. In the MYP the IB encourages teachers to assess this acquired skill set, including exam performance.

Typically, these assessment tasks include open-ended, problem-solving activities and investigations, organized debates, tests and examinations, hands-on experimentation, analysis and reflection. In all cases, the assessment is carried out internally by teachers, according to the criteria defined by the IB.

***“The IB MYP restores trust to teachers and schools, giving them the freedom to develop their own courses and to decide what is best for their pupils – albeit according to the exacting standards of the IB.”***

**Anthony Seldon** Master of Wellington College

## Leading Innovation

Innovative new developments for the MYP are to launch in 2014 to build on existing strengths and better prepare students for success in the IB Diploma Programme or IB Career-related Certificate and beyond. The enhanced Middle Years Programme will feature an updated framework that deepens learning and understanding and increases engagement through innovative, concept-based assessment options. The enhanced MYP is scheduled for first teaching in IB World Schools in September 2014.

### Assessment in the MYP: Rigorous criteria, applied consistently worldwide

Until 2015, when schools offering the enhanced Middle Years Programme will be able to implement innovative, concept-based eAssessment options, all schools are responsible for developing appropriate assessments for their students according to published MYP objectives and criteria.

While external examinations are currently not provided, IB World Schools offering the MYP must participate in either moderation or monitoring of assessment. The IB reviews and provides feedback on each school's internally-developed assessments, highlighting those areas where the school is performing well along with areas for improvement.

External moderation validates final grades that can contribute 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).

For more information on MYP subject criteria or assessment please email [myp.curriculum@ibo.org](mailto:myp.curriculum@ibo.org).

***"The IB programmes (MYP and DP) that I followed have without doubt given me a massive advantage for my university course... because I have a wider base of knowledge than most people on my course."***

**Oliver Thompson** MYP and DP graduate, North London International School

*“Our students are now so much more aware of their learning journey. They talk freely about taking risks and recovering from mistakes. They are confident, active and willing participants in the co-curriculum in school and across the wider community.”*

**WJ Oakes**, Headmaster at Dartford Grammar School

## **Do schools combine national curriculum and MYP requirements?**

MYP teachers follow a standard global approach to planning units of work that arise from vertical and horizontal curriculum overviews. The use of this planning process enables cohesion between MYP and national curriculum requirements. It ensures that all of the required components for state and MYP provision are included, with one system of assessment informing the other. The skills, knowledge and understanding that a student picks up from a national assessment can be

harnessed and used in an MYP assessment in the same unit. In this way, one method of assessment informs another; schools adhere to the national curriculum but use the opportunities afforded within the MYP to both deepen knowledge and understanding, and develop skills.





## MYP: A strong predictor of performance in the DP

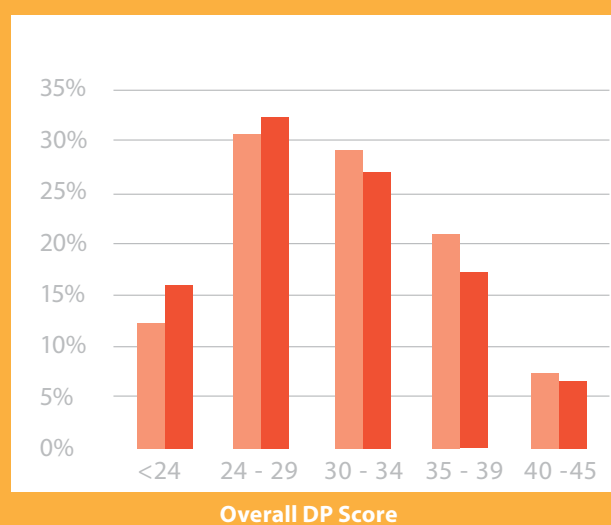
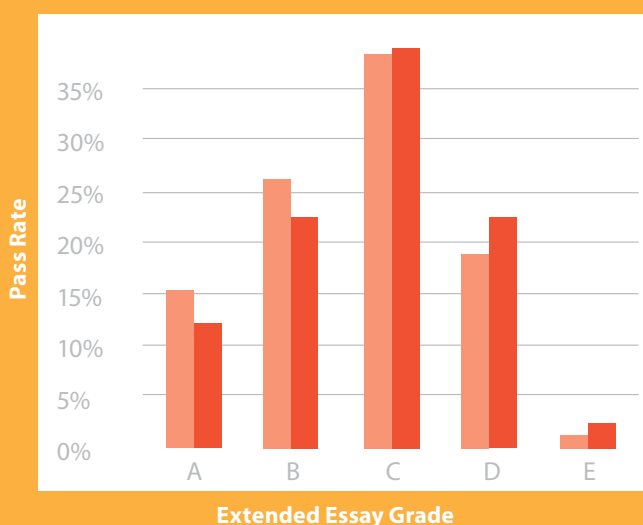
Figure 2: Pass rates of MYP students in the Diploma Programme  
(Information source: IB internal data systems [IBIS])

The data presented here compares pass rates of former MYP students from moderating schools, with the whole cohort of DP students.

**Fig. 2**

|                                    | 2009           |       | 2010           |       | 2011           |       | 2012           |       |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| <b>Result DP</b>                   | All Candidates | MYP   | All Candidates | MYP   | All Candidates | MYP   | All Candidates | MYP   |
| <b>Pass rate</b>                   | 78.8%          | 87.7% | 78%            | 85.2% | 78%            | 84.9% | 78.4%          | 83.8% |
| <b>Students achieving 40+</b>      | 5.4%           | 6.9%  | 5.2%           | 6.7%  | 5.8%           | 7.6%  | 6.6%           | 7.4%  |
| <b>Pass rate bilingual Diploma</b> | 24.5%          | 36.6% | 24.1%          | 39.9% | 24%            | 41.5% | 24.5%          | 40%   |

The value of the MYP in terms of approaches to learning (ATL), skill development, and experience in the personal project, may be a contributory factor in success of Diploma Programme students in the extended essay, as can be seen from the grade comparisons below from 2012:



Ex MYP Students All Candidates

## A comparison of American College Testing (ACT) mathematics and reading scores of MYP students and the scores of matched non-MYP peers at a high school in the western US revealed statistically significant higher scores for the MYP students after controlling for prior academic achievement.

Houston Magee

### MYP students outperform their peers on international assessments

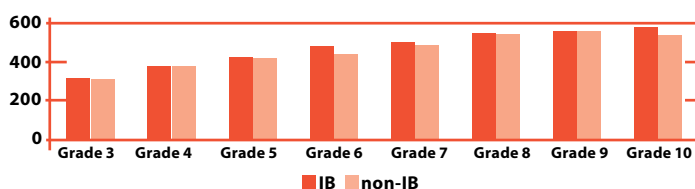
A study conducted by Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) found that MYP students outperformed their peers in nearly every year level on the International Student Assessment (ISA) administered to 48,000 students worldwide. The study looked at the different domains of assessment for students in years 3-10 across four domains: *math literacy, reading, narrative writing, and expository writing.*

The results indicate that MYP students outperformed their non MYP peers on the ISA across all four domains, with the strongest effects noted in Year 11 maths and expository writing. MYP students' ISA scores in Years 10 and 11 also compare favourably to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) benchmarks in maths and reading with MYP students performing above the average of every country except for four,

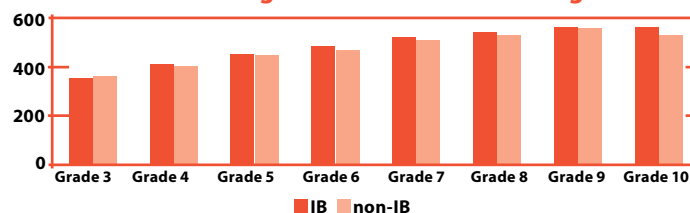
for reading and above the average for all countries in maths. The study also looked at the correlation of MYP moderation scores with the ISA scores and found moderate to strong correlations across the domains.

For more information on this and other MYP studies, visit [www.ibo.org/research](http://www.ibo.org/research).

Math Literacy



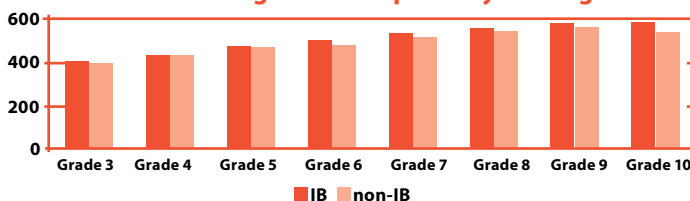
Writing Task A: Narrative Writing



Reading



Writing Task B: Expository Writing



### Middle Years Programme students stand out from the crowd

In a 2013 study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to investigate the teaching and learning benefits of the MYP, the researchers found that MYP students exhibit positive attitudes and behaviours, particularly in civic and cultural contexts uncommon in their non-IB peers. On all factors related to civic-mindedness, MYP students scored significantly higher than their non-IB peers—even in their future expectations of civic participation.

Among the 309 MYP students who were surveyed, there were high levels of awareness and belief in the importance of issues such as diversity, social justice, human rights, sustainable development, conflict resolution and interdependence, as well as an understanding of how cultural values and assumptions shape human behaviour.

# IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.



**As IB learners we strive to be:**

## **INQUIRERS**

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

## **KNOWLEDGEABLE**

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

## **THINKERS**

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

## **COMMUNICATORS**

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

## **PRINCIPLED**

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

## **OPEN-MINDED**

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

## **CARING**

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

## **RISK-TAKERS**

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

## **BALANCED**

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.


## **REFLECTIVE**

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

**The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.**

*“For me, as a classroom teacher, involvement in the MYP has resulted in students acquiring a refreshing open-mindedness about their work, their relationships with others and a mature engagement with a range of contemporary themes and issues.”*

**Sian Carr** Principal, The Skinners' Kent Academy



For more information regarding  
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