

The IB **Middle Years Programme**



21st century education

Life in the 21st century places many changing demands on students making the transition through adolescence. They are at a crucial period of personal, social, physical and intellectual development, of uncertainty and of questioning. The International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme is designed to help them find a sense of belonging in the ever-changing and increasingly interrelated world around them and to foster a positive attitude to learning.

What is the IB Middle Years Programme?

The IB Middle Years Programme, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.

The programme:

- encourages **international-mindedness** in IB students, starting with a foundation in their own language and culture
- encourages a **positive attitude to learning** by challenging students to solve problems, show creativity and resourcefulness and participate actively in their communities

- reflects **real life** by providing a framework that allows students to see the connections among the subjects themselves, and between the subjects and real issues
- supports the development of **communication skills** to encourage inquiry, understanding, language acquisition, and to allow student reflection and expression
- emphasizes, through the **learner profile**, the development of the whole student—physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

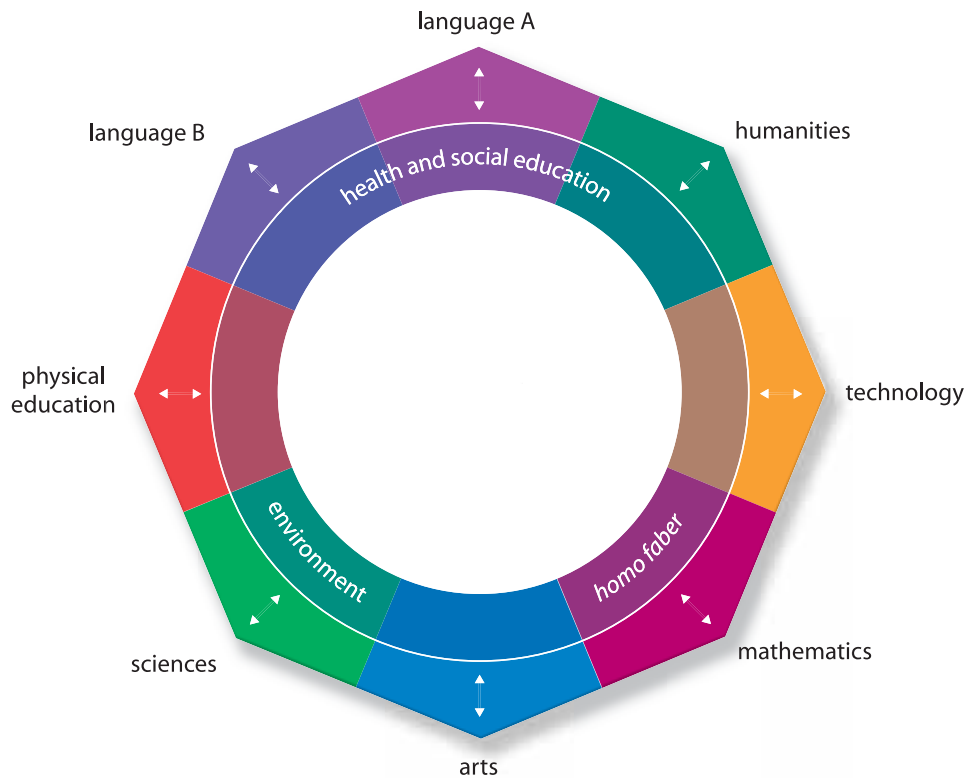
The IB Middle Years Programme may be taught as a stand-alone programme but it is flexible enough to accommodate the demands of most national or local curriculums.

The curriculum

The programme consists of eight subject groups integrated through five areas of interaction that provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects.

Students are required to study their mother tongue, a second language, humanities, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical education and technology. In the final year of the programme, students also engage in a personal project, which allows them to demonstrate the understandings and skills they have developed throughout the programme.

Students and parents will develop an understanding of the IB learner profile. The ten aspirational qualities of the learner profile inspire and motivate the work of teachers, students and schools, providing a statement of the aims and values of the IB and a definition of what we mean by “international-mindedness”. IB learners strive to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced and reflective.



Teachers organize the curriculum through the five **areas of interaction**:

Approaches to learning is concerned with developing the intellectual discipline, attitudes, strategies and skills that will result in critical, coherent and independent thought and the capacity for problem solving and decision-making.

Community and service starts in the classroom and extends beyond it, requiring students to participate in the communities in which they live. The emphasis is on developing community awareness and concern, a sense of responsibility, and the skills and attitudes needed to make an effective contribution to society.

Homo faber allows students to focus on the evolution, processes and products of human creativity. It considers their impact on society and on the mind. Students learn to appreciate the human capacity to influence, transform, enjoy and improve the quality of life. This area of interaction encourages students to explore the relationships between science, aesthetics, technology and ethics.

Environment aims to make students aware of their interdependence with the environment so that they become aware of their responsibility, and may take positive, responsible action for maintaining an environment fit for the future.

Health and social education prepares students for a physically and mentally healthy life, aware of potential hazards and able to make informed choices. It develops in students a sense of responsibility for their own well-being and for the physical and social environment.

For example, a group of students in year 1 of the programme could learn about pure substances and mixtures in sciences (chemistry). As part of their laboratory activities, students apply simple techniques to separate different types of mixtures, including techniques for separating impurities from water.

The skills to be developed would include:

- using simple equipment
- making straightforward observations and measurements
- drawing scientific diagrams.

The teacher could then lead the students to explore issues linked to **environment** and **homo faber** by posing questions such as:

- How pure is pure?
- Can the energy costs involved in the production of pure substances be justified?
- Why is only a fraction of the world's water directly drinkable?
- How can we produce enough drinkable water to meet our needs?

The teacher could use these questions as a focus for discussion, for written responses or to lead into a further topic. They provide an authentic means of looking critically at an increasingly relevant resource problem with ethical dimensions.

Assessment

Assessment is criterion referenced, so students around the world are measured against pre-specified criteria for each subject group. Teachers may modify these criteria to be age-appropriate in the earlier years of the programme.

Teachers set assessment tasks that are assessed internally in the school. External checks (either **moderation** or

monitoring of assessment by IB examiners) are carried out on this internal assessment to ensure worldwide consistency of standards. For schools that require official IB certification for their students, moderation is carried out every year.

Quality assurance and professional development

Any school wishing to offer the Middle Years Programme and attain IB World School status must first go through the authorization process. The requirements for authorization are the same for all schools, even though the process is administered slightly differently in each IB region. The process is designed to ensure schools are well prepared to implement the programme successfully.

This is a challenging programme that demands the best from both motivated students and teachers. Schools can access an extensive package of IB professional development for teachers and administrators and commit to ongoing professional development. Teams from the

organization visit IB World Schools from time to time in order to support an ongoing process of review and development, using standards and practices that apply to all IB World Schools.

IB teachers are challenged to constantly reflect upon and improve their practice. All teachers in IB World Schools have access to the online curriculum centre, which provides programme documentation, examples of student work, and also acts as the hub of an international online community. Teachers can talk to other teachers in IB World Schools around the world, give and receive advice, and post their own example resources for other teachers to share.

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