

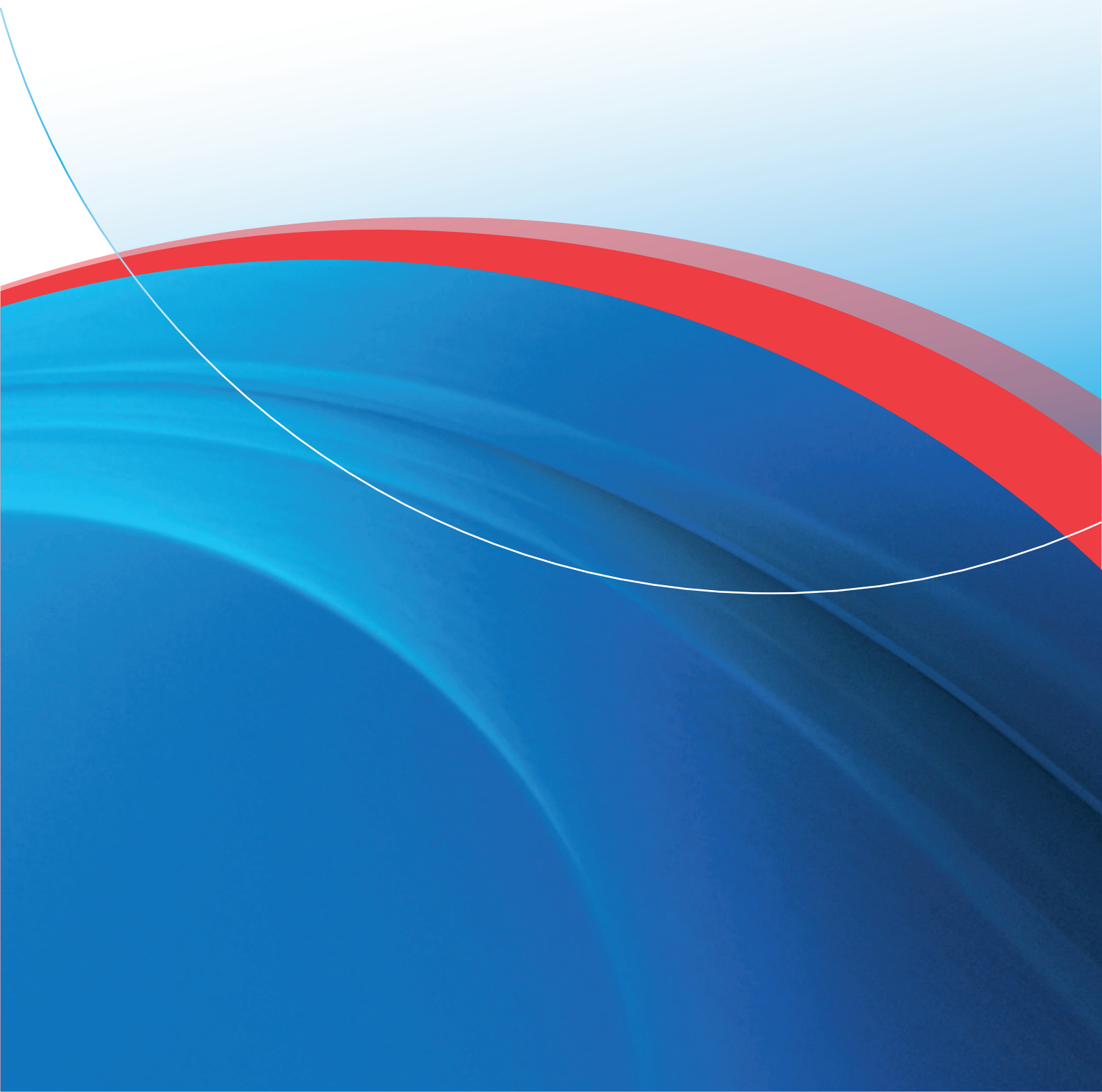


International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

Middle Years Programme

# Humanities guide

For use from September 2005 or January 2006







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For use from September 2005 or January 2006



## **Middle Years Programme Humanities guide**

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# IB 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.

## 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.

IB learners strive to be:

<b>Inquirers</b>	They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	They explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.
<b>Thinkers</b>	They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognize and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b>	They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.
<b>Principled</b>	They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.
<b>Open-minded</b>	They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b>	They show empathy, compassion and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.
<b>Risk-takers</b>	They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
<b>Balanced</b>	They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.
<b>Reflective</b>	They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and personal development.



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## How to use this guide

The *Humanities guide* provides the framework for teaching and learning in humanities in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and must be read and used in conjunction with the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008).

This guide was originally published in January 2005 for use from September 2005 (northern hemisphere) and January 2006 (southern hemisphere). However, the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008) now includes all general information about the programme and, as a result, the format of subject-group guides has been changed so that they include only subject-specific information.

This revised edition of the *Humanities guide* includes all subject-specific information as published in the earlier version. Importantly, requirements for the subject, aims, objectives and final assessment details have not changed. However, general information about the MYP has been taken out and some additional subject-specific information included (for example, sample questions related to each of the areas of interaction).

# Introduction to MYP humanities

MYP humanities aims to encourage students to respect and understand the world around them, and to provide a skills base to facilitate further study. This is achieved through the study of individuals, societies and environments in a wide context: historical, contemporary, geographical, political, social, economic, religious, technological and cultural. Students gain and develop knowledge and conceptual understanding as well as the skills of research, analysis, interpretation and communication, contributing to the development of the student as a whole.

This guide will give both teachers and students clear aims and objectives for MYP humanities. It includes conceptual and skill requirements of the course, in addition to details of final assessment requirements.

The learning and development associated with humanities should contribute to students developing the qualities of the International Baccalaureate (IB) learner profile and engaging with the fundamental concepts of the MYP—holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication.

IB-produced teacher support material complements this guide and includes assessed pieces of student work.

## The IB humanities continuum

MYP humanities builds on learning that students experience during their time in the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP). The PYP develops knowledge, conceptual understanding and skills through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, which include social studies. The knowledge component of PYP social studies is arranged into five strands: human systems and economic activities, social organization and culture, continuity and change through time, human and natural environments, and resources and the environment.

MYP humanities aims to build on PYP social studies and to challenge students to look beyond their understanding of their immediate time, place and culture. It enables students to acquire a knowledge and understanding of such significant concepts as time, place and space, change, systems, and global awareness that extend into the subjects in the Diploma Programme (DP) group 3 individuals and societies.

The aims of the DP group 3 include fostering in students a critical understanding of human experience and behaviour; the physical, economic and social environments; and the history and development of social and cultural institutions. The technical, analytical, decision-making and investigative skills required in MYP humanities also serve as a foundation to the skills and methodologies required in the various subjects in the DP group 3 individuals and societies.

# Aims and objectives

## Aims

The aims of any MYP subject state in a general way what the teacher may expect to teach or do, and what the student may expect to experience or learn. In addition, they suggest how the student may be changed by the learning experience.

The aims of the teaching and study of MYP humanities are to encourage and enable students to develop:

- an inquiring mind
- the skills necessary for the effective study of humanities
- a sense of time and place
- a respect and understanding of others' perspectives, values and attitudes
- awareness and understanding of people, cultures and events in a variety of places at different times
- an understanding of the interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies, and their environments
- an understanding of the causes and consequences of change through physical and human actions and processes
- an understanding of contemporary humanities issues
- a sense of intercultural awareness and a desire to be proactive as a responsible global citizen
- an awareness of the connections with other subjects
- a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of humanities.

## Objectives

The objectives of any MYP subject state the specific targets that are set for learning in the subject. They define what the student will be able to accomplish as a result of studying the subject.

These objectives relate directly to the assessment criteria found in the "Humanities assessment criteria" section.

### **A Knowledge**

Knowledge is fundamental to studying humanities, and forms the base from which to explore concepts and develop skills.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- know and use humanities terminology in context
- demonstrate subject content knowledge and understanding through the use of descriptions and explanations, supported by relevant facts and examples, and may show other ways of knowing.

## B Concepts

Concepts are powerful ideas that have relevance within and across the disciplines. Students should be able to develop an understanding of the following key humanities concepts over the course at increasing levels of sophistication.

### Time

Students should understand the concept of “time” not simply as the measurement of years or time periods, but as a continuum of significant events of the past. Students can achieve this through the study of people, issues, events, systems, cultures, societies and environments through time.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- establish a personal sense of identity in a context of time and place
- understand different perceptions of time
- show an understanding of people in past societies
- demonstrate an awareness of chronology that links people, places and events through time
- recognize and explain the similarities and differences that exist between people, places and events through time.

### Place and space

The concept of “place and space” refers to a student’s awareness of how place/space is categorized, and the significance of place/space in humanities disciplines.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- recognize, describe and explain patterns and relationships in space, including natural and human environments
- recognize and explain similarities and differences between places
- understand constraints and opportunities afforded by location
- understand issues related to place/space on a local, national and global scale.

### Change

Change necessitates an examination of the forces that shape the world. It may be viewed as positive or negative based on people’s perceptions. The concept of “change” addresses both the processes and results of change—natural and artificial, intentional and unintentional.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- understand and explain short-term and long-term causes of change
- establish and explain links between causes, processes and consequences
- recognize and explain continuity and change
- recognize that change is inevitable and that the rate of change is relevant to the context
- understand that as people interact with their environment, both change
- understand and explain how environmental, political, economic and social interactions can change levels of sustainability.

### Systems

The concept of “systems” refers to the awareness that everything is connected to a system or systems. Systems provide structure and order to both natural and artificial domains.

At the end of the course, students should be able to understand, identify and compare:

- how systems, models and institutions operate
- social structures and controls
- the complex and dynamic nature of systems
- different types of equilibrium within systems
- systems in local, national and global societies
- rights and responsibilities within systems
- cooperation within and between systems.

### **Global awareness**

The concept of “global awareness” engages students in a broader global context and encourages understanding of, and respect for, other societies and cultures. It also emphasizes the need to understand one’s own culture in order to understand others’ cultures.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- explain different perceptions of places, societies and environments
- show an understanding of how culture and perception can affect a sense of intercultural awareness
- show an understanding of the interdependence of societies
- demonstrate international awareness and intercultural awareness and understanding
- explore issues facing the international community
- recognize issues of equity, justice and responsibility
- know when and how to take responsible action where relevant.

## **C Skills**

The development of skills in humanities is critical in enabling students to undertake research and demonstrate their understanding of knowledge and concepts. Students should be able to demonstrate the following skills during the humanities course to an increasing level of sophistication.

### **Technical skills**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- observe, select and record relevant information from a wide range of sources
- use a variety of media and technologies to research, select, interpret and communicate data
- use sources, such as maps, graphs, tables, atlases, photographs and statistics, in a critical manner
- represent information using maps, models and diagrams, including use of scale, graphs and tables.

### **Analytical skills**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- analyse and interpret information from a wide range of sources
- identify key questions, problems and issues
- critically evaluate the values and limitations of sources
- compare and contrast events, issues, ideas, models and arguments in a range of contexts.

### **Decision-making skills**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- develop appropriate strategies to address issues
- formulate clear, valid and sound arguments, make balanced judgments on events, and draw conclusions, including implications
- make well-substantiated decisions and relate them to real-world contexts.

### **Investigative skills**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- test hypotheses and/or ideas and modify them where necessary
- plan, carry out and present individual and group investigations
- engage in fieldwork in order to complement an investigation.

## **D Organization and presentation**

Students should be comfortable using a variety of formats to organize and present their work (including oral presentations, essays, reports, expositions) and using a variety of media and technologies. They should understand that every presentation is unique and hence shows their new perspective.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- communicate information that is relevant to the topic
- organize information in a logically sequenced manner, appropriate to the format used
- present and express information and ideas in a clear and concise manner, using appropriate language, style and visual representation
- use referencing and a bibliography to clearly document sources of information, using appropriate conventions.

# Requirements

All MYP humanities courses must ensure that:

- students engage in structured learning in accordance with the aims and objectives found in this guide
- students' work is assessed using the published MYP humanities assessment criteria for final assessment in the final year of the programme
- criterion-related assessment is used to assess student work in years 1–4 using interim objectives and criteria that have been adapted from the final objectives and criteria in this guide (for more information, see the "Assessment" section in the document *MYP: From principles into practice*, August 2008)
- the areas of interaction are a central element of humanities curriculum planning, teaching and learning
- a minimum teaching time of 50 hours per year applies to the humanities subject group.

## Teaching hours

It is essential that teachers be allowed the number of teaching hours necessary to meet the requirements of the MYP humanities course. Although the prescribed minimum teaching time in any given year for each subject group is 50 teaching hours, the IB recognizes that, in practice, more than 50 teaching hours per year will be necessary, not only to meet the programme requirements over the five years, but also to allow for the sustained, concurrent teaching of subjects that enables interdisciplinary study.

## Language of instruction

Humanities is a language-rich subject group. In schools where the language of instruction of humanities is not the mother tongue of some of the students taking the course, measures must be implemented to ensure that these students are not disadvantaged and have the full opportunity to meet the final objectives. These measures may include:

- teacher training
- differentiation of assessment tasks
- modification of language in materials
- parallel resources in students' mother tongues.

For further information, please refer to the document *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes*.

# Developing the curriculum

## Introduction

The humanities course must be structured within the school so that the final aims and objectives set by the IB for this subject group can be met effectively.

Humanities in the MYP has the potential to consist of a broad range of traditionally separate subjects such as geography, history, economics, politics, civics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Schools may choose to teach these subjects over the course of the programme as distinct courses or as one integrated course, and this may vary for different year groups. As with all subject groups in the MYP, humanities must be part of each student's experience every year.

Within the aims and objectives of the humanities course, there are concepts that students must address and skills that must be developed over the five years of the MYP. These include the concepts of time, place and space, change, systems, and global awareness, as well as technical, analytical, decision-making and investigative skills.

To support the aims of the MYP, it is preferable that concepts and skills are taught through a humanities course that involves more than **one** humanities discipline. This might be through a modular approach, a multi-disciplinary thematic approach or an interdisciplinary approach. There is ample flexibility in the MYP humanities subject group to teach all the required concepts and skills through a range of disciplinary focuses. For example, a teacher may choose to teach mapping skills and the concept of "change" through a study of the expansion of the Roman Empire, incorporating aspects of geography, history and sociology in the broader unit.

The IB recognizes that some schools are also bound to national or other curriculum requirements, and may have to teach the humanities course in some year levels through discrete humanities disciplines. This is acceptable within the MYP humanities framework; however, schools are still required to ensure that students are given the opportunity to achieve all of the objectives listed in this guide.

The assessment criteria for humanities cover all humanities disciplines as one. This reflects the primary aim of the humanities course in developing understanding and application of concepts and skills, rather than in prescribing and assessing content.

When planning a unit of work in MYP humanities, the following points must be considered.

- At least one of the areas of interaction provides a context for learning.
- Students are given clear information about how their work will be assessed, including which objectives are being developed.
- Learning outcomes match the MYP objectives (see objectives in "Aims and objectives").
- Appropriate materials are selected from a wide range of sources.
- Differentiated teaching and learning methods are planned and used.
- Interdisciplinary teaching is explored and used where appropriate.

## Resources

Information and communication technologies (ICT) should be used whenever possible as an important means of expanding students' knowledge of the world in which they live, and as a new channel for developing skills. Teachers have the responsibility to teach students to use all electronic media critically so that students are aware of the limitations of the data.

The choice of resources within a school will also need to reflect the ability range within that school. The school library has an essential role to play in this process and should, for example, make available good choices of supplementary works and simplified books.

Resources used and tasks assigned should be carefully chosen and prepared so that objectives can be met and assessment criteria can be applied.

In addition, the online curriculum centre is a valuable resource for teachers in the MYP. It contains discussion forums and resource banks, as well as official IB publications that can be downloaded. Please see your MYP coordinator for a school code and password.

## Addressing the areas of interaction

The areas of interaction provide contexts through which teachers and students consider teaching and learning, approach the disciplines, and establish connections across disciplines. They are organizing elements that strengthen and extend student understanding and awareness through meaningful exploration of real-life issues. All teachers share the responsibility of using the areas of interaction as a focus for their units of work.

The process of inquiring into the subject content through the different perspectives or contexts of the areas of interaction enables students to develop a deeper understanding of the subject as well as the dimensions of the areas of interaction. Through this inquiry cycle of understanding and awareness, reflection and action, students engage in reflection and metacognition, which can lead them from academic knowledge to thoughtful action, helping to develop positive attitudes and a sense of personal and social responsibility.

The document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008), in the section "The areas of interaction", provides further information relating to the dimensions of each area of interaction, the inquiry cycle, planning units of work, and focusing relevant content through these areas of interaction.

There are five areas of interaction:

- approaches to learning (ATL)
- community and service
- health and social education
- environments
- human ingenuity (formerly *homo faber*).

The following sections on the areas of interaction provide sample questions that might be used as **MYP unit questions** or **inquiry cycle questions**, depending on the content being taught. These particular questions are "content free", and when devising their own questions, teachers can relate them to the specific content that is being explored in a unit of work.

It is important to note that the areas of interaction are ways of looking at content: some of the examples that follow could easily fit into more than one area of interaction perspective, and also have the potential to be explored through subjects other than humanities.

The contexts that frame the content curriculum in humanities must be natural and meaningful. Often when designing a unit of work, the context for the content will emerge naturally. To provide meaningful learning experiences, teachers should ensure that the MYP unit question gives students scope for inquiry into the issues and themes within the content. The area of interaction will then give direction to teacher-directed and student-initiated inquiry.

Please note that any reference to “I” in the areas of interaction questions could also be interpreted as “we” where this is more appropriate to the social ethos of the school or location.

## Approaches to learning

*How do I learn best?*

*How do I know?*

*How do I communicate my understanding?*

Approaches to learning (ATL) are central to all MYP subject groups and the personal project. Through ATL, schools provide students with the tools to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning. This involves planning, organizing and teaching the skills, attitudes and practices that students require to become successful learners.

The MYP has identified seven groups of skills that encompass ATL: organization, collaboration, communication, information literacy, reflection, thinking, and transfer. The school community will need to spend time defining the ATL attitudes, skills and practices that it considers important within these groups, both for an individual subject group and across subject groups.

Specific ATL skills that students can develop through humanities include:

- organizational skills—working to deadlines and timelines, managing projects
- collaborative skills—learning to work as a team, developing interpersonal skills
- communication skills—speaking, listening, reading, writing, questioning, presenting, working in a team, classifying, documenting, using maps, graphs, diagrams
- information literacy skills—knowing which sources to use and how to find them
- reflection skills—learning to reflect critically on their own work and that of their peers
- thinking skills—convergent and divergent thinking, drawing conclusions, organizing and articulating their own views, developing memory strategies, reading and listening for information, critical assessment of information
- understanding the transferability of the skills listed above across the subject disciplines.

## Sample questions

- What skills do I need to develop to study humanities subjects?
- What skills and knowledge can I take from other subjects and use in my humanities learning?
- How do I investigate a topic in humanities?
- How do I present my work in humanities?
- How do we acknowledge sources?
- How can I plan and organize my learning more effectively?
- How do I plan to meet deadlines?
- How do I work collaboratively in humanities?
- How can ICT help my humanities learning?

- How can I detect bias in a document/map?
- How can I distinguish between description and analysis?

## Community and service

*How do we live in relation to each other?*

*How can I contribute to the community?*

*How can I help others?*

The emphasis of community and service is on developing community awareness and a sense of belonging and responsibility towards the community so that students become engaged with, and feel empowered to act in response to, the needs of others.

Community and service starts in the classroom and extends beyond it, requiring students to discover the social reality of self, others and communities. This, in turn, may initiate involvement and service in the communities in which they live. Reflection on the needs of others and the development of students' ability to participate in and respond to these needs both contribute to the development of caring and responsible learners.

Students will explore the nature of past and present communities through humanities, as well as their place in their own communities. Incorporating community and service into the study of humanities encourages responsible citizenship as students deepen their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Activities that may be considered to promote community and service through humanities include:

- exploring concepts of identity, culture and community
- investigating social, environmental and economic problems and their effects on communities
- researching service and aid programmes in school, local, regional and global communities
- promoting awareness campaigns
- organizing individual and group responses to community needs
- reflecting on topics studied and services undertaken.

### Sample questions

- How do we define community?
  - How do humanities subjects approach the concept of community?
- What contribution do humanities make to understanding communities?
- What are the responsibilities of those who work in humanities?
- How is community identity explored in humanities?
- What can I learn about my community through humanities?
- How can I contribute to my community?
- How do humanities promote service in communities?
- How does the study of humanities help us understand the many different types of communities in today's world?
- How can one community support another?
- How do humanities explain contemporary geopolitical issues?

## Health and social education

*How do I think and act?*

*How am I changing?*

*How can I look after myself and others?*

This area of interaction is about how humanity is affected by a range of social issues (including health). It includes an appreciation of these effects in various cultural settings and at different times. It is concerned with physical, social and emotional health and intelligence—key aspects of development leading to a complete and balanced lifestyle.

Activities that may be considered to promote health and social education through humanities include:

- investigating the benefits and stresses caused by social and technological change
- researching health and social issues in different parts of the world and reflecting on how they compare
- studying how societies have reacted to and dealt with health and social issues in the past
- looking at possible and current political and economic ramifications of health and social issues
- working with other subject groups on diverse issues such as gender, race, sexuality, class and religion
- discussing moral issues regarding health and social education, and looking at ways in which different cultures deal with them
- organizing awareness campaigns within the school and local community based on students' research.

### Sample questions

- What do humanities tell us about society?
- How can humanities help to communicate the health of a society and/or nation?
- In what way(s) do humanities impact on society?
- How can I learn for life through humanities?
- How do humanities enable me to learn about myself and others?
- How can my learning in humanities help me to make healthy choices?
- How can humanities be used to influence people?
- How does learning in humanities facilitate our understanding of ourselves and others?
- What behaviours or attitudes will I seek to change in myself through what I have learned in humanities?
- How does the study of humanities help us to understand contemporary society?
- How do humanities help us to understand the relationships between societies?

## Environments

*What are our environments?*

*What resources do we have or need?*

*What are my responsibilities?*

This area of interaction considers environments to mean the totality of conditions surrounding us, natural, built and virtual. It focuses on the wider place of human beings in the world and how we create and affect our environments. It encourages students to question, to develop positive and responsible attitudes, and to gain the motivation, skills and commitment to contribute to their environments.

Activities that may be considered to promote environment through humanities include:

- investigating a variety of environments, natural and artificial, and their qualities
- examining the nature of interactions with our and others' environments
- analysing the concepts, principles and issues related to sustainable development
- studying environmental changes and issues, their causes, and their political, economic and cultural dimensions
- taking responsibility and organizing action to combat an environmental challenge or to help maintain an environmental balance
- reflecting on the effectiveness of students' own actions related to the environment.

### Sample questions

- What do humanities communicate about environments?
- How do humanities and environments interact?
- In what ways are environments created?
- In what ways can humanities influence natural, built and virtual environments?
- How can humanities affect our understanding of different environments?
- How can humanities help to improve environments?
- How can my humanities knowledge and skills help me to improve my environments?
- How do humanities help me to live in my environments?
- What power can humanities give us to communicate environmental issues to the world?
- How does an understanding of humanities help us to identify the different types of environments in the contemporary world?

## Human ingenuity

*Why and how do we create?*

*What are the consequences?*

Human ingenuity looks at human contributions in the world both in their particular context and as part of a continuing process. It stresses the way humans can initiate change, whether for good or bad, and examines the consequences (intended and unintended). This area also emphasizes both the importance of researching the developments made by people across place, time and cultures, and the importance of taking time to reflect on these developments.

Some examples of the study of human ingenuity through humanities include:

- researching the development over time of mathematical and scientific thought and ethics
- studying the human ability to adapt to and work with an environment, and the desire for students to explain their own environment
- investigating the evolution of social, economic and political systems and models
- examining the impact of technological innovations in geographical and cultural contexts
- exploring human bias in documenting humanities topics and issues
- reflecting on the consequences of human development and action.

### **Sample questions**

- How have we sought to explain our world over time?
- How is human ingenuity identified in humanities?
- How have humanities evolved?
- How are humanities evolving in my time and culture?
- What can I learn about human nature through humanities?
- How does an understanding of the past and the evolution of modern society help us to improve the contemporary world?
- How do humanities help us to develop strategies to solve conflicts?

## Assessment in the MYP

There is no external assessment provided by the IB for the MYP and therefore no formal externally set or marked examinations. All assessment in the MYP is carried out by teachers in participating schools and relies on their professional expertise in making qualitative judgments, as they do every day in the classroom. In line with the general IB assessment philosophy, a norm-referenced approach to assessment is not appropriate to the MYP. Instead, MYP schools must follow a criterion-related approach. This means that students' work must be assessed against defined assessment criteria and not against the work of other students.

The IB moderation and monitoring of assessment procedures ensure that the final judgments made by these teachers all conform to an agreed scale of measurement on common criteria.

It is expected that the procedures for assessment and the MYP assessment criteria are shared with both students and parents as an aid to the learning process.

## Using the assessment criteria

The assessment criteria published in this guide correspond to the objectives of this subject group. The achievement levels described have been written with year 5 final assessment in mind.

All schools **must** use the assessment criteria published in this guide for final assessment, although local or national requirements may involve other assessment models and criteria as well.

In years 1–4, schools may modify the descriptors of the achievement levels for each criterion according to the progression of learning organized by them and guided by the interim objectives. These modified criteria must be based on the MYP principles of assessment and must provide for a coherent approach to assessment practices over the entire programme. Schools may add other criteria, in addition to the MYP criteria, in response to national requirements and report on these internally to parents and students.

### Clarifying published criteria in year 5

During the final year of the programme, the final assessment criteria as published in each subject-group guide must be used when awarding levels. However, specific expectations of students for a given task must still be defined.

Teachers will need to clarify the expectations of any given task with direct reference to the published assessment criteria. For example, in humanities, teachers would need to clarify exactly what a “wide range of terminology” means in the context of a given assessment task. This might be in the form of:

- a task-specific clarification of the criteria, using the published criteria but with some wording changed to match the task
- an oral discussion of the expectations
- a task sheet that explains the expectations.

It is important that teachers specify the expected outcomes at the beginning of each individual task so that students are aware of what is required.

When clarifying expectations for students, teachers must ensure that they do not alter the standard expected in the published criteria, nor introduce new aspects. When awarding levels in year 5, teachers themselves should always use the published criteria.

Please also see the “Humanities: Moderation” section for guidance on what is required as part of background information.

## The “best-fit” approach

The descriptors for each criterion are hierarchical. When assessing a student’s work, teachers should read the descriptors (starting with level 0) until they reach a descriptor that describes an achievement level that the work being assessed has **not** attained. The work is therefore best described by the preceding descriptor.

Where it is not clearly evident which level descriptor should apply, teachers must use their judgment to select the descriptor that best matches the student’s work overall. The “best-fit” approach allows teachers to select the achievement level that best describes the piece of work being assessed.

If the work is a strong example of achievement in a band, the teacher should give it the higher achievement level in the band. If the work is a weak example of achievement in that band, the teacher should give it the lower achievement level in the band.

## Further guidance

Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial levels, fractions and decimals are not acceptable.

The levels attributed to the descriptors must not be considered as fixed percentages, nor should it be assumed that there are arithmetical relationships between descriptors. For example, a level 4 performance is not necessarily twice as good as a level 2 performance.

Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary for each criterion, or make comparisons with, or conversions to, the IB 1–7 grade scale, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.

The highest descriptors do not imply faultless performance, but should be achievable by students at the end of the programme. Teachers should therefore not hesitate to use the highest and lowest levels if they are appropriate descriptors for the work being assessed.

A student who attains a high achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily reach high achievement levels for the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan.

**Further information on MYP assessment can be found in the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008) in the section “Assessment”.**

## Humanities assessment criteria

Please note that the assessment criteria in this guide are for first use in **final assessment** in 2006 for southern hemisphere schools and for northern hemisphere schools.

The following assessment criteria have been established by the IB for humanities in the MYP. All final assessment in the final year of the MYP must be based on these assessment criteria even if schools are not registering students for IB-validated grades and certification.

Criterion A	Knowledge	Maximum 10
Criterion B	Concepts	Maximum 10
Criterion C	Skills	Maximum 10
Criterion D	Organization and presentation	Maximum 8

For each assessment criterion, a number of band descriptors are defined. These describe a range of achievement levels with the lowest represented as 0.

The descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although failure to achieve may be included in the description for the lower levels.

## Criterion A: Knowledge

### Maximum 10

Knowledge is fundamental to studying humanities, and forms the base from which to explore concepts and develop skills. Knowledge and understanding can be assessed through a wide variety of tasks that involve factual recall or description, and explanation. Tasks may include tests, examinations, written assignments, oral interviews and presentations, extended writing, projects and exhibits.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1–2	The use of terminology is <b>inconsistent or incorrect</b> . Facts and examples are either <b>absent</b> , or those used are <b>irrelevant or do not show understanding</b> . The student provides descriptions that are <b>inaccurate</b> or that have <b>insufficient detail</b> ; explanations are <b>absent or superficial</b> .
3–4	The use of terminology is <b>mostly accurate and usually appropriate</b> , though some errors remain. Facts and examples used are <b>mostly</b> relevant, and <b>usually show understanding</b> . The student provides <b>basic</b> descriptions that may need more detail; explanations are <b>usually adequate</b> but sometimes superficial.
5–6	Terminology is used <b>accurately and appropriately</b> . <b>Relevant</b> facts and examples are <b>used to show understanding</b> . The student provides <b>accurate</b> descriptions; explanations are <b>adequate</b> but not well developed.
7–8	A <b>range</b> of terminology is used accurately and appropriately. A <b>range</b> of relevant facts and examples are used to show understanding. The student provides <b>accurate and detailed</b> descriptions; explanations are <b>developed</b> .
9–10	The student shows an <b>excellent command of a wide range</b> of terminology, and uses it appropriately. An <b>extensive range</b> of relevant facts and examples are used to show understanding. Descriptions are <b>accurate and detailed</b> and explanations are <b>fully developed</b> .

## Criterion B: Concepts

### Maximum 10

Concepts are powerful ideas that have relevance within and across the MYP, and students must explore and re-explore these in order to develop understanding. Students develop their understanding of a concept to increasing levels of sophistication by applying acquired knowledge and skills.

Assessment tasks should allow students to demonstrate and apply the full extent of their understanding of the concepts specified within, or across, disciplines. It is not intended that any one piece of work will assess all of the humanities concepts (time, place and space, change, systems, and global awareness). Suggested tasks for assessment include extended writing, oral presentations, research projects, case studies, essays and tests, and must give students the opportunity to demonstrate the requirements of the highest level descriptor.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1–2	Application of concepts is <b>inappropriate</b> . The student <b>may demonstrate some</b> conceptual awareness and understanding by <b>recognizing basic</b> connections to the subject matter.
3–4	Application of concepts is <b>not always appropriate</b> . The student <b>demonstrates</b> conceptual awareness and understanding by <b>describing basic</b> connections to the subject matter.
5–6	Application of concepts is <b>appropriate but superficial</b> . The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by <b>describing</b> connections to the subject matter. The student <b>attempts</b> to apply concepts to other situations but is not always successful.
7–8	Application of concepts is <b>appropriate and shows some depth</b> . The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by <b>explaining</b> connections to the subject matter. The student <b>applies</b> concepts to other situations.
9–10	Application of concepts is <b>appropriate and sophisticated</b> . The student demonstrates conceptual awareness and understanding by <b>explaining in detail</b> connections to the subject matter. The student applies concepts <b>effectively</b> to other situations.

## Criterion C: Skills

### Maximum 10

The development of skills in humanities is critical in enabling the student to undertake research and demonstrate an understanding of knowledge and concepts. Developments in the student's technical, analytical, decision-making and investigative skills will be invaluable in transferring these skills to other subject groups in the MYP, and for lifelong learning.

Assessment tasks may give the student the opportunity to demonstrate one or more of the skills described in the objectives. Tasks for assessment may include fieldwork, data analysis, map analysis, evaluation of sources and/or evidence, a research paper or similar piece of extended writing, case studies, and oral presentations/interviews.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1–2	The student can select and use <b>some relevant</b> information. The student displays <b>minimal analytical skills</b> . The student's arguments, decisions or judgments are <b>not always relevant</b> , or may be <b>absent</b> . The student <b>attempts</b> to carry out investigations, demonstrating <b>few skills</b> .
3–4	The student selects and uses <b>mostly relevant</b> information. The student's work <b>lacks the required depth in analysis</b> . The student makes some <b>relevant</b> arguments, decisions or judgments though these are <b>unsupported</b> . The student demonstrates <b>basic</b> investigative skills.
5–6	The student selects and uses <b>relevant</b> information. Work shows <b>satisfactory evidence of analysis</b> . Arguments, decisions and judgments are <b>supported and balanced but superficial</b> . The student demonstrates <b>adequate</b> investigative skills.
7–8	The student selects and uses a <b>range of relevant</b> information. Work shows a <b>good level of critical analysis</b> . Arguments, decisions and judgments are <b>well supported and balanced</b> . The student demonstrates <b>effective</b> investigative skills.
9–10	The student selects and uses a <b>wide range of relevant</b> information. Work shows a <b>high level of critical analysis</b> . Arguments, decisions and judgments are <b>fully supported and well balanced</b> . The student demonstrates <b>sophisticated</b> investigative skills.

### Note

- Certain elements within each descriptor apply to specific skills. Teachers should use only the relevant elements of the descriptors when assessing different skills.

## Criterion D: Organization and presentation

### Maximum 8

Students need to develop the ability to organize and present information and ideas in order to be able to demonstrate their grasp of humanities knowledge, concepts and skills.

Criterion D is more suited to assessing extended pieces of work, for example, fieldwork, research projects or essays. Teachers should use only the relevant elements of the descriptors when assessing organization and presentation.

Schools must ensure that there is a set of recognized conventions for students to adhere to when documenting sources.

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors given below.
1–2	The student communicates information that <b>may not always be relevant</b> . The student attempts to structure the work, but it may be <b>unclear</b> and/or <b>inappropriate</b> to the format required. Presentation and expression are <b>unclear and imprecise</b> . There may be <b>some evidence</b> of documentation.
3–4	The student communicates information that is <b>mostly relevant</b> . The student attempts to structure <b>and</b> sequence the work but is <b>not always successful</b> . Presentation and expression are <b>occasionally unclear</b> . Sources of information are documented, though there <b>may be omissions or consistent errors</b> in adhering to conventions.
5–6	The student communicates information that is <b>relevant</b> . The student uses a structure <b>appropriate to the task and</b> sequences the content <b>logically</b> . Presentation and expression are <b>clear; attention is paid</b> to the audience and purpose in terms of appropriate language, style and visual representation. Sources of information are documented, with <b>occasional errors</b> in adhering to conventions.
7–8	The student communicates information that is <b>always relevant</b> . The student organizes information into a <b>well-developed and logical</b> sequence, appropriate to the format required. Presentation and expression are <b>clear, concise and effective</b> , and the language, style and visual representation used are <b>always appropriate</b> to the audience and purpose. All sources of information are documented <b>according to a recognized convention</b> .

### Note

- When submitting samples for moderation or monitoring of assessment, at least one task must allow students to show evidence of documenting sources according to a recognized convention.

# Determining the final grade

This section explains the process by which a student's overall achievement level (in terms of the assessment criteria) is converted to a single grade.

## 1. Collecting the information

Teachers will use assessment tasks to make judgments of their students' performance against the assessment criteria at intervals during the final year in the subject. Many of the assessment tasks will allow judgments of levels to be made with regard to more than one criterion.

For the purposes of final assessment, teachers **must** ensure that, for each student, they make **several judgments against each criterion**. This can be achieved by using some kinds of assessment task more than once, or by incorporating other types of assessment activity. MYP humanities has **four** criteria and so **at least eight** judgments (two per criterion) must be made for each student in the final year for the purposes of final assessment. However, as more-complex tasks will allow students to be assessed against several criteria, final assessment may rest on a limited number of tasks.

**Important:** If more than one teacher is involved in one subject for a single year group, the school must ensure **internal standardization** is used to provide a common system for the application of the assessment criteria to each student. In joint assessment, internal standardization is best achieved by:

- the use of common assessment tasks
- shared assessment between the teachers
- regular contact between the teachers.

In certain schools, students may be grouped according to ability within the same subject. In such cases, the teachers' final assessment of student performance across all groups must be based on a **consistent application of the assessment criteria to all students**. A different standard should not be applied to different groups.

## 2. Making a final judgment for each criterion

When the judgments on the various tasks have been made, teachers will be in a position to establish a final profile of achievement for each student by determining the **single most appropriate level for each criterion**. Where the judgments for a criterion differ for specific assessment tasks, the teacher must decide which level best represents the student's final standard of achievement.

**Important:** Teachers should not average the levels gained in year 5 for any given criterion. Students can develop academically right up to the end of the programme, and teachers must make a professional judgment (that is also supported by work completed) as to which level best corresponds to a student's general level of performance for each of the criteria towards the end of the programme.

### 3. Determining the final criterion levels total

The final levels for each criterion must then be added together to give a **final criterion levels total** for humanities for each student. In humanities, students have the opportunity to gain a maximum level of 10 for criteria A, B and C and 8 for criterion D. Therefore, the maximum final criterion levels total for humanities will be 38.

The final criterion levels total is the total that will be submitted to the IB via IBIS (IB information system) for those schools that have registered students to receive IB-validated grades.

### 4. Determining the final grade for humanities

Grade boundaries must be applied to the criterion levels totals to decide the final grade for each student.

Please see the *MYP coordinator's handbook* for the table of grade boundaries for humanities.

All MYP subjects receive final grades in the range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest) on the IB record of achievement, where students have been registered for IB-validated grades. The general MYP grade descriptors describe the achievement required for the award of the subject grade. After using the conversion table to determine a student's final humanities grade, teachers should check the general grade descriptor table to ensure that the description equally reflects the student's achievement.

Schools requiring **IB-validated grades** are required to use **only** the published MYP subject-specific criteria as a basis for the final results that they submit to the IB (both for moderation and as final assessment for certification).

Other schools (those not requiring IB-validated grades) will use the published criteria together with any additional criteria that they have developed independently, and report internally to students and parents. These schools may decide on their own grade boundaries (if using published and additional criteria), or use the boundaries published by the IB.

# Humanities: Moderation

The following details apply **only** to schools that request **IB-validated grades**.

Please ensure that you also refer to the section “Assessment in the MYP”.

## Purpose of moderation

The external moderation procedure in all MYP subjects and the personal project exists to ensure that students from different schools and different countries receive comparable grades for comparable work, and that the same standards apply from year to year.

All MYP assessment is carried out by the students’ own teachers (or by the supervisors in the case of the personal project). The IB moderation procedures ensure that the final tasks set by those teachers are appropriate and that the final judgments made by these teachers all conform to an agreed scale of measurement on common criteria.

To ensure this comparability and conformity, moderation samples submitted to the IB **must** be assessed using the assessment criteria and achievement levels listed in this guide.

Schools that wish to register their students to receive an IB-validated grade in the final year in a humanities subject that is not available on IBIS should contact the IB for advice about the process, by email to [myp@ibo.org](mailto:myp@ibo.org).

The submission date for moderation samples is before the end of a school’s academic year. Tasks submitted for moderation are not absolutely final tasks. Schools must continue to make further assessments of students’ work after moderation samples have been submitted, as these later tasks will also contribute towards the student’s final criterion levels total.

**For general information on moderation, please see *MYP: From principles into practice (August 2008)*, section “Moderation”.**

Teachers should note that there are three distinct phases to the moderation process.

- Phase 1: Submission of moderation samples
- Phase 2: Submission of criterion levels totals
- Phase 3: Award of MYP grades

## Phase 1: Submission of moderation samples

Schools that request IB-validated grades for their students must register these students following the guidelines in the *MYP coordinator's handbook*. This includes students who are only eligible for the record of achievement along with those who are also eligible for the MYP certificate.

Each moderation sample must include **eight folders of students' work** with each folder representing the work of a single student. The selection of student work should be representative of a range of abilities within the final year group, comprising two comparatively good folders, four folders showing average ability and two comparatively weak folders. Only the work of students registered for IB-validated grades should be submitted. If there are fewer than eight students registered, the sample will therefore have fewer than eight folders.

Since June 2006, schools that have had minimal adjustments to their results over a three-year period have been instructed to send only four folders of student work instead of eight in the relevant subjects. "Minimal adjustments" means differences between teachers' and moderators' totals of within plus or minus 3. This does not mean that there will be no changes to final grades, as some students' totals will still cross grade boundaries even though the differences, and therefore the moderation factors applied, are small. Schools are advised via the moderation reports whether they can send four folders the following year. The situation is monitored annually and applies only to the subjects that have been identified in the moderation reports. For further information, please contact your MYP coordinator.

### Prescribed minimum tasks

There must be **two** judgments **only** for each humanities criterion (A, B, C, D) entered on the moderation coversheet contained in each student folder.

- A piece of extended writing (essay, research paper, project, etc), approximately 700–1,200 words in length.
- An end-of-unit or end-of-term test, including paragraph writing.
- A piece of classwork or homework.

### Notes

- The work in the moderation sample should be taken from the same unit(s) of work for all students, as far as possible.
- Student work submitted for moderation should reflect the types of tasks used for final assessment and must be devised to give students the opportunity to reach the highest descriptors of each criterion.
- In order to help schools with the timing of the preparation of moderation samples, work from the end of year 4 of the programme can be included, provided the final year assessment criteria have been used. The sample must also include work produced in year 5.

- Where students are engaged in collaborative work, they must record their contribution and be assessed on an individual basis; their individual input to the task should be clearly identifiable; evidence of their individual development and the exploration of their ideas must be present in their developmental workbook.
- In law, students retain copyright in work they create themselves, and the school probably retains copyright in the tasks created by teachers. However, when the school submits this work to the IB, students and schools are deemed to be granting the IB a non-exclusive worldwide licence to use the work. Please see the *MYP coordinator's handbook*, sections F1 and F3 for further information on how this work may be used, and section F4 for the "Student claim of exclusive copyright" form if needed.

## Practical organization of the moderation sample

- The coversheet *Form F3.1* must be used to record the judgments for each criterion in each student's folder.
- Background information should be compiled in an additional folder to the students' folders. It should document details that will be useful to the moderators:
  - the context and expected outcomes of the unit of work (Background information in humanities should also indicate which concepts and skills were the specific focuses of the assessment tasks.)
  - time allocation
  - the degree of teacher support
  - the conditions under which the work was completed
  - information about the application of the assessment criteria.

Unit planners must be included in the background information in order to give moderators an idea of the context in which the task was set. The moderator will not make comments about the unit planner.

- Clear and legible copies of work should be submitted in the sample. Original work may be submitted but it is not returned to schools.
- Students are expected to reference sources they use for their work as a matter of course.
- If teachers and students use third-party material as stimuli and/or as part of their tasks, this material must be fully referenced. This will include the title of the source, the author, the publication date, the publisher and, for books only, the ISBN. Examples of third-party material include newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, videos, movie excerpts, extracts from books, pictures (please check the acknowledgments in the original publication for the original sources), diagrams, graphs, tables, statistics, materials from websites, and so on.

## Phase 2: Submission of criterion levels totals

Phase 1 of the moderation process takes place before the end of most schools' academic year. After submitting moderation samples, teachers should continue to assess students' work until **final assessment**.

After final assessment, teachers should use the procedure described in "Determining the final grade" to arrive at a **criterion levels total** for each student registered for certification.

The MYP coordinator will then enter each registered student's criterion levels total on **IBIS**, and submit this to the IB.

## Phase 3: Award of MYP grades

Following moderation in each subject, the IB may, where appropriate, apply a moderation factor to the criterion levels totals submitted by a school. Final grades will then be determined by applying grade boundaries to these moderated totals.

Schools will receive notification of the final grades for their students and the IB will also provide a general and a school-specific moderation report for each subject in which students were registered.

The *MYP coordinator's handbook* provides further guidelines on submitting criterion levels totals in each subject.

# Humanities: Monitoring of assessment

The following details apply to schools **not** requesting IB-validated grades.

Please ensure that you also refer to the sections “Assessment in the MYP” and “Humanities: Moderation”.

## Definition

Monitoring of assessment is a service available to IB World Schools offering the MYP, whereby schools can send samples of assessed student work to the IB to receive feedback from an experienced MYP moderator in the form of a report. This service is subject to a fee.

Monitoring of assessment is aimed at providing support and guidance in the implementation and development of the programme with regard to internal assessment procedures and practices. It is not linked to validation of students’ grades, and therefore differs from the process of external moderation.

Samples for monitoring of assessment in humanities must be submitted in English, French or Spanish, although these may be translations into one of these languages.

Details on registering for monitoring of assessment and fees, as well as the latest updated versions of the coversheets, are available in the *MYP coordinator’s handbook*.

**Further information on monitoring of assessment can be found in the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008), in the section “Monitoring of assessment”. Brief information follows here.**

## Purpose

There are three reasons why schools send in a monitoring of assessment sample:

1. as a requirement for the school’s programme evaluation visit
2. as a pre-check before sending in samples for moderation
3. to receive guidance on a particular subject.

## Choice of tasks for monitoring of assessment

### For evaluation visit and general advice

Schools can decide on the types of task they wish to submit for monitoring of assessment for the evaluation visit or for general advice. However, they are recommended to consider the prescribed minimum tasks detailed in the “Humanities: Moderation” section, as this is designed to give an even spread over the humanities assessment criteria.

### Prior to moderation

If the school is requesting monitoring of assessment in preparation for future moderation, the tasks in the following list **must** be included in the sample of assessed student work. These are the required minimum tasks listed in the “Humanities: Moderation” section.

- A piece of extended writing (essay, research paper, project, etc), approximately 700–1,200 words in length.
- An end-of-unit or end-of-term test, including paragraph writing.
- A piece of classwork or homework.

Please see the “Humanities: Moderation” section for further notes and information.

# MYP humanities frequently asked questions

## General

### **Should my MYP humanities course be an integrated course (that is, studying concepts and developing skills through more than one humanities discipline)?**

The MYP humanities guide encourages teachers to use an integrated approach in designing their humanities course. It is important that students gain conceptual understanding and skills from a range of humanities disciplines and see how these disciplines integrate with and complement each other as well as other subject groups in the MYP.

The IB understands that some schools will be bound to national or other curriculum requirements, for example, students may have to study a specific humanities subject during their final year of the MYP in response to national requirements. It is possible to accommodate this. Schools need to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve all of the final objectives by the end of year 5 of the MYP. For example, if there were any final objectives that could not be achieved through a school's final year humanities course, the school would ensure that those objectives were met by the end of year 4 of the programme, through other humanities disciplines.

### **How many humanities disciplines should we integrate into our course?**

You should include as many disciplines as are relevant to the subject matter at hand. For example, when studying the Roman Empire, first year students may look at it through the disciplines of history, geography and sociology, whereas fifth year students may look at it through economic and political perspectives (or vice versa, depending on the broader needs of the students). Importantly, students should understand which discipline the concepts and skills belong to, and how the disciplines are complementary.

### **Why do I need to focus my units of work through the areas of interaction?**

The areas of interaction form the core of the MYP. By making sure a unit of work is developed through an area of interaction, teachers are integrating subject groups through the areas of interaction. This allows students to make their own connections in knowledge, concepts and skills, and hence the opportunity for enhanced cognitive development. This integration also supports the MYP fundamental concept of holistic learning.

### **How do I focus my units of work through the areas of interaction?**

Identifying the area of interaction that frames a unit of work will depend on the significant concepts and content of the unit. For example, students could study the second world war through the area of human ingenuity, looking at technological advancements and social and political system developments during the war. Further information on the areas of interaction and planning units of work can be found in the document *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008).

### **Can I teach concepts and skills other than those listed in the humanities objectives?**

Teachers may teach humanities concepts and skills other than those listed. However, students must be given the opportunity to achieve all of the concepts and skills listed in the humanities objectives in this guide by the end of the final year of the MYP.

**How can I detect plagiarism? How can I avoid it in the first place?**

If you suspect that work has been plagiarized, one way to check is to conduct an internet search. Using a major search engine, type in a selection of the work in inverted commas (one sentence should be sufficient). If the work has been taken directly from a website it will be detected. Your school may also subscribe to a plagiarism detection site. Plagiarism from other sources can be more difficult to detect, depending on how familiar the teacher is with all the resources available to the students.

The best solution is to avoid setting tasks that are easy to complete through plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty. For example, if a task requires students to give their own interpretation of a concept or use their humanities skills, rather than only asking for factual answers, then it is very difficult to plagiarize other material. Tasks should also be challenging, but not so difficult that students are tempted to use dishonest means to complete them, and support should be available when students require it. For further information on IB policy on academic honesty, please see the publication *Academic honesty* found on the online curriculum centre (OCC).

**Does the IB recommend any particular style of referencing/quoting/footnoting?**

There is no set style for referencing in the MYP. Schools need to decide on one or more recognized styles of referencing that suits the needs of the students and the school.

**Can we use teaching resources if we do not have a clear idea of where the resources came from?**

Teachers need to adhere to the guidelines of academic honesty as much as the students. Therefore, teachers need to make every effort to reference and acknowledge the work of others that they use in the classroom.

**Why are the overall grade boundaries not included in the guide?**

The grade boundaries are included in the *MYP coordinator's handbook* (available on the OCC), which is updated every year. This gives the flexibility to adjust grade boundaries if necessary, without waiting for the next review cycle (when the next edition of the guide is published).

## Assessment

**I want to assess my students in a wide variety of ways without being restricted to the choice of an extended piece of writing, a test and classwork or homework. Can I assess in other ways as well?**

Yes. The “test”, “extended piece of writing” and “piece of classwork/homework” are the required minimum tasks for moderation/monitoring of assessment, and are only a snapshot of what is assessed in schools. Student abilities should be assessed through a wide range of assessment activities.

**What is the difference between selecting and presenting relevant information in criteria C and D?**

The skill of being able to select relevant information at the research stage of an assignment is assessed through criterion C. That is, the student should demonstrate the skills of being able to locate and select relevant information and data from the school library, internet, and so on. Teachers may even wish to assess a student's selection skills part-way through an assignment before the selected material is refined for the final product, if this is appropriate to the assignment. It is good practice to reinforce academic honesty through citing sources using an appropriate convention.

The skill of being able to present relevant information is assessed through criterion D. The student should be able to demonstrate the skills of being detailed yet concise in his or her communication, with no superfluous information. Student choice of presentation format is also key in criterion D. For example, a student may choose to present information with a diagram and short paragraph rather than writing a lengthy paragraph alone, if he or she judges that to be more effective.

**My students cannot achieve the objectives in years 1–4. It is hard to assess years 1–4 against the criteria. I'd like to place more emphasis on objective D for my younger students. What can I do?**

The humanities objectives are designed in such a way that students should be able to achieve them by the end of five years of study in the MYP. It is not expected that students in the earlier years of the programme will be able to achieve them as written in the guide, but it is expected that they will be working towards achieving them.

Schools should consult the humanities interim objectives for years 1 and 3 on the OCC for examples of modified objectives.

**My students have difficulty understanding the descriptors. What can I do?**

In years 1–4, schools may modify the descriptors of the achievement levels for each criterion according to the progression of learning organized by them and guided by the interim objectives. These modified criteria must be based on the MYP principles of assessment and must provide for a coherent approach to assessment practices over the entire programme. Schools may add other criteria, in addition to the MYP criteria, in response to national requirements and report on these internally to parents and students.

**Can I clarify the criteria in year 5 to be task-specific?**

Yes. Clarifying the criteria in any year level is of great help to the students in defining what is expected of them in given tasks. When clarifying expectations for students, teachers must ensure that they do not alter the standard expected in the published criteria, nor introduce new aspects.

**Can I modify the assessment criteria for my students who are designated as having special educational needs?**

Modified criteria should be developed for each particular stage of learning for all students, as described in *MYP: From principles into practice* (August 2008). This means that schools will need to come up with modified assessment criteria that clearly align with the interim objectives. The levels of achievement represented in each modified criterion must reflect realistic expectations of student learning for the various age groups.

Separate, modified objectives or assessment criteria are not developed for students with special educational needs; however, as schools attempt to implement the MYP in an inclusive way, teachers will be designing learning experiences that will allow all students, including those who have special educational needs, to meet the objectives in each subject group. In year 5 of the programme the final assessment criteria apply to all students. By differentiating their teaching strategies, teachers will provide all students with opportunities to reach these goals. Differentiated teaching aims to maximize students' potential, and allows them to demonstrate their learning in different ways. Without compromising standards, assessment tasks should take into account the requirements of students with special educational needs.

If a diagnosed special educational need makes assessment of some humanities objectives impossible, the MYP coordinator should follow the guidelines in the "Special cases" section of the *MYP coordinator's handbook* so that the student is not disadvantaged when registering and submitting the levels/grade for certification.

**Can I modify the assessment criteria for my students who are accessing the curriculum in their second language?**

The assessment criteria may be modified in years 1–4 as described above. In the final year of the MYP, students need to be assessed against the criteria as published, though students may have a personal copy of the criteria written in more accessible language. The documents *Second-language acquisition and mother-tongue development: A guide for schools* (January 2004), *Guidelines for developing a school language policy* (April 2008) and *Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes* (April 2008) give further information on how schools can provide programmes to ensure second-language students have the opportunity to achieve all objectives at the highest levels in all subjects.

### What is the connection between the criterion levels and the final grade?

A criterion level only gives a partial assessment of humanities. For example, a level for criterion A only shows the student's achievement in "knowledge", and not how the student can apply that knowledge or how that knowledge has contributed to skill development in humanities. To work out a student's final grade, a teacher must have taken into account levels from all of the criteria, giving a balanced final result. In summary, the final grade is an overall view of the student's achievement in the subject; the criterion levels show the student's achievement in components of the subject.

For example:

	Criterion A (/10)	Criterion B (/10)	Criterion C (/10)	Criterion D (/8)	Levels total (/38)	Final grade
Student 1	9	8	7	5	29	5
Student 2	8	5	7	7	27	5
Student 3	6	7	6	6	25	5

Criterion levels and final grades are useful in different ways. For example, schools may use final grades for reporting to parents but use criterion levels in designing their lessons as these give more specific feedback on the needs of the students.

## Moderation

**For moderation in humanities, schools may register in "humanities", "history", "geography", "economics" and "business studies". If my school offers another humanities option for students in year 5 can they be registered in this?**

The MYP coordinator should contact [myp@ibo.org](mailto:myp@ibo.org) for advice on student registrations in humanities subjects other than those mentioned above. The "humanities" option is intended for those courses that are integrated humanities, incorporating various humanities disciplines. Essentially, the conceptual and skill requirements of the humanities course must be covered through those humanities subjects offered by the school. If any of the final objectives (for example, some of the concepts or skills) are better suited to being covered through humanities disciplines not offered in year 5 then schools need to ensure that students have already mastered these concepts or skills in year 4 of the programme.

**I can never find students who are, for example, "average" in all tasks. What do I do for moderation?**

The aim of moderation is to check that teachers are setting appropriate tasks, and that they are assessing the work appropriately, that is, that average work is awarded an average level and good work is awarded a good level.

Often, students do not fit into one "category", so when submitting samples, teachers will need to tick the "comparatively good", "average" or "comparatively weak" boxes using the principle of best fit. For example, a student with two excellent pieces of work and one average piece of work may be designated "comparatively good"; a student with one excellent, one average and one poor piece of work may be designated "average". The important thing is to ensure there is a range of abilities displayed so that the moderator can check that good work is awarded a good level, poor work is awarded a low level, and so on. Any issues can be clarified in the background information for the sample.

**It is hard to get samples of good year 5 level work when I have to send moderation samples so early in the school year. Are students penalized by this?**

No. As in the previous answer, the moderation process checks that teachers are assigning appropriate levels to student work. Moderators take into account that most of the sent work is from the first half of the final year of the MYP.

**How can I address each criterion twice with the three tasks?**

This depends on the tasks used and which of the assessment criteria suits them the best (and which objectives are being assessed). Here are some common examples where a different emphasis has been put on different tasks.

Task	A	B	C	D
Rivers project (extended writing)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Waterways test	✓	✓		
Egyptian culture essay (classwork)			✓	✓

Task	A	B	C	D
Migration research paper (extended writing)		✓	✓	✓
End-of-term exam	✓	✓	✓	
Demographic research (classwork)	✓			✓

Task	A	B	C	D
Japanese “modernization” essay	✓		✓	✓
Industrial Revolution test	✓	✓		
Wall Street crash case study (classwork and homework)		✓	✓	✓

**What is “background information”? What should I include?**

Background information is provided in a moderation or monitoring of assessment sample and tells the moderator or assessor details of the tasks, what the expectations were, and under what conditions the tasks were completed. This can be a useful place to note any information that is atypical about the class. Examples of background information include worksheets, instructions or notes given to students, information on time allocation/length of preparation, degree of teacher or peer support allowed, blank copies of tasks/tests/examination papers used and the teacher’s corrected versions, relevant markschemes, and comments on student work. In humanities, it is important that background information indicates which concepts and skills were the specific focuses of the assessment tasks, as well as task-specific clarifications given to students.

If the sample differs from the stated requirements in any way, this should also be explained in the background information.

**Would any “normal exam” be suitable for moderation purposes?**

Yes. Often the traditional examination-type assessment is good for assessing criteria A and B—knowledge and concepts. A criterion-related approach must still be used. Therefore, teachers must ensure that the examination contains questions that allow students to produce extended answers, giving them the opportunity to reach the higher levels of the criteria.

### Could we present an assessment plan early in the course for feedback rather than find out during moderation that something is not appropriate?

Yes. Schools that wish to have feedback on their courses or assessment procedures as a check before submitting for moderation are welcome to apply for monitoring of assessment. Monitoring of assessment reports will give schools this type of feedback; any changes in criterion levels as a result are for feedback purposes only and do not affect the final grades of the students. (Fees for monitoring of assessment are listed in the *MYP coordinator's handbook*.)

### What is the difference between moderation and monitoring?

Similarities	
<p>Both monitoring of assessment and moderation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use the services of trained moderators and MYP subject specialists selected by the IB</li> <li>• are offered only in the working languages of the MYP—English, French, Spanish and Chinese (except language A and language B). Moderation/monitoring of assessment in a particular subject will take place in only one language</li> <li>• are conducted on a per subject basis</li> <li>• consider samples of student work representing achievement in the MYP subjects and the personal project</li> <li>• are based on the application of MYP objectives and published assessment criteria in order to ensure high standards</li> <li>• involve schools mailing to moderators sets of selected student work assessed according to the MYP assessment criteria</li> <li>• involve IB Cardiff sending a report to the school providing constructive feedback to teachers</li> <li>• consider only the application of IB-published assessment criteria, as stated in the subject group's assessment details.</li> </ul>	
Differences	
Monitoring of assessment:	Moderation:
aims to provide advice and guidance regarding general assessment principles within a subject	is linked to validation of schools' results in a specific subject
is <b>optional</b> for all IB World Schools offering the MYP, but is <b>required</b> as part of the programme evaluation process and the curriculum flexibility approval process for schools that do not submit to moderation	is required only for schools requesting IB-validated results
requires the school to pay a fixed fee per subject	requires the school to pay variable fees depending on the number of registered candidates
allows schools to send translated samples (except for languages A and B)	does not allow schools to send translated samples
leads to the production by the IB of a school-specific report providing feedback and guidance on assessment within the subject(s)	leads to the production by the IB of MYP documentation (records of achievement and certificates), as well as a school-specific report providing feedback and guidance

<b>Monitoring of assessment:</b>	<b>Moderation:</b>
is based on samples of student work completed in years 1 to 5 of the MYP	is based on samples of work from the final year of the programme
involves no change to the school's grades	may lead to changes to the school's final grades on MYP records of achievement
takes place at any time between <b>September</b> and <b>March</b> , with two months' advance notice (for samples submitted as a requirement for a programme evaluation visit, schools should register ten months before the scheduled visit and submit the samples to IB Cardiff eight months before the visit)	takes place according to a fixed schedule (see section G of the <i>MYP coordinator's handbook</i> )
may involve, only for years 1 to 4, school-specific descriptors of achievement levels within the MYP criteria for the subject.	considers only the application of IB-published assessment criteria, as stated in the subject group's assessment details. (Where appropriate, include task-specific clarifications that elaborate on the published assessment criteria.)

#### **Does my school need to undergo moderation and/or monitoring for programme evaluation?**

Yes, moderation **or** monitoring of assessment is compulsory for programme evaluation.

Schools that have not requested IB-validated grades for their students in the final year of the programme are required to apply for monitoring of assessment in at least one subject per subject group and the personal project within two years, and at least 10 months prior to the evaluation visit. Alternatively, these schools could also apply for moderation.

Schools that are being evaluated and wish to have IB-validated grades for their students in the final year of the programme must apply for moderation in all subject groups and the personal project.

#### **What can I do if my questions are not answered here?**

Your MYP coordinator may be able to answer your questions. If not, posting a message on the OCC can often prompt answers from other teachers in the MYP world. Alternatively, your coordinator may pass your query on to be answered by your regional office or IB Cardiff.

## MYP humanities glossary

<b>Document</b>	To “document” work is to fully credit all sources of information used through referencing and the bibliography according to one recognized academic convention.
<b>Fieldwork</b>	Authentic humanities research tasks, including interviewing, polling, data collection, archeological digs, etc.
<b>Humanities disciplines</b>	These include history, geography, politics, economics, civics, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, business studies and contemporary studies.
<b>Intercultural awareness</b>	Having some knowledge of and sensitivity towards groups of people with different sets of beliefs and values, experiences and practices.
<b>Peer-conferencing</b>	Student discussions with fellow students to gain insight into the task, topic, concepts and skills at hand and to provide feedback and suggestions on draft work.
<b>Reference</b>	To acknowledge sources within the text. This includes in-text documentation and footnoting. See also <b>Document</b> .