

–A KIS Parent Handbook–



The International Baccalaureate PYP A Guide for

Dummies

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about

The International Baccalaureate (IB)
Primary Years Program (PYP)...

But, Were too Afraid to Ask!

*“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes.”*
—Marcel Proust

The International Baccalaureate PYP—A Guide for Dummies.
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Sources used in compiling this guide book:

- Making the PYP Happen
- German-American International School
- Alpine Elementary School—Longmont, CO, USA
- Robbinsdale Area Schools—St. Paul, MN, USA
- RCHK Primary Schools—Hong Kong, China
- The International School International Baccalaureate—Portland, Oregon, USA
- Wikipedia



What is the International Baccalaureate Organization?



- It is a non-profit educational and non-governmental (NGO) organization of UNESCO. The IB's alliance with UNESCO encourages the integration of its educational goals into the IB curriculum.
- It was established in 1968 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is governed by a 16-member council and is funded by fees from IB World Schools.
- The IBO offers three programs of international education for students aged 3-19 years old:
 - The Diploma Program at the high school level (grades 9-12).
 - The Middle Years Program (MYP) (students 11-16 years old).
 - The Primary Years Program (PYP) (for students 3-12 years old).
- There are 651,000 IB students and 2,390 authorized IB schools in 129 countries.



What's the story behind the IBO?



Marie Therese Maurette created the framework for what would eventually become the IB Diploma Programme, in 1948, when she wrote *Is There a Way of Teaching for Peace?*, a handbook for UNESCO. In the mid-1960's, a group of teachers from the International School of Geneva (Ecolint) created the International Schools Examinations Syndicate (ISES), which would later become the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The IB headquarters were officially established in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1968, for the development and maintenance of the Diploma Programme, which provided an internationally acceptable university admissions qualifications for young people whose parents worked as diplomats or with international and multi-national companies.



What is an IB PYP School?



Regardless of location, size, or make-up, an IB PYP school strives to develop an internationally minded person.

The mission of the IBO:

- To develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people.
- To create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.
- To work with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment.
- To encourage students worldwide to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



What does that mean at KIS?



It means our KIS students are taught **WHY** they should know something and how it connects to other subjects and the world around them. It means high quality teaching and learning—challenging instruction and worldwide knowledge “at home” (so to speak, in whichever country where you live and go to school). It also means great opportunities to study abroad for college/university, as

well as opportunities to make friends with other students at IB schools around the world.



How does the IB PYP teach students to be internationally minded?



Through teaching and modeling the “Learner Profile.” Regardless of the IB school your child may visit, these characteristics or “Learner Profile” remain the same—foundational to the IB PYP learning experience.



But, really, what does it mean to be “internationally minded” and why is it important?

It is a thoughtful, critical perspective that applies to who we are and what we do. It includes how we communicate, our political awareness, cultural understanding, celebrating diversity, global awareness of global issues, and a reflection on how knowledge is constructed and applied. At KIS, we focus on moving students toward becoming people who reflect the characteristics of the “Learner Profile.”



Who is an “internationally minded” person?



According to the IB PYP, an “internationally minded” person is someone who demonstrates the attributes of the “Learner Profile.”



What is the “Learner Profile?”



These are qualities determined to be most important in creating positive and productive citizens of the world.



But, what does it mean, “Profile?”



HINT: Think Facebook or myspace. A profile is the description of a person’s qualities, values, and characteristics.



What are these “Learner Profile” qualities?



- **Inquirers**—I am curious and know how to discover answers to many of my questions. I love to learn!
- **Thinkers**—I use my thinking skills to make good choices and solve problems.
- **Communicators**—I understand and share ideas in more than one language.
- **Risk Takers**—I try new things, love to explore, and confidently share my experiences.
- **Knowledgeable**—I explore big ideas that are important. I know and can do a lot of important things.
- **Principled**—I am fair and honest. I can make good decisions about what is right and wrong for me.
- **Caring**—I am concerned about other people’s needs and feelings. I believe it is important to help others.

- **Open-Minded**—I am comfortable with differences. I welcome and respect other people’s points of views and ways of doing things.
- **Balanced**—To be healthy, it is important for me to balance the needs of my mind and body.
- **Reflective**—I think about and discuss my learning, skills, and products.



What are the IB “Attitudes”?



The “Attitudes” are the daily expressions of the “Learner Profile” used by teachers in teaching and by students in their learning.

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

--Winston Churchill

- **Appreciation**—Seeing and being thankful for the wonder and beauty of our world.
- **Commitment**—Being responsible for my learning, showing self-discipline, and perseverance. Sticking with a difficult task until it is completed.
- **Confidence**—Knowing I can do it! Having courage to take risks, using what I have learned, and making good choices.
- **Cooperation**—Working with others and being willing to lead or follow as needed.
- **Creativity**—Using my imagination while thinking and doing things.
- **Empathy**—Being able to put myself in someone else’s place in order to understand her or him.
- **Enthusiasm**—Being excited about learning and life.
- **Independence**—Thinking and acting on my own.
- **Integrity**—Being fair and honest.
- **Respect**—Showing that I can for others, our world, and myself.
- **Tolerance**—Understanding, appreciating, and celebrating differences in each other.



What does “attitude” look like?



Attitude is an outward expression of an inner feeling. Some people try to mask their attitude, but a cover doesn’t last long—attitude always finds a way to leak out.

“It is the vanguard of your true self. Its root is inward but its fruit is outward. It is your best friend or worst enemy. It is more honest and consistent about you than your words. It is what draws people to you or repels them. It is never content until it is expressed. It is the librarian of your past. It is the speaker of your present. It is the prophet of your future.

There is not a single part of your current life that is not affected by your attitude. And your future will definitely be influenced by the attitude you carry with you from today forward.”—The Difference Maker



So, what will my child be learning at KIST?



With the IB PYP at KIS, we are committed to structured inquiry as the vehicle for learning. Six transdisciplinary themes provide the framework for exploration and construction of knowledge. Teachers and students are guided by these transdisciplinary themes—as the design units of inquiry for exploration and study. Through this process, students develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop particular attitudes and learn to take socially responsible action.



Ok, what does “transdisciplinary” mean?



Transdisciplinary is the word that IB uses to describe a discipline that applies across all disciplines—it is interconnected and can be applied across all subjects and applied to real life. A transdisciplinary concept stretches across math, science, English, geography and ties it all together; it is not isolated to one subject. For example, the idea of change affects math, science, English, geography—the IB PYP strives to demonstrate this through learning, giving understanding to a real life world.



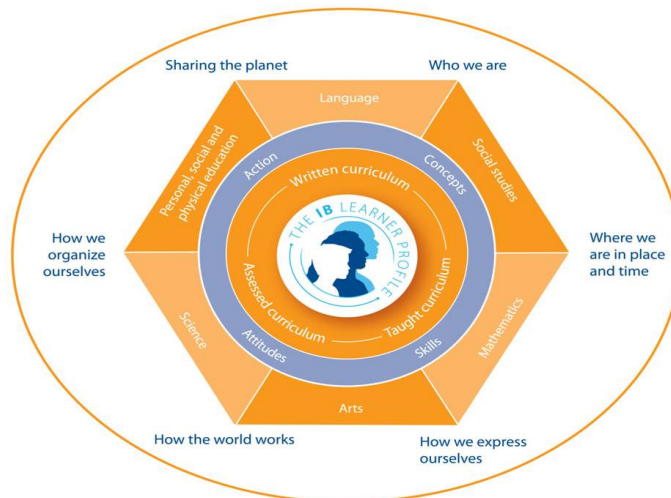
The IB curriculum incorporates **5 essential** elements:

1. **CONCEPTS**—there are 8 fundamental concepts expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units—called UNITS OF INQUIRY (have you heard of this before?!)—but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas (transdisciplinary). The 8 fundamental concepts are
 - **Form: What is it like?**
 - **Function: How does it work?**
 - **Causation: Why is it like it is?**
 - **Change: How is it changing?**
 - **Connection: How is it connected to other things?**
 - **Perspective: What are the points of view?**
 - **Reflection: How do we know?**
- **SKILLS**—There are 5 sets of transdisciplinary skills acquired in the process of structured inquiry. These are:
 - **Thinking**
 - **Communication**
 - **Social**
 - **Research**
 - **Self-Management**
- **ATTITUDES**—The PYP promotes attitudes that we want our KIS students to *feel, value, and demonstrate.*

- **ACTION**—Our KIS students are encouraged to reflect, to make informed choices and to take action that will help their peers, school staff, and the wider community. This is how our students demonstrate a deeper sense of learning, by applying their knowledge to service and positive action.
- **KNOWLEDGE**—The PYP recognizes that it is inappropriate and challenging to dictate what every child should know in an international environment and community. Rather than provide a **fixed** syllabus or curriculum, the PYP has identified **themes**, or areas of knowledge, which are used to organize the **6 Units of Inquiry**, taught from early childhood through grade 5. These **Units of Inquiry** provide the framework (as opposed to a text book curriculum) for a wide variety of resources to be explored in order to accomplish the objectives within each **Unit of Inquiry**:
 - **Who We Are**
 - **Where We Are in Place and Time**
 - **How We Express Ourselves**
 - **How the World Works**
 - **How We Organize Ourselves**
 - **Sharing the Planet**



Here is a diagram of **how** IB learners strive to be inquirers, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, and reflective.



So, what actually is a “Unit of Inquiry”?



A **Unit of Inquiry** usually lasts for 6-8 weeks and the objective is to cover all 6 themes throughout the year. For example, during the Unit of Inquiry “Sharing the Planet” students may spend 6 weeks looking at the resources we have in the world and how various countries use and share and dispose of these resources. Students will answer questions like: How do these resources connect people around the world? Or, how are these resources changing and what does

that mean for people? These concepts and questions move across all school subjects (i.e. math, English, geography, etc.) and apply to real life and the world around us.



And, how does KIS implement these Units of Inquiry?



These themes or **Units of Inquiry**, provide a framework on which our teachers build students' knowledge. With the IB PYP, the priority is not on using a set of textbooks, but rather the emphasis is on a wide variety of resources from which teachers and students extract knowledge, develop understanding, and explore ways of applying that to real life.



What resources does KIS use, if there are no textbooks/workbooks?



KIS has a wide variety of resources available:

- For English classes, KIS provides each grade level with the highly acclaimed “First Steps” program. This resource helps to create continuity between each grade level, while ensuring a strong English program for our KIS students.
- For Math classes, KIS provides each grade level with the “Everyday Math” program—again, a highly recommended program that has proven results. With this math program, students learn foundational concepts that apply to real life—this resource provides continuity between each grade level.
- KIS subscribes to a number of other resources as well:
 - Reading A-Z
 - Science A-Z
 - Learning A-Z
 - Brain POP Jr.
 - BrainPOP
 - Enchanted Learning
 - Scholastic Premium
 - Rosetta Stone

**Just to name a few of our resources at KIS.*



Why not use textbooks/workbooks? It seems more systematic?



Because the IB PYP philosophy believes that students learn best through authentic inquiry. While there is certainly a place in the curriculum for textbooks and workbooks, KIS uses a wide range of resources that best cater to our students' individual needs and learning styles.

The IB PYP also recognizes that it is **not** knowledge alone that makes a learner successful, but the skills and attitudes they develop along the way.



How are students at KIS tested?



Students at KIS are assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, exams, projects, oral presentations and written reports.

Assessment in IB PYP is “criterion referenced.” This means students are scored against standards, not against each other (or at the teacher's whim). Teachers will give the students

a rubric on larger assignments that explains to the students what is expected of them. The rubric states what the criteria are for the assignment (in a paper, for instance) and what the score will be for addressing or not addressing each point in that criteria. The rubric allows students to “buy into” their grades and take ownership of their effort and learning.



Please tell me what is a RUBRIC?!







A rubric defines what are the standards or requirements that need to be accomplished in order to achieve the overall target or goal. Here is a way to think about it that one of our KIS teacher's uses in his classroom to help his students understand how a rubric works. Let's say you're planning to go out to buy a pair of jeans, but before you do, you sit down to come up with some criteria for the pair of jeans you hope to buy. Some of the criteria may include cost, style, color, and brand. With this exercise, KIS students understand that we are using criteria everyday to make judgments—in essence, this is a rubric.



Okay—so, show me a Rubric!

Here is an example of a Rubric from our Grade 1 class:

Create a game and write instructions.

	4 	3 	2 	1 
Game	I always <ul style="list-style-type: none"> included all pieces of equipment in the game: hoops, ball, cones, rope followed my instructions when setting up the game made sure the rules were clear 	Most of the time I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> included the pieces of equipment in the game: hoops, ball, cones, rope followed my instructions when setting up the game made sure the rules were clear 	Sometimes I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> included the pieces of equipment in the game: hoops, ball, cones, rope followed my instructions when setting up the game made sure the rules were clear 	I rarely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> included the pieces of equipment in the game: hoops, ball, cones, rope followed my instructions when setting up the game made sure the rules were clear
Instructions	I always <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the format of an instruction: title, aim, equipment, procedure start an instruction with a verb include pictures to explain my instructions 	Most of the time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the format of an instruction: title, aim, equipment, procedure start an instruction with a verb include pictures to explain my instructions 	Sometimes I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the format of an instruction: title, aim, equipment, procedure start an instruction with a verb include pictures to explain my instructions 	I rarely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use the format of an instruction: title, aim, equipment, procedure start an instruction with a verb include pictures to explain my instructions
Group work Instructions	I always <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the group: drawing, writing, typing Use the 3 C's when working with my group 	Most of the time I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the group: drawing, writing, typing Use the 3 C's when working with my group 	Sometimes I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the group: drawing, writing, typing Use the 3 C's when working with my group 	I rarely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contribute to the group: drawing, writing, typing Use the 3 C's when working with my group



Explain to me a little more about how my child will be assessed at KIS?



At KIS, each Unit of Inquiry allows students opportunities to demonstrate that learning is taking place—that there are shifts, if you will, in their understanding. This may look different across all subject areas—however, this shift in understanding is not always best demonstrated through a piece of written work or a traditional exam. Students may be asked to put together a final project, draw, act out a performance, do a presentation, or some other way to show what they have learned. The goal is for our students to demonstrate that learning has taken place by showing what they understand and how they are applying that understanding to real life and the world around them. Authentic learning cannot always be demonstrated through traditional tests or exams.

At KIS, we believe that assessment is the continuation of the learning process. It is NOT assessment **of** learning, but it is assessment **for** learning. The point is that our KIS able to apply their learning to the world around them.



The IB views assessment as needing to be authentic, essential, rich, engaging, and feasible—it should incorporate students in the process of evaluating their learning.

“**Formative**” assessment is interwoven into the daily lessons and learning—this ongoing process of “checking in” between teachers and students, helps both teachers and students find out what they already know, in order to plan for the next stage of learning. “**Formative**” assessment and teaching are directly linked; effective learning cannot take place without one or the other.

“**Summative**” assessment takes place at the end of the teaching and learning process—this is the time that students have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding and application of what has been learned.



What is the homework load like? How much homework should a child have outside of school?



This is not a program that just loads on a lot of homework. This is a big misconception that many people have of the IB program. Keeping in mind that each child is different, the homework assigned is not overwhelming **AND** kids still have time for a variety of after school activities. Long-term and large projects are given ample time and warning to complete.



How can parents help students with schoolwork?



Follow up daily with your child to see what homework they have. Help reinforce at home the program requirements that the student fills out their School Diary each and every day, in every subject, then use this to check for assignments each evening at home. Help your student schedule time so they don’t feel overwhelmed. Realize that you will probably help them with (**not do**) some of their larger projects. Example: Many parents will make a trip with their child to the Central Museum for history or cultural projects, or help them create display boards for presentations. Most parents will find pleasure or pride in helping their child grow in this way, as they together to do larger projects.



How can you, as a PARENT, get involved?

- Volunteer in your child's classroom, the library, in the computer lab, at lunch, etc.
- Provide communication between yourself and school that is regular, 2-way, and meaningful.
- Participate as a full partner in decisions that impact your child and family.
- Portfolios are a part of documenting student growth and reflections over the course of the students' elementary career. Ask your child to see his/hers often when visiting the school.
- Collaboration with the community, through partnerships, which are mutually beneficial to our school and the community.
- You are always welcome at KIS! We need your support and assistance to make our school the great place that it is!



In the end, here is a summary of what the IB PYP is:

"The whole art of teaching is only the awakening of the natural curiosity of young minds."

—Anatole France

"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think."

—Socrates

And this sums up what the IB PYP is NOT:

"It is possible to store the mind with a million facts and still be entirely uneducated."

—Alec Bourne

"Passive acceptance of a teacher's wisdom is easy for most boys and girls. It involves no effort of independent thought."

—Bertrand Russell



This means that at KIS, with the IB PYP,

our students in all grades have the opportunity to own their learning. Our teachers do not "cover" a subject or "give" a lesson. At KIS, our students take the lesson or learning process—they do it, make it, and experience it. Our students ask questions and learn how to find the answers to those questions and apply to their lives and the world around them. With the IB PYP, KIS students see how things are connected in a real way, rather than simply being fragmented into school subjects.



So, in the end, what makes the IB PYP so effective at KIS?

We are a truly international community and we are committed to the IB philosophy that students need to be at the center of real life learning by using their natural curiosity. The IB PYP model fits well with our goals, at KIS, to guide our students to be internationally minded with a passion for life-long learning.



Kazakhstan International School

Where we are about MORE THAN ACADEMICS.

OUR MISSION

Nurturing each child without prejudice. Education—the axis for balance, for now and the future. Every individual matters. Each one challenged. Everyone successful.

OUR VISION

At Kazakhstan International School, we expect nothing less than the best from each individual—from students to parents to faculty and staff—each person developing her/her innate potential to achieve more than academics. With unlimited possibilities, our students are supported by a multicultural community of lifelong learners who will guide them in their quest to answer who am I and what will I become.