

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Subject Brief

Language acquisition

From 2020

The IB Middle Years Programme (MYP) is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning that emphasizes intellectual challenges and encourages students to make connections between their studies and the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement—essential qualities for young people today.

Interdisciplinary teaching and learning builds a connected curriculum that addresses the developmental needs of students and prepares them for further academic study and life in an increasingly interconnected world. The MYP uses concepts and contexts as starting points for meaningful integration and the transfer of knowledge across eight subject groups.

The MYP focuses on “learning how to learn” through the systematic development of approaches to learning (ATL) skills for communication, collaboration, organization, self-management, reflection, research, information literacy, media literacy, creative thinking, critical thinking, and transfer of learning.

For students seeking a formal qualification at the end of the programme, the IB offers eAssessments that lead to MYP course results and the MYP certificate. Additionally, students who demonstrate additional proficiency in a second language or mother tongue can earn the MYP bilingual certificate. The MYP recognizes student achievement across a broad and balanced curriculum using a range of assessment strategies to establish grades that have been externally validated against a common, rigorous global standard. MYP eAssessments meet the General Conditions for Recognition established by England’s Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation and are recognized by other national education systems as preparation for further study at the senior secondary level.

This IB MYP subject brief has for key components:

I. Course description and aims

II. Curriculum overview

III. Assessment criteria

IV. MYP eAssessment



I. Course description and aims

The ability to communicate in more than one language is essential to the concept of an international education that promotes intercultural understanding, and it is central to the IB’s mission. The study of additional languages in the MYP provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, behaving and viewing the world.

Acquiring an additional language and exploring and reflecting on the cultural perspectives of our own and other communities:

- are central to developing critical thinking and international-mindedness
- provide an intellectual framework to support personal development, cultural identity and conceptual understanding
- greatly contribute to the holistic development of students and to the strengthening of lifelong learning skills
- equip students with the necessary multiliteracy skills and attitudes to communicate successfully in various global contexts.

The aims of MYP language acquisition are to encourage and enable students to:

- gain proficiency in an additional language while supporting maintenance of their mother tongue and cultural heritage
- develop a respect for, and understanding of, diverse linguistic and cultural heritages

- develop the communication skills necessary for further language learning, and for study, work and leisure in a range of contexts
- develop multiliteracy skills through the use of a range of learning tools
- develop an appreciation of a variety of literary and non-literary texts and to develop critical and creative techniques for comprehension and construction of meaning
- recognize and use language as a vehicle of thought, reflection, self-expression and learning in other subjects
- understand the nature of language and the process of language learning
- gain insight into the cultural characteristics of the communities where the language is spoken
- gain an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of people from their own and other cultures
- develop curiosity, inquiry and a lifelong interest in, and enjoyment of, language learning.

II. Curriculum overview

The MYP promotes **inquiry** in language acquisition by developing conceptual understanding within global contexts.

Key concepts such as **communication, connections, creativity** and **culture** broadly frame the MYP curriculum.

Related concepts promote deeper learning grounded in specific disciplines. Examples of related concepts in MYP language acquisition include **word choice, conventions** and **idiom**.

Students explore key and related concepts through MYP **global contexts**.

- Identities and relationships
- Orientation in space and time
- Personal and cultural expression
- Scientific and technical innovation
- Globalization and sustainability
- Fairness and development

The MYP curriculum framework offers schools the flexibility to determine engaging, relevant, challenging and significant content that meets local and national curriculum requirements. This inquiry-based curriculum explores factual, conceptual and debatable questions in the study of language acquisition.

MYP language acquisition is a compulsory component in every year of the MYP, except for bilingual students who pursue courses of study in multiple languages in the MYP language and literature subject group.

The MYP requires at least 50 hours of teaching time for each subject area in each year of the programme. For students participating in MYP eAssessment, the IB recommends 70 hours of guided learning each year in MYP years 4 and 5.

III. Assessment criteria

Each language acquisition objective corresponds to one of four equally weighted assessment criteria. Each criterion has eight possible achievement levels (1–8), divided into four bands with unique descriptors that teachers use to make judgments about students' work.

Criterion A: Listening

Students interpret and construct meaning from spoken multimodal text to understand how images and other spatial aspects presented with oral text interplay to convey ideas, values and attitudes.

Criterion B: Reading

Students construct meaning and interpret written, spatial and visual aspects of texts to understand how these aspects presented with written text interplay to convey ideas, values and attitudes.

Criterion C: Speaking

Students develop their communication skills by interacting on a range of topics of personal, local and global interest and significance, with the support of spoken, written and visual texts in the target language. Students apply their understanding of linguistic and literary concepts to develop a variety of structures, strategies and techniques with increasing skill and effectiveness.

Criterion D: Writing

Students recognize and use language suitable to the audience and purpose, for example, the language used at home, the language of the classroom, formal and informal exchanges, and social and academic language. Students apply their understanding of language, form, mode, medium and literary concepts to express ideas, values and opinions in creative and meaningful way.

IV. MYP eAssessment

Students seeking MYP course results or the MYP certificate must demonstrate their achievement of the subject group's objectives by completing an end-of-course on-screen examination and an internally assessed IB moderated speaking examination. MYP language acquisition courses are formally assessed at one of three proficiency levels: emergent, capable or proficient.

MYP on-screen examinations are constructed as a series of tasks that sample, simulate or replicate internal assessment practices. The assessments follow an agreed structure that provides a clear framework for developing each examination. The distribution of marks within each eAssessment may vary by no more than three marks from those displayed in the blueprint.

These blueprints enable teachers and students to review the nature and purpose of MYP eAssessment. They provide an important resource for helping students to prepare for on-screen examinations, focusing attention on subject-group criteria and assessment strategies in each subject group.

The MYP language acquisition on-screen examination comprises receptive and productive summative assessment tasks. The internally assessed IB moderated speaking examination is an interactive summative assessment task.

In MYP language acquisition courses, on-screen examinations comprise of three tasks and may include any topics from the language acquisition list.

Objective	Assessment criteria	Mark
Listening to spoken multimodal texts	Criterion A	32
Reading written multimodal texts	Criterion B	32
Writing in response to multimodal texts	Criterion D	32

The individual speaking assessment task is marked by students' classroom teachers against published speaking examination marking criteria for MYP year 5. In each examination session, the IB moderates a sample of the interactive speaking examination from each school, adjusting grades as necessary to ensure the application of rigorous and reliable international standards.

Objective	Assessment criteria	Mark
Speaking in response to multimodal texts	Criterion C	32

MYP language acquisition examination tasks are aligned with understanding and skills that prepare students for high levels of achievement in IB Diploma Programme courses in **language acquisition** and **studies in language and literature**.

The MYP certificate requires a satisfactory level of achievement in language acquisition.

About the IB: For over 50 years, the IB has built a reputation for high-quality, challenging programmes of education that develop internationally minded young people who are well prepared for the challenges of life in the 21st century and are able to contribute to creating a better, more peaceful world.

For further information on the IB Diploma Programme, visit: www.ibo.org/en/myp.

Complete subject guides can be accessed through the programme resource centre or purchased through the IB store: store.ibo.org.

For more on how the MYP prepares students for success, visit: www.ibo.org/recognition or email: recognition@ibo.org.

