



- CWA Parent Handbook -



The International Baccalaureate PYP

Questions and Answers

Revised May, 2019

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP)...

“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think!” - Albert Einstein



Created by Sonia Bouchard,
sobouchard@lbpearson.ca

Sources used in compiling this guide book:

- Making the PYP Happen: From Principles into Practice, IBO, 2018
- www.ibo.org



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 IB Career-related Certificate
 - The Diploma Programme 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).
- On 1 February 2016, there were 5,578 programmes being offered worldwide, across 4,335 schools



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 internationally acceptable university admission 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 International Baccalaureate is:

- 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 CWA?



It means our CWA 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 connections to local and global issues.



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. It supports students in developing international-mindedness and in taking action for positive change.



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 CWA, we provide students with a range of opportunities to develop, demonstrate and reinforce the attributes 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.” Internationally minded students are open to others and to the world, and are cognizant of our deep interconnectedness (IB 2017)

What is the “Learner Profile?”



The 10 attributes of the learner profile represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that encompass intellectual, personal, emotional and social growth.

But, what does it mean, “Profile?”



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

What are these “Learner Profile” Attributes?

- **Inquirers**—We are curious and know how to discover answers to many of my questions. We love to learn
- **Thinkers**—We use our thinking skills to make good choices and solve problems.
- **Communicators**—We understand and share ideas in more than one language.
- **Risk Takers**—We try new things, love to explore, and confidently share our experiences.
- **Knowledgeable**—We explore big ideas that are important. We know and can do a lot of important things
- **Principled**—We are fair and honest. We can make good decisions about what is right and wrong for us
- **Caring**—We are concerned about other people’s needs and feelings. We believe it is important to help others.
- **Open-Minded**—We are comfortable with differences. We welcome and respect other people’s points of views and ways of doing things.
- **Balanced** – To be healthy, it is important for us to balance the needs of our mind and body.
- **Reflective** – We think about and discuss our learning, skills, and products.





So, what will my child be learning at CWA?



With the IB PYP at CWA, 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 for units of inquiry for exploration and study. Through this process, students develop an understanding of important concepts, acquire essential skills and knowledge, develop self-efficacy which will lead to the students to exercise agency and take 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 to real life. A transdisciplinary concept stretches across Math, Science, English, French, and Geography and ties it all together; it is not isolated to one subject. For example, the idea of change affects Math, Science, English, Geography—it begins and ends with a problem, an issue or a theme



The IB curriculum incorporates **Essential** elements:

- **CONCEPTS**—there are 7 fundamental concepts expressed as key questions, to propel the process of inquiry. These universal concepts drive the research units—called UNITS OF INQUIRY but they also have relevance within and across all subject areas (transdisciplinarity).

The 7 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?**
- **Responsibility: What is our responsibility?**

Approaches to Learning —There are 5 sets of approaches to learning and associated sub-skills acquired in the process of structured inquiry.

These are:

- Thinking skills
- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Research skills
- Self-Management skills

- **ACTION**—Our CWA 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 (4 in Kindergarten)**, taught from early childhood through grade 6. 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



So, what actually is a “unit of inquiry”?



A **unit of Inquiry** usually lasts a minimum of 3 weeks and the objective is to cover all 6 themes throughout the school year. In kindergarten, students explore 4 units of inquiry. For example, during the unit of Inquiry “Sharing the Planet” students may spend 4 to 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, French, Geography, etc.) and apply to real life and the world around us.



And, how does CWA implement these units of inquiry?



These units of inquiry, provide a framework on which our teachers build students’ knowledge through inquiry and concept-based learning. 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 CWA use, if there are no textbooks/workbooks?



CWA has a wide variety of resources available:

- All students have access to latest technology available.
- We have a variety of resources for English, French, Math, Geography and History, Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) classes, etc...
- We have a well-equipped Computer lab and a Library that is regularly upgraded with new books.



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



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, CWA 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 dispositions they develop along the way.



How are students at CWA evaluated?



Students at CWA are assessed in a variety of ways, including tests, exams, projects, oral presentations and written reports. Assessment in the IB PYP is "criterion referenced." This means students are scored against standards, not against each other. 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 and what the score will be for addressing or not addressing each point in that criteria. The rubric allows students to develop self-efficacy, agency, and take ownership of their learning.



Please tell me what a RUBRIC is?



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: 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.



Okay—so, show me a Rubric!

Here is an example of a Rubric from our Grade 5 class:

Fictional Narrative Rubric

<p>HISTORICAL FACTS</p> <p>All information used in narrative is based on what we have learned about immigration during this unit.</p> <p>/20</p>	<p>HISTORICAL FACTS</p> <p>Most of the information used in narrative is based on what we have learned about immigration during this unit.</p> <p>/18</p>	<p>HISTORICAL FACTS</p> <p>Some of the information used in narrative is based on what we have learned about immigration during this unit</p> <p>/16</p>	<p>HISTORICAL FACTS</p> <p>Little of the information used in narrative is based on what we have learned about immigration during this unit</p> <p>/14</p>	<p>HISTORICAL FACTS</p> <p>The information used in narrative is not based on what we have learned about immigration during this unit</p> <p>/11</p>
<p>Organization</p> <p>The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The story follows a logical sequence. It surpasses expectations.</p> <p>/20</p>	<p>Organization</p> <p>The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The story follows a logical sequence. It easily meets expectations.</p> <p>/18</p>	<p>Organization</p> <p>The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. The story follows a logical sequence. It may be somewhat short or missing one of the elements requested</p> <p>/16</p>	<p>Organization</p> <p>The story has a clear beginning, middle, and end. It may be too short or missing more than one of the elements requested. Some improvement required.</p> <p>/14</p>	<p>Organization</p> <p>The story lacks in organization and is difficult to follow. Much improvement is required.</p> <p>/11</p>
<p>Grammar & Spelling</p> <p>There are few or no errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling</p> <p>/10</p>	<p>Grammar & Spelling</p> <p>There are some errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling</p> <p>Spelling</p> <p>/8</p>	<p>Grammar & Spelling</p> <p>There are many errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling</p> <p>/6</p>	<p>Grammar & Spelling</p> <p>There are too many errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, or spelling. These make the story hard to understand</p> <p>/4</p>	<p>Grammar & Spelling</p> <p>The numerous errors in grammar and spelling interfere with meaning.</p> <p>/2</p>
<p>Learner Profile</p> <p>Reflections are insightful. The student was able to identify and justify the learner profile and attitudes (3) chosen. /20</p>	<p>Learner Profile</p> <p>Reflections are well formulated. The student was able to identify and justify the learner profile and attitudes (3) chosen. /18</p>	<p>Learner Profile</p> <p>Reflections are satisfactory. The student was able to identify and justify the learner profile and attitudes (2) chosen. /16</p>	<p>Learner Profile</p> <p>Reflections need improvement. The student was able to identify but could not justify the learner profile and attitudes (2 or 3) chosen. /20</p>	<p>Learner Profile</p> <p>Reflections are not evident. The student was unable to identify and/or could not justify the learner profile and attitudes (2 or 3) chosen. /20</p>



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

At CWA, 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 CWA, 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 CWA students are able to apply their learning to the world around them.



The IB views assessment as needing to be authentic, essential, rich, engaging, and clear and specific—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?

Keeping in mind that each child is different, the homework assigned is not overwhelming **AND** students still have time for a variety of after school activities. Long-term and large projects are given ample time and warning to complete. **All end-of-unit summative assessments (projects) are done in school.** Research and preparation might also be done at home.



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 are communicated by the teacher for every subject. Help your child schedule time so they don't feel overwhelmed. Realize that you will probably help them with **(not do)** some of the research for their larger projects. Example: Some parents will make a trip with their child to the library, 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?

Did you ask a good question today?

- Volunteer in your child's classroom, the library, in the computer lab, for Field trips, etc.
- Electronic Portfolios are a part of documenting student growth and reflections over the course of the students' elementary career. Your child will be able to show you his/ her work easily.
- Collaboration with the community, through partnerships, which are mutually beneficial to our school and the community.
- You are always welcome at CWA! 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 CWA, 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 CWA 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 their knowledge to their lives and the world around them. With the IB PYP, CWA 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 CWA?

We truly believe 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 and the Quebec Educational Program to guide our students to be internationally minded and with a passion for life-long learning.



Mission Statement of Children's World Academy

Children's World Academy is a community of lifelong learners. The mission of the school is:

- ❖ To educate the whole child, developing each student's intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual well-being.
- ❖ To encourage students to become active, compassionate and responsible human beings who are respectful of the plurality of cultures and religious beliefs.
- ❖ To nurture intellectual curiosity and actively involve students in developing good work habits, positive attitude and critical thinking in order to become committed and engaged citizens of the world.
- ❖ To provide students with engaging, relevant, challenging, and significant learning experiences connecting the world to the curriculum.
- ❖ To continue to provide a peaceful teaching and learning school environment via the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme attitudes and conflict management/peer mediation programs.



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.