

## Key concepts

Key concepts promote the development of a broad curriculum. They represent big ideas that are both relevant within and across disciplines and subjects. Inquiry into key concepts can facilitate connections between and among:

- courses within the individuals and societies subject group (intra-disciplinary learning)
- other subject groups (interdisciplinary learning).

Table 1 lists the key concepts to be explored across the MYP. The key concepts contributed by the study of individuals and societies are **change, global interactions, systems** and **time, place and space**.

Aesthetics	Change	Communication	Communities
Connections	Creativity	Culture	Development
Form	Global interactions	Identity	Logic
Perspective	Relationships	Systems	Time, place and space

Table 1  
MYP key concepts

These key concepts provide a framework for individuals and societies, informing units of work and helping to organize teaching and learning.

### Change

**Change** is a conversion, transformation, or movement from one form, state or value to another. Inquiry into the concept of change involves understanding and evaluating causes, processes and consequences.

For individuals and societies, the concept of change allows examination of the forces that shape the world: past, present and future. The causes and effects of change can be natural and artificial; intentional and unintentional; positive, negative or neutral. The subject group explores the role of individuals and societies in shaping change.

### Global interactions

**Global interactions**, as a concept, focuses on the connections between individuals and communities, as well as their relationships with built and natural environments, from the perspective of the world as a whole.

For individuals and societies, global interactions focuses on the interdependence of the larger human community, including the many ways that people come into conflict with and cooperate with each other, and live together in a highly interconnected world to share finite resources.

### Systems

**Systems** are sets of interacting or interdependent components. Systems provide structure and order in human, natural and built environments. Systems can be static or dynamic, simple or complex.

For individuals and societies, systems thinking provides a powerful tool for understanding both natural and human environments, and the role of individuals within them. Social and natural systems rely on a state of equilibrium and are vulnerable to change from internal and external forces.

### Time, place and space

The intrinsically linked concept of **time, place and space** refers to the absolute or relative position of people, objects and ideas. Time, place and space focuses on how we construct and use our understanding of location (“where” and “when”).

For individuals and societies, time is not simply the measurement of years or time periods but is a continuum of significant events of the past, present and future. Place and space are complex concepts, the definitions of which are fluid. Place is socially constructed and can be explored in terms of constraints and opportunities afforded by location. Places have value and meaning defined by humans. Space relates to where and why places and landscapes are located. This concept also includes the social, economic, and political processes that interact through or across space, resulting in patterns and networks arising, such as migration or trade flows. Challenges related to “place and space” can be understood on multiple scales (including local, regional, national and global).

Other key concepts can also be important in individuals and societies. For example, **culture, development** and **communities** are among the key concepts that often inform studies in the humanities and social sciences.

### Related concepts

Related concepts promote deep learning. They are grounded in specific disciplines and are useful for exploring key concepts in greater detail. Inquiry into related concepts helps students develop more complex and sophisticated conceptual understanding. Related concepts may arise from the subject matter of a unit or the craft of a subject—its features and processes.

The individuals and societies subject group is integrated by a rich array of disciplines and the experience of students within the subject group can be structured in very different ways. Table 2 lists related concepts for the study of individuals and societies. For modular courses, teachers should select the relevant related concepts from the disciplines that are central for each unit. The definitions for integrated humanities courses, economics, geography and history are included at the end of this guide (in the appendices). The definitions for suggested related concepts for additional disciplines in individuals and societies can be found in the MYP Individuals and societies teacher support material (on the programme resource centre). Teachers are not limited to the related concepts listed in this chart and may choose others when planning units, including from other subject groups.

Related concepts in individuals and societies		
Economics		
Choice	Consumption	Equity
Globalization	Growth	Model
Poverty	Power	Resources
Scarcity	Sustainability	Trade

<b>Geography</b>		
Causality (cause and consequence)	Culture	Disparity and equity
Diversity	Globalization	Management and intervention
Networks	Patterns and trends	Power
Processes	Scale	Sustainability
<b>History</b>		
Causality (cause and consequence)	Civilization	Conflict
Cooperation	Culture	Governance
Identity	Ideology	Innovation and revolution
Interdependence	Perspective	Significance
<i>Related concepts in individuals and societies</i>		
<b>Integrated humanities (drawn from economics, geography and history)</b>		
Causality (cause and consequence)	Choice	Culture
Equity	Globalization	Identity
Innovation and revolution	Perspective	Power
Processes	Resources	Sustainability
<i>Suggested related concepts for additional disciplines in individuals and societies</i>		
<b>Business management</b>		
Causality (cause and consequence)	Competition	Cooperation
Culture	Ethics	Globalization
Innovation	Leadership	Power
Processes	Strategy	Structure
<b>Philosophy</b>		
Alterity (self and other)	Being and becoming	Belief
Causality (cause and consequence)	Human nature	Identity
Knowledge	Liberty	Mind/body
Objectivity/subjectivity	Personality	Values
<b>Psychology</b>		
Behaviour	Bond	Cognition
Consciousness	Development	Disorder
Group	Learning	Mental health
Mind	Symptoms	Unconsciousness
<b>Sociology/Anthropology</b>		
Agency	Community	Culture
Identity	Institutions	Meaning
Norms	Social interactions	Socialization
Social position (roles/status)	Structure	Subjectivity
<i>Suggested related concepts for additional disciplines in individuals and societies</i>		
<b>Political science/Civics/Government</b>		

Authority	Citizenship	Conflict
Cooperation	Globalization	Government
Ideologies	Integration	Interdependence
Leadership	Power	Rights
<b>World religions</b>		
Authority	Beliefs	Deity
Destiny	Doctrines	Morality
Religious feelings	Rituals and rites	Sacredness
Symbolism	Tradition	Worship

Table 2  
Related concepts in individuals and societies

## Global contexts for teaching and learning

Global contexts direct learning towards independent and shared inquiry into our common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet. Using the world as the broadest context for learning, MYP individuals and societies can develop meaningful explorations of:

- identities and relationships
- orientation in space and time
- personal and cultural expression
- scientific and technical innovation
- globalization and sustainability
- fairness and development.

Teachers must identify a global context for teaching and learning, or develop additional contexts that help students explore the relevance of their inquiry (why it matters).

Many inquiries into individuals and societies concepts naturally focus on location and chronology. However, courses in this subject group should, over time, offer students multiple opportunities to explore all MYP global contexts in relation to the aims and objectives of the subject group.