

Language acquisition glossary

Term	Definition
Accuracy	Accuracy, appropriateness and effect in writing refers to use of transitional devices, tenses, word use and word order, accents, register and spelling. Accuracy, appropriateness and effect in speaking refers to use of transitional devices, tenses, word use and word order, register, pronunciation and intonation.
Aspects of style	The use of literary devices such as register, tone, alliteration, onomatopoeia, exaggeration, genre, metaphor, simile, and so on.
Cohesive devices	The grammatical and/or lexical items that give coherence to the text as a whole, as well as punctuation and paragraphing.
Communication	<p>Oral communication encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking. Oral skills are essential for language development, for learning and for relating to others. Listening (the receptive mode) and speaking (the expressive mode) work together in a transactional process between listeners and speakers. Oral communication enables students to construct meaning through the process of articulating thoughts and internalizing meaning from speech in a variety of ways. Role plays, interviews, oral presentations, discussions, debates, lectures, speeches and drama are all examples of learning experiences in which students may engage in order to develop their oral communication skills both as speakers and listeners. Some oral communication tasks will involve a single, main speaker whereas other oral communication tasks will involve multiple, interacting speakers. Speakers may be face-to-face or digital participants in oral exchange.</p> <p>Visual communication encompasses all aspects of viewing and interpreting text and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. Visual texts are constructed to convey meaning and engage viewers in accessing information and interpreting thoughts, ideas and feelings. They allow students to understand the interplay of image and language to convey cultural facts, ideas, values and attitudes. Visual texts may be paper, electronic or live, observable forms of communication constructed to present information. Learning to interpret this information and to understand and use different media develops invaluable skills. Symbols and signs, graphs, tables, diagrams, leaflets, brochures, posters, advertisements, cartoons, comics, graphic novels, television programmes, films, music video clips, newspapers, magazines, websites and dramatic interpretations are all examples of visual text types with which students may engage in order to develop their visual interpretation skills.</p>

Term	Definition
Communication (continued from previous page)	<p>Written communication encompasses all aspects of reading and writing. Reading is constructing meaning from text by making inferences and interpretations. The process of reading is interactive and involves the reader's purpose for reading, the reader's prior knowledge and experience, as well as the author's techniques and effects. The ability to read and comprehend fiction and non-fiction is essential for the process of inquiry. Students need to be able to identify, synthesize and apply useful and relevant information from written text. When students engage or interact with the text, they make connections, reflect on feelings and actions, imagine themselves in another's situation, gain perspectives and develop empathy. Writing is a way of expressing ourselves. It allows us to develop, organize and communicate thoughts, feelings, ideas, opinions and information. Fiction and non-fiction in a variety of genres, for example, short stories, novels, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, letters, cartoons, graphic novels, poetry, song lyrics, drama, screenplays, advertisements, blogs, emails, websites, brochures, leaflets, editorials, interviews, magazine articles, reports, instructions and guidelines are all examples of text types with which students may engage in order to develop their written communication skills both as readers and writers.</p> <p>Note: The examples above do not constitute a definitive list, and teachers may wish to incorporate other text types into classroom practice.</p>
Constructing meaning	<p>Constructing meaning refers to creating an understanding about something; interpreting facts, an opinion, an idea or an event that has been read, viewed, listened to. The next step is to interact or engage with the text; this is when students relate the event or idea or experiences to their own experiences, ideas, opinions. It is hoped that students can empathize as a result of the understandings and insights gained.</p>
Context	<p>The constellation of events and situational factors (physical and others), both internal and external to a person, in which acts of communication are embedded (Council of Europe 2001). Interpersonal and cultural contexts are embedded in all communication between two or more people. The cultural contexts are the learned behaviours and rules that frame these interactions. In the early phases, the simple interpersonal and cultural contexts may include ways of greeting and forms of address, gestures, eye contact, body language and personal space considerations. In the later phases, they may include negotiating, solving problems, agreeing and disagreeing.</p>
Continuum	<p>A tool to identify and map a student's language development.</p> <p>A diagnostic tool to assist teachers in planning language learning experiences for students, and for monitoring and assessing their language development. Recognizing that learners enter the programme at different ages and with varying levels and domains of language experience, a sequence of development phases enables the teacher to identify current levels and plan learning experiences leading on to subsequent phases.</p>
Critical literacy	<p>The ability to question, challenge and evaluate the meanings and purposes of texts. The skills to compose, respond to, analyse and evaluate written, spoken, visual and multimedia texts from various perspectives. It involves an understanding of the ways in which values and attitudes are communicated through language, including how subject matter, point of view and language embody assumptions about issues such as culture, gender and ethnicity.</p>

Term	Definition
Critical stance	A perspective or point of view taken by a reader or viewer. It involves the reader or viewer questioning the position presented in a text and developing his or her own ideas in response to the text.
Critical thinking	Specific cognitive skills, such as analysing and interpreting, used to consider ideas, arguments and points of view, and to reach a conclusion.
Digital text	Text read or viewed by electronic means.
Format	This is the text type. Examples of written formats are: magazine, letter, book, brochure, newspaper, chart, journal, email, text message. Examples of spoken text types are: performance, speech, radio report, TV programme, screencast. Examples of visual text types are: poster, magazine, website, postcard, brochure, gesture, sign, diagram, graph, film.
Genre	Genre refers to a style, category or type of literature that can be further categorized into fiction and nonfiction.
Graded readers	Fiction and non-fiction books that have been written specifically for language learners with scaffolded or modified plot, vocabulary, grammar and visual text to support the written text.
Grammar	The set of rules governing how words and their component parts combine to form sentences. In MYP language acquisition, this encompasses word order, sentence structure, parts of speech, morphology, phonetics, as applicable to the language.
Infer	To go beyond information in a text to identify what may be thought, expressed or considered correct.
Language	Language refers to vocabulary and grammatical structures. It is assumed that as students move through the phases, they will use language that demonstrates increasing levels of sophistication and complexity.
Language conventions	Language conventions refer to the structures and features of a variety of texts and includes spelling, grammar and punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing and format, and referencing style. In writing, format can be further defined to include purpose, sense of audience, text type (essay, short story, letter), structure and organization of the text.
Language of instruction	This is the language in which the majority of a school's curriculum is delivered. A school can have more than one language of instruction.
Literary and non-literary texts	In the MYP language subject groups, literary texts can include, but are not limited to, biographies, autobiographies, diaries and journals, poetry, song lyrics, fairy tales, fables and myths, prose (short stories and novels, including abridged and modified versions), cartoons, plays, graphic novels, screenplays. They can also include fiction and non-fiction genres such as letters, speeches, oral traditions, essays, drama, travelogues. Non-literary texts can include, but are not limited to, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements, blogs, emails, websites, brochures, leaflets, editorials, interviews, reports, instructions, guidelines and other texts of an informational nature.

Term	Definition
Literature	The definition of literature varies between different cultures and languages. In most cultures, literature includes poetry, prose (short stories and novels), mythology and drama. Additionally, in some cultures, literature also includes autobiography, biography, graphic novels, travelogues, satires, essays, letters, literary non-fiction, speeches, oral traditions, screenplays, film and television programmes, such as drama series. In MYP language acquisition, literature can include all of the above, and schools need to determine what constitutes literature within the context of their language course(s).
Mode	The medium used to communicate the message: in written mode, on paper or in electronic format; in spoken mode, live or in electronic format; in visual mode, in electronic format, live or printed.
Mother tongue	The term “mother tongue” is used in the research literature in various ways. It may denote the language learned first and/or the language identified with as a “native” speaker. For the purpose of the MYP, “mother tongue” includes both these definitions, and describes the language that the student uses at home and/or outside the classroom environment. Those students whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction may study their mother tongue as their second language option. This course of study supports students to develop their mother tongue, sustain cognitive and academic development and maintain their cultural identity.
Multilingualism	A term used to describe complex, rich, dynamic language portraits that include a range of abilities/proficiencies in more than one language.
Multiliteracies	Engaging with text in multimodal ways to construct meaning. Multiliteracies provide a bridge between the real-life texts of the community and school texts, and encourage a real-world, interdisciplinary approach to learning through the use of disciplined knowledge. Using a multiliteracies approach enables students to understand, use and critically evaluate the multimodal texts of the current generation. These complex texts incorporate elements of linguistic, visual, spatial, audio and gestural design.
Multimodal text	A text in which meaning is constructed and presented/represented in multiple ways, for example, written and/or visual text (such as in a cartoon, website, TV programme, graphic novel, advertisement, poster, music video, magazine).
Oracy	The ability to speak, and to understand spoken language.
Oratory technique	A combination of pronunciation, intonation, tone, pitch, inflection, pace, pausing, voice control, volume, projection, body language, gesture and eye contact (as applicable to the language being studied).
Phase	A stage of language learning development as indicated by a standard or proficiency reached. Phases 1 to 6 on the language learning continuum do not directly correspond to the years of study in the MYP or to the age of students in the programme.
Print-based text	Text read or viewed by paper means.
Proficient	Able to use a discrete skill successfully, in context, according to established criteria.

Term	Definition
Pronunciation	Clarity of articulation, not accent.
Recognize	Identify through patterns or features.
Register	The use of tone, pace, volume, pitch, inflection, fluency/fluidity, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure that give the correct degree of formality appropriate for the specific context and audience. In some languages there will be more levels of register than just “formal” and “informal”.
Sense of audience	Sense of audience is linked to register. This refers to tone, vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, and their appropriateness for the situation.
Situation	<p>Situation refers to the context in which the communication takes place or the purpose of the communication; it may refer to the linguistic, social or cultural time and place.</p> <p>Everyday situations include classroom routines and activities, family life and home routines.</p> <p>Familiar situations include topics of more personal concern or interest; students will have the knowledge, the language and the experience to communicate more confidently about these personal world-type topics, which may be ideas or issues.</p> <p>Unfamiliar situations include contexts beyond the scope explored through the unit; students may have more limited knowledge and experience of these contexts, which will require language learned to be applied to a new situation or idea. The language required may also be more abstract. This may include global challenges and more globally significant ideas.</p> <p>Rehearsed and unrehearsed refers to structured or practised models or frameworks, for example, a dialogue or role-play format. In any interaction, the student is expected to speak with spontaneity.</p> <p>Social situations may be in the classroom, the playground, the home, participating in a drama, a role play or dialogue, an interview, a celebration.</p> <p>Academic situations may include listening, note taking, participating in a lecture, a presentation, a discussion, a debate, making a speech, conducting a survey or interview, giving an oral response to literature or giving a report or review of a book read or a film viewed, participating in group work and projects. This list is not exhaustive but serves to help teachers when planning learning experiences and assessment tasks.</p>
Style	Style refers to the manner in which the author of the text has used language to suit his or her purpose or intention. This can include the author’s use of vocabulary, grammar, register, syntactical elements and literary devices.
Target language	The language being studied.
Text	A visual, oral or written construct. For the purposes of MYP language acquisition, a text may be written, viewed or spoken, and may or may not include graphic or pictorial information. Text types can be informational or literary, for example, speeches, letters, cartoons, advertisements, news reports, magazine and newspaper articles, short and long prose, and so on.

Term	Definition
Transitional devices	Structures, systems or words used to connect and organize ideas, with the effect of guiding the reader through a text. What is considered as appropriate structure or convention will be dependent on the language.
Understand	Comprehend the meaning or significance of something and explain it in a different way.
Viewed	Able to be seen, shown or looked at for display, scrutiny or critical consideration.
Visual context	The purpose(s) for and situation(s) in which the text has been created or is read. For example, the social and cultural features and factors of the text. Where and why is it viewed and interpreted? What factors influence the understanding and interpretation of the visual text in combination with the spoken and/or written text? Does the visual text communicate a message, add meaning or explanation, or offer a perspective on a topic?
Visual convention	The structures, features, layout and design elements of visual text. It can include the use of colour, texture, line, shape and form, symbolism, sound effects and music, body language, special effects, costume, camera angles and movement.
Visual literacy	For the purposes of MYP language acquisition, visual literacy is not limited to modern mass media and new technologies. It can refer as much to reading signs and symbols as graphic novels. Visual literacy is the ability to evaluate, apply or create conceptual visual representations, and to understand the knowledge that is communicated by the visual.
Visual text	Any text that includes an image or a series of static or moving images, for example, a sign, symbol, poster, brochure, CD or book cover, newspaper article with pictures, website, film, TV programme, PowerPoint® presentation. In MYP language acquisition, visual text is viewed together with oral and/or written text to interpret, analyse and evaluate information, ideas, opinions, emotions and attitudes presented.
World literature	In the MYP, this refers to literature from different parts of the world, cross-cultural works and/or works in translation.