The EDUCATOR

The newsletter of Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin



Fall-Winter 2024-2025

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From the Head of School



KURT MECKLEM

When you send your child out the door in the morning, or drop them off in front of the school, you are essentially taking a leap of faith that their time spent on campus will be a benefit to their education and development. You are entrusting us with the development of your child. This is a responsibility that we take very seriously.

Throughout the year, we inform you of what we are doing with your child while they are here on campus. This includes writing reports that offer feedback on how they are progressing academically. We also invite you to conferences, open days, explanation sessions, Back to School Night and other events to keep you informed. We publish a weekly newsletter and ensure that all of us are available via email and appointments.

In spite of all that, it can still be difficult for a parent to truly understand what is happening inside our classrooms. The students usually are not that much help either. A question like, "what did you do in school today?" is likely to result in a one word answer from your child at the dinner table. It is our hope that a publication like this *Educator* will give you a better understanding of what is happening here after your kids walk out of your door and into our's.

This is just a small sample of what types of things are happening in our classes. We hope, though, that it is enough to give you a sense of how your children are spending their day.

If you are not already a member of our community, I invite you to have a look at these pages to find out more about the education we offer at OIS. You can always contact our admissions office to fine out more.

If you are a current parent, I invite you to have a look at this small sample of the types of learning that is happening at our school. And, hopefully, it will give you an opportunity to ask some questions that elicit more conversation at the dinner table.

Cover image: Still photograph of the cast performing Sister Act!, the 2024 All School Production musical presented in February.

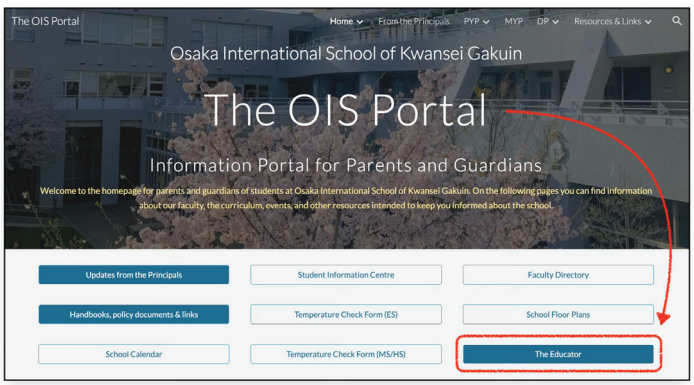
About The Educator

Welcome to *The Educator*, the newsletter of Osaka International School of Kwansei Gakuin. The newsletter is published twice per year, with one mid-year edition, and one end-of-year edition, and provides a look at a selection of the learning, activities, events, and accomplishments from the first and then the second half of each academic year.

Feedback and requests on the contents of the newsletter are always welcome; please send your comments to oisprincipals@soismail.jp

Please also make sure to check out our other OIS publication, the student-led Tango newsletter, also available to download from our website.

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PYP Early Years: Kindergarten Unit of Inquiry



DAWN INADA

Through the transdisciplinary theme of *How we express ourselves*, children in Kindergarten developed an understanding of how people learn and express themselves through play. They inquired into how we communicate through play, the imaginative use of materials, and the connection between play and learning.

We started our unit with a *No Play* day. An individual called the Play Pirate took our play away! In his written messages, he said that play was a waste of time and that we should do more work! He insisted that the only way to get our play time back was to convince him that it was worthwhile. So, that's what we did!

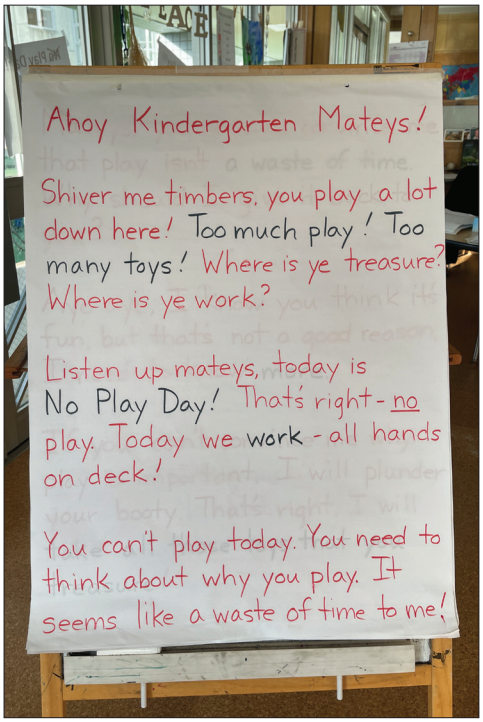
During our *No Play* day, we did lots of cleaning and work around the classroom.

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PYP Early Years: Kindergarten Unit of Inquiry (continued)

We discovered that we liked it, but we really wanted our play back. We drew pictures of what we like to play and brainstormed why play is important.







Fortunately, we convinced the Play Pirate and got our play back. The learning was just beginning.

We made cool things out of everyday materials. Castles, jellyfish, and houses from cups, and snakes, paint brushes and telescopes from toilet paper rolls! We learned new games and how to create our own fun. We also practiced how to enter into play and include others. Communication and self-management skills were developed along the way.











At the end of the unit we celebrated all our new learning during our field trip to Kids Plaza.









In case you still think playing is a frivolous activity, talk to one of the Kindergarten children. They'll set you straight!

PYP: Grade 1 Unit of Inquiry



WAKABA MORI

Unit of Inquiry
How We Express Ourselves (HWEO)

Central Idea
People communicate ideas in different ways

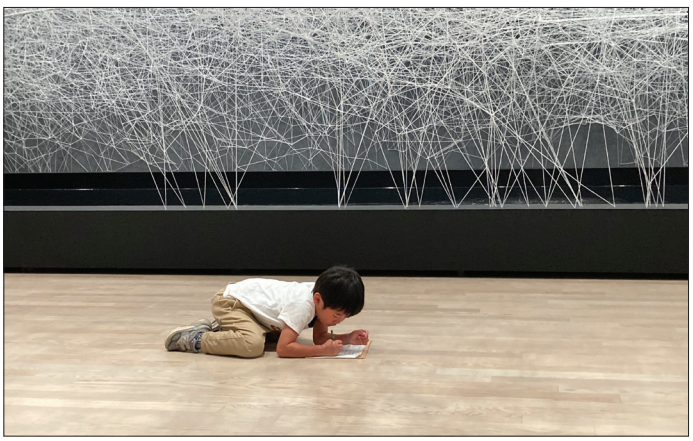
Lines of Inquiry

- Ways people communicate
- Reasons people communicate
- How words and images help people understand messages

Each year, as we attend high school graduation ceremonies at SOIS, one of the significant qualities demonstrated by our students is their ability to express themselves. From a young age, our students are taught and nurtured in the art of *How We Express Ourselves.*

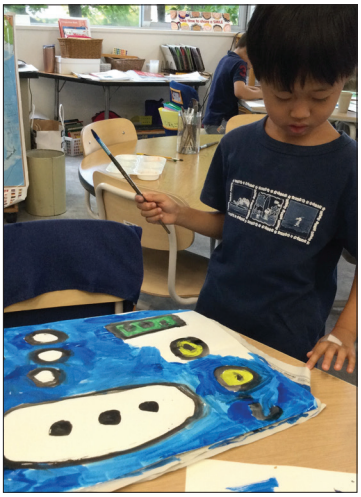
In Grade 1, as our provocation of the unit on *How We Express Ourselves*, the students visited the Nakanoshima Museum of Art, where they explored the installations of renowned artist Chiharu Shiota. This experience sparked curiosity and led to discussions about how people communicate through art.





Inspired by the museum visit, each student created a painting that reflected key aspects of their identity, accompanied by original poems titled "The Important Thing about Me". This combination of visual art and poetry provided a meaningful way for students to express their thoughts and emotions, reinforcing the unit's focus on communication and self-expression.





Then, we took a walk around the local community to explore how people use signs and symbols to communicate. Students identified various signs and symbols and learned that communication extends beyond words to include visual symbols with specific meanings. This real-world experience helped students understand how symbols guide behavior, convey messages, and provide information across different contexts and cultures.



PYP: Grade 1 Unit of Inquiry (continued)

In addition to exploring visual art and symbols, the Grade 1 students visited the High School Wind Ensemble Class at our school to learn about communication through music. They observed how high school students collaborate without talking to each other to create beautiful music, and the HS students demonstrated various instruments. The Grade 1 students also had the chance to conduct while the HS students played, actively participating in the musical process. This experience highlighted how music is a powerful form of expression for thoughts, feelings, and stories.





The students then wrote imaginative stories and designed a cover to create their own fiction books, which they successfully published and shared with their parents.

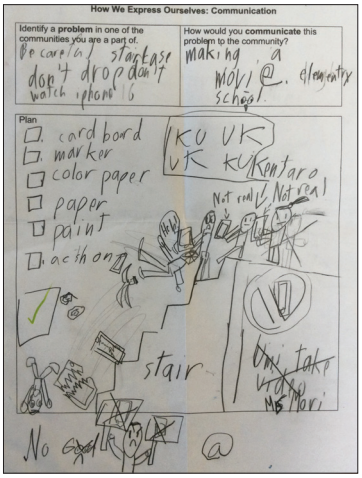
Throughout this unit, the Grade 1 students gained a deeper understanding of the many forms of communication that exist in our everyday lives. From verbal and non-verbal communication to symbolic and artistic forms, students were encouraged to think creatively about how messages are conveyed.

For the summative assessment, students were tasked with demonstrating their understanding of effective communication by expressing their messages through a variety of mediums. These included posters, *Kamishibai* stories, artwork, short videos, and signs. The range of ideas, creativity, and teamwork displayed by the students was truly impressive. They took great care in identifying the message they wanted to convey and refining their communication to ensure clarity and impact. Through this process, the students not only developed a deeper understanding of how to express themselves, but also learned the importance of persistence and collaboration in achieving their goals.



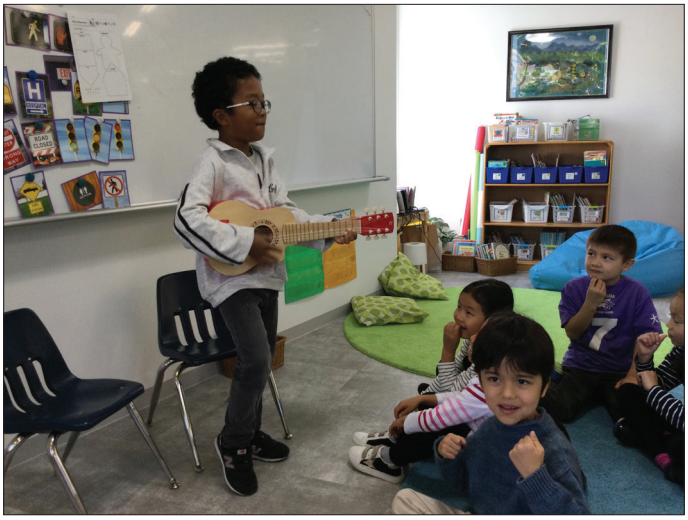








What stood out the most was the students' enthusiasm and commitment to their work. The Grade 1 students demonstrated remarkable creativity and a genuine passion for self-expression. They have shown that they are not only capable communicators but also imaginative thinkers. We are incredibly proud of each of them and the impressive progress they have made in their journey of *How We Express Ourselves*. We look forward to seeing how their newfound skills will continue to develop in future inquiries, as they continue to discover and express their unique voices.



PYP: Grade 2 Authors in Action (Realistic Fiction Edition)



PAULA DEZEM

During the Fall term, Grade 2 students explored the world of realistic fiction - a genre that features made-up stories set in real-life situations with believable characters. These stories connect with children because they reflect experiences children may have in their own lives. Through storytelling, students improved their writing skills and learned about empathy, imagination, and the world.

This literacy unit focused on key elements that make stories engaging. We used the ***6 + 1 Traits of Writing*** - ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation - to guide students in developing well-structured and interesting narratives. These traits help them understand the components of writing and bring their stories to life. As part of this process, students experimented with dialogue, onomatopoeia, ellipses, and all-capital letters for emphasis. These techniques allowed them to express emotions, build suspense, and create lively dialogue, with the goal of making their writing more dynamic. They also expanded their vocabulary and refined their grammar, paying particular attention to punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure to produce well-crafted narratives.

To support their writing, we read and explored several mentor texts in the realistic fiction genre. These books demonstrated how authors write engaging stories and how illustrators enhance narratives visually. By looking at word choices and page layouts, students gained inspiration for organizing their own text and illustrations.

A highlight of this unit was the collaborative writing process. Working in pairs or small groups, students brainstormed ideas, discussed and refined their stories together, and strengthened their ability to work as a team. While the stories were co-created, each child produced their own edition, personalizing the illustrations and final presentation. This balance of collaboration and individual creativity made the experience especially rewarding.

Grade 2 Authors in Action: Realistic Fiction Edition was a memorable conclusion to the unit. During this celebration, students shared their stories with parents, the elementary school community, and even a high school class. They read their books aloud, explained their writing process, and reflected on what made their stories interesting. This experience highlighted their growth as writers, giving them the opportunity to take pride in their creativity and recognize themselves as real authors.







PYP: Grade 2 Unit of Inquiry (continued)









Students were required to brainstorm and plan together, and then produce an individual piece of work.

This balance of collaboration and individual creativity made the experience especially rewarding.



PYP: Grade 2 Exploring Materials Through STEAM



PAULA DEZEM

Unit of Inquiry
How the World Works (HTWW)

Central Idea
Materials exist in different states and can be used in different ways.

Lines of Inquiry

- Different states of matter
- Changes in materials can be reversible and irreversible
- How living things use materials

In December and January, Grade 2 students explored the unit of inquiry, *How the World Works*, focusing on materials and their properties. They investigated the different states of matter—solid, liquid, and gas—and how these properties influence their uses. Students also examined how materials change, why some changes are reversible or irreversible, and how living things use materials in everyday life.

To enhance their learning, students participated in a series of hands-on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) activities in class. STEAM education encourages students to think critically and creatively while problem-solving through real-world applications. The importance of this approach was reinforced when OIS Grade 10 student Shoot Noro, who chose STEAM education for his Personal Project, shared insights on its impact. As they engaged in these activities, students explored material properties like flexibility, hardness, density, visibility, and viscosity. In the process, they not only applied scientific concepts but also developed creative and thoughtful approaches to problem-solving.

The value of STEAM activities lies in how they connect various areas of learning, helping students deepen their understanding of how the world works. These activities promote collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking - skills that are essential in today's world. By exploring materials through STEAM, students not only gained knowledge but also strengthened crucial skills such as communication, teamwork, and perseverance.

The unit concluded with an exciting event: the STEAM Expo. During this event, Grade 2 students led some of the STEAM-based activities they had learned in class for the Elementary School community and their parents. The Expo took place over three sessions, during which students demonstrated their stamina, organizational and communication skills, and ability to manage an audience. It was great to see the second graders confidently explain their activities and engage others in hands-on learning. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to build confidence, refine their teamwork, and engage in meaningful interactions with others.













PYP: Grade 4 Unit of Inquiry



JENNIFER CAMPBELL

Unit of Inquiry
Who We Are (WWA)

Central Idea
Effective interactions between human body systems contribute to healthy lifestyle.

Lines of Inquiry

- How body systems work
- How body systems are interdependent
- Impact of lifestyle choices on the body

For our third Unit of Inquiry, the Grade Four class explored the transdisciplinary theme *Who We Are*. We inquired into the idea of 'Effective interactions between human body systems contribute to a healthy lifestyle'. For this unit, we focused on developing several important Approaches to Learning skills – information and media literacy (Research Skills), and affective and reflection skills (Self-management). We also utilized our interaction and language skills (Communication) in our final presentation!

In the beginning of the unit, students learned about the various body systems. They considered how different body systems interact and impact one another. Then, we began to consider how our own lifestyles impact our body systems. For a one-week period, students recorded data related to four personal health habits – sleep, exercise, diet, and screen time. In Art class, students also worked in groups to create life-size artistic representations of various body systems.

Students chose one personal health habit to reflect on. Utilising their research skills, they inquired into how that health habit affects various body systems. Students learned about the recommendations from health professionals regarding sleep, diet, exercise, or screen time. We worked to improve the students' media literacy by considering the following questions - What makes a source trustworthy? How can we tell if this is reliable information? What are the different reasons an author of a source might want to present information that is not entirely true?

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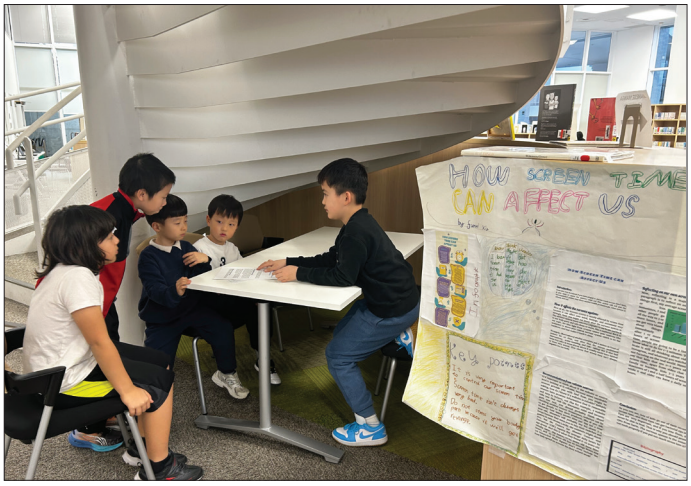
G4 presented their findings in a *Health Habits & Body Systems Exhibition* to students from K-G6.



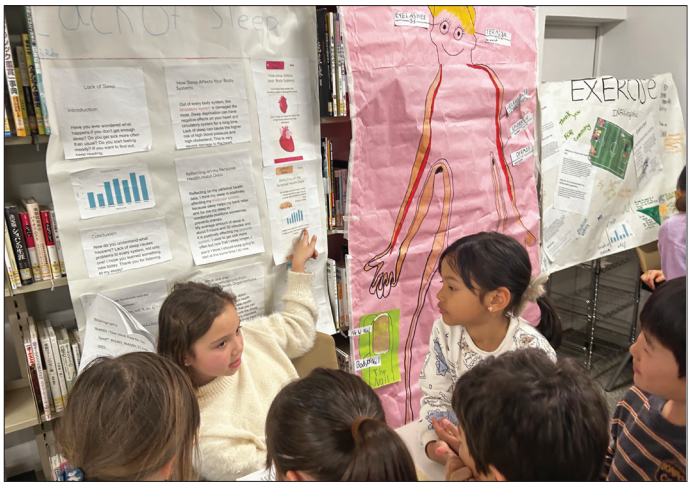


PYP: Grade 4 Unit of Inquiry (continued)

Students compiled their research into a persuasive text, using research and statistics to make arguments for the importance of healthy habits with the personal health habit they chose. They used Excel to create a graph to express their own personal health habit data in comparison to recommendations from health organisations. Students also created their own infographic to communicate their research findings. Finally, we combined our persuasive writing, research, graphs, and infographics into a poster.



As a conclusion to the unit, Grade Four students presented their findings in a 'Health Habits & Body Systems Exhibition'. They shared their learning with students from kindergarten to Grade 6, and enjoyed presenting in a variety of languages. Grade Four students shared their research findings, reflections on their own health habits, and their graphs and infographics. They explained their learning about the importance of reliable sources when researching, especially when learning about health information. They did their best to use their persuasive skills to convince their audience about the importance of being knowledgeable and reflective when considering the connection between our body systems and our health habits. As a school community, we were so impressed with the development of the Grade Four students' research, communication, and self-management skills through this inquiry. Congratulations, Grade Four!



Calendar Reminders



June 3 (Tue) MS/HS Spring Concert in the theatre from 16:00. Performances by MS Beginning Band, MS Band, HS Concert Band.

June 3-10 G11 mock exams.

June 4 (Wed) OIS PTA meeting from 09:00.

June 4 (Wed) MS/HS Spring Concert in the theatre from 16:00. Performances by MS Chorus, MS Beginning Strings, MS Intermediate Strings, MS Performance Strings, HS Concert Strings.

June 6 (Fri) K-G5 Student-Led Conferences, No elementary school classes on this day.

June 10 (Tue) HS Spring Concert at Maple Hall in Minoo. Performances by HS Choir, HS Strings Ensemble, and HS Wind Ensemble.

June 10 (Thu) G5 PYP Exhibition opening ceremony in the theatre.

June 13 (Fri) G11 Core Exhibition in the courtyard from 13:45-16:30. Students will present their Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay projects, and discuss their CAS activities.

June 19 (Thu) OIS PTA farewell party.

June 26 (Thu) Elementary school half-day; end of ES trimester.

June 27 (Fri) Middle and high school half-day; end of MS/HS trimester.

PYP Japanese

KAORI ALGIE, HISAKO GOHARA,
& KAZUYA SAKANAKA





Kinder: *Setsubun*

Setsubun is a traditional Japanese festival celebrated in early February, marking the day before the start of the spring season according to the Japanese lunar calendar. The festival is best known for a custom called *mame-maki* (bean throwing), where people throw roasted soybeans either out of their homes or at family members dressed as *oni* (demons or ogres). The aim of this activity is to drive away evil spirits and bad luck while inviting good fortune (*fuku*) into the home. As they throw the beans, people shout, "*Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*" which means, "Out with the demons! In with the good fortune!"

In Kindergarten, prior to the day, the students learned about the event, what it means, and how it is celebrated. We read many books related to *oni* (ogre) and made *oni* masks. On January 31st, we went to a nearby park for an *oni* hunt to defeat the *oni*. When we arrived, one of the shrubs rattled, and an *oni* jumped out! The students were very brave, grabbing a handful of beans and courageously throwing them at the *oni*. Soon, the fierce *oni* was overpowered and ran away. The students were filled with happiness and a sense of accomplishment after chasing away the evil spirits. Later, Kaori sensei tracked down the *oni*, brought it back to the park, and made it apologize. The *oni* revealed itself, and behind the mask, we discovered our beloved Sakanaka sensei! We were all very relieved to see the familiar face.

After the *oni* left the park, the students flew the kites they had made in Japanese class as part of the traditional Japanese New Year's activity during the Unit of Inquiry on play. Although they were made from copy paper, the kites flew very well. The students were delighted to see them fly, and kept running around with joy and excitement.

The students were able to cleanse themselves of the misfortunes of the previous year and start the new season with a clean slate, filled with hopes for good health and happiness, while keeping their spirits high in the year ahead. It was a valuable experience for them, both culturally and academically.

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PYP Japanese (continued)

Grades 1 & 2: *Fictional Narratives*

During the unit on *How We Express Ourselves*, Grade 1 and 2 students wrote original narratives in Japanese and created picture books. First, they explored different types of fictional narratives. Then, through engaging class discussions, they identified the essential components of a story. Using a graphic organizer, they crafted their own imaginative narratives. It was the biggest and most challenging project they had undertaken so far, yet it was also the most rewarding experience, unlocking their creativity and imagination and shaping it into a book. When the book was completed, their faces lit up with bright smiles of satisfaction and pride.





In addition to this project, Grade 1 students also learned to sing the song *Sekaiju no Kodomotachi ga* (Children All Around the World) with sign language. Through this activity, they naturally recognized that each gesture has its own meaning, and that there are other ways of expressing and communicating beyond using voice or letters.



Grades 3 & 4: *Haiku*

In Unit 2, Grade 3 & 4 students learned about *haiku*. A *haiku* is a traditional form of Japanese poetry that consists of 17 syllables (5-7-5). *Haiku* often highlight nature, the seasons, or moments of personal feelings. The students explored the beauty and simplicity of the *haiku* world and were inspired by existing *haiku* created by people both young and old in the past, and the rich nature around us. They experimented with capturing moments, emotions, and impressions, and worked hard to evoke their imagination and creativity. With the great motivation of entering the nation-wide annual *haiku* contest, they elaborated on their original *haiku*. At the end of the unit, they chose the best one from their own collection and wrote it on a *shikishi* with a small *haiga* (small painting accompanying *haiku*) to showcase their learning.

This creative exercise not only enhanced their understanding of poetry but also helped them develop an appreciation for the power of language and the art of concise expression.



PYP Japanese (continued)

Grade 5: *Rakugo*

During Unit 2, all Grade 5 students immersed themselves in the world of *rakugo*, a traditional Japanese comedic storytelling art. They began by watching various professional performances, including a semi-professional live show. Afterward, they were divided into three groups to perform different stories. Each team developed their performance to tell a humorous tale, using minimal props, varied tones of voice, facial expressions, and gestures to effectively deliver the comedy of the story. Students in JL 2 and 3 also wrote their own original *rakugo* stories, performing them individually to showcase their learning at the end of the unit.

Through this unit, students not only developed Japanese language skills and performing arts techniques but also gained cultural insights into the stories and the historical background of *rakugo*, learning to appreciate them all.











KG News

Sustainable Development Goals in Action at Kwansei Gakuin

In 2019, Kwansei Gakuin established the SDGs Promotion Headquarters (from FY2024, the Sustainability Promotion Headquarters) to promote the development of global citizens who embody KG's motto "Mastery for Service". As part of this effort, KG is holding the SDGs Ideas Contest for Kwansei Gakuin students for the third time this year.

This year, the contest is open to all students in the Kwansei Gakuin community, ranging from elementary school to university students. The theme of the contest is "the realization of a sustainable society". Mr. Saimon Yamakawa from the headquarters office visited OIS in April to introduce the contest to our PYP teachers, and MYP students. More information about the contest can be seen here.



MYP: Art & Design



DAVID MYERS
Head of Art Department

Grades 7: *Printmaking & Storytelling*

This year in Grade 7 Art, we embarked on a journey into the world of printmaking and storytelling, combining artistic creativity with practical skills. .

One of the highlights of the year was the children's book project, where students designed, illustrated, and printed their own original stories. Using a variety of printmaking techniques, they created enjoyable, and creative pages, experimenting with methods such as linocut, monoprinting, and stenciling. Over the past two trimesters, they developed their skills, refining their craft while learning how to plan and execute long-term projects.

As part of this initiative, students also honed essential skills beyond art—time management, organization, and task planning—as they worked through the stages of brainstorming, sketching, and printing. This process encouraged them to think critically, problem-solve, and develop patience and precision in their artistic practice.

The finished books will be printed, bound, and shared with elementary students, starting with Grade 1. Many of these beautifully illustrated works will also find a home in the school library, offering future students a chance to enjoy and be inspired by the stories created this year.

By combining artistic expression with practical application, this project has not only enhanced students' printmaking abilities but also fostered a sense of collaboration and contribution to the school community

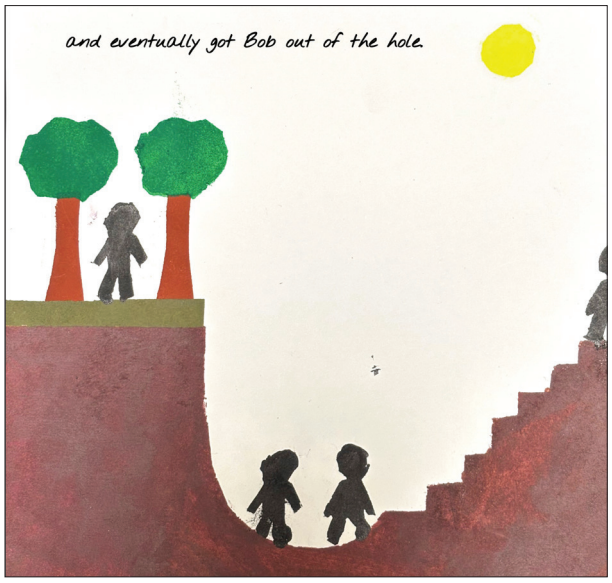


Ivy Crislip



Milani Ferris

Ishan Mitra Das



Yuika Hirose



MYP: Art & Design (continued)

Grades 10: *Exploring Film, Photography, and Animation*

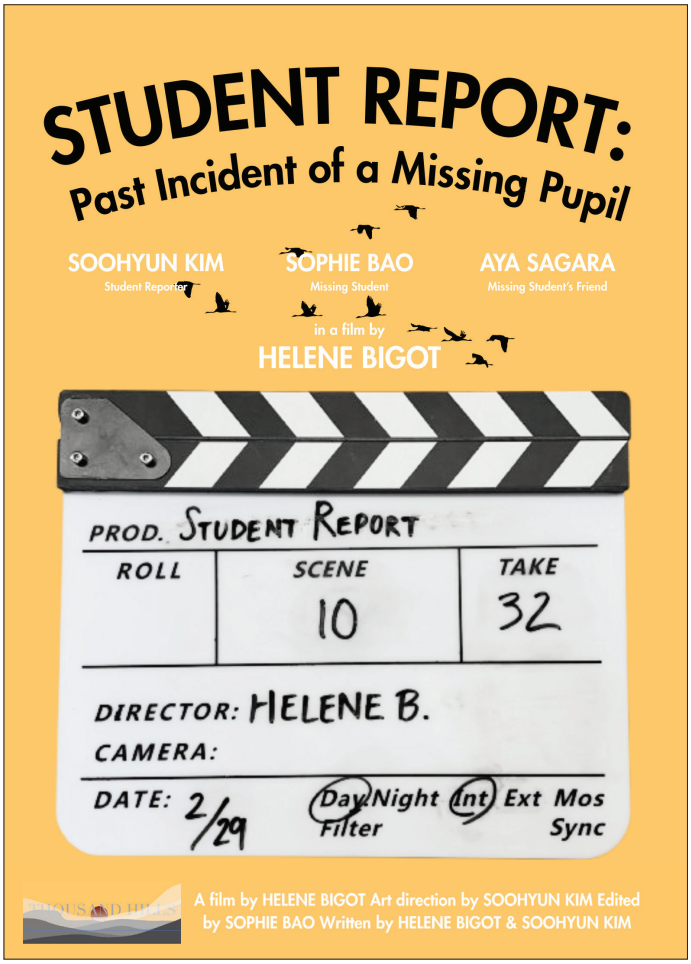
Grade 10 Media Arts students immersed themselves in the world of film production, beginning with an in-depth introduction to cinematography, editing, sound, lighting, and art direction. Over the first trimester, they divided into specialized roles, working to develop technical expertise in their chosen areas. This unit proved to be both engaging and rewarding, as students discovered the complexities and creative possibilities of filmmaking.

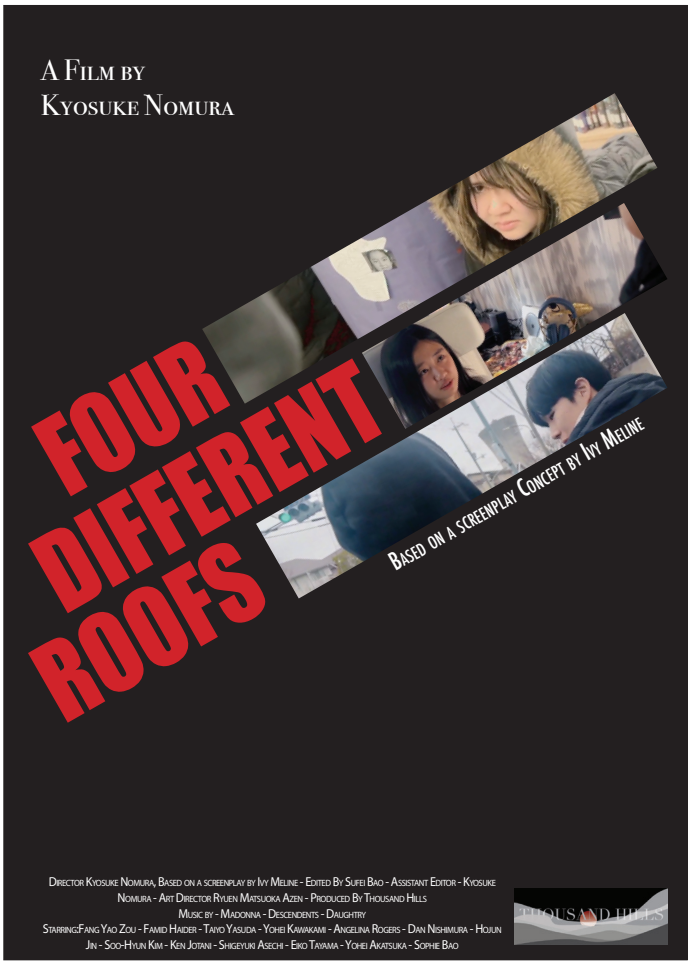
Following this foundation, students broke into three groups to explore different aspects of visual storytelling. One group took on the challenge of producing a short film, applying their newly acquired skills in directing, shooting, and editing. Another group focused on the artistic and technical aspects of photography, refining their ability to capture compelling images. Meanwhile, the third group delved into art direction and stop-motion animation, experimenting with visual composition and set design to bring their ideas to life.

Each of these projects required careful planning, organization, and teamwork, pushing students to navigate the challenges of working within a production team. Some experienced firsthand the complexities of managing a creative team, balancing artistic vision with the realities of collaboration and logistics.

For those interested in seeing the final projects, including the Grade 10 short films, photography showcases, and stop-motion animations, as well as the Grade 7 children's book project, you can soon access them via the provided link or QR code. Be sure to check them out to experience the creativity and dedication of our students in Media Arts!

https://sites.google.com/soismail.jp/thousand-hills/home





MYP: Invididuals & Societies



DAVID ALGIE

Grades 8: *Cartography and Geography*

Take a look at a world map. Depending on the type of map you're looking at, it might appear that Greenland is nearly as large as Africa. In reality, Greenland is much smaller—Africa is about 14 times larger. This distortion happens because of the Mercator projection, which makes landmasses near the poles (like Greenland) appear much larger than they are. Similarly, Canada may seem far bigger than the United States on many maps, but in fact, Canada is only about one and a half times the size of the U.S. Maps like the Mercator projection can distort sizes and distances, shaping our perceptions of the world in ways that don't always match reality.

During the Fall trimester, the Grade 8 Individuals and Societies class explored geography and cartography—studying the world around us and how we map and represent it. One major concept students engaged with was how map projections can distort our perceptions of shape, space and distance, particularly when translating the curved surface of the Earth onto a flat map.

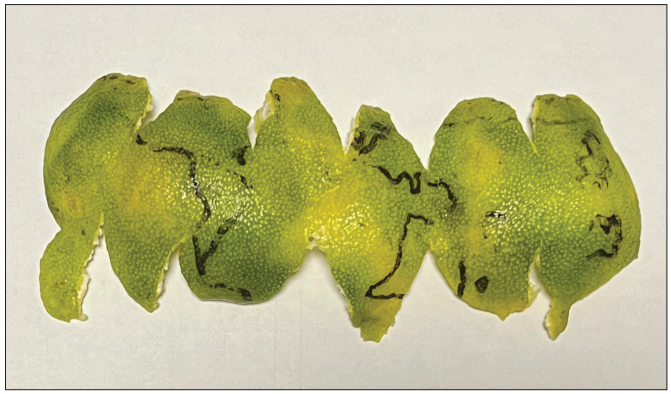
The Grade 8 students should be proud of how they engaged with the work. They listened attentively, took good notes, and asked thoughtful questions. It was clear they were mastering new concepts and expanding their knowledge. But as their teacher, I also wanted them to have fun and connect with the subject in a more hands-on way.

When Mr. Bertman heard we were looking at how maps can distort reality, he suggested an activity involving mikans. His idea was for students to draw a world map on a mikan, measure the distance between two locations on the mikan "globe", and then flatten the skin out to measure the distance again. The difference in measurements would allow students to experience firsthand how the transition from a 3D globe to a 2D map leads to distortions in size, shape and distance. While this activity doesn't replicate the precise mathematical distortions of map projections, it offers a fun and tangible way for students to understand how turning a globe into a flat map can alter spatial relationships.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the activity. The classroom was filled with shrieks of laughter mixed with gasps of realization as students saw with their own eyes how maps are flawed in how they represent the world. Finally, the peeled mikans provided a tasty snack to follow up what had been a fun learning experience.















MYP: Science



ANIL GHODAKE

Grade 6: *Interactive 3D Brain Model - A Creative Exploration of Neuroplasticity*

I am excited to highlight the remarkable journey of our Grade 6 Science students as they embarked on an exploration of brain development. The central theme of this inquiry, guided by our Statement of Inquiry, was understanding how changes in the brain during adolescence empower young minds to take responsibility for and creatively express their health and happiness.

Throughout this engaging unit, students explored the key concepts of change, creativity, and their connections to consequences and functions. The goal was to understand the adolescent brain's development while gaining a holistic perspective on the elements that contribute to a balanced and fulfilling life.

Students investigated various dimensions of brain science, including the structure and function of the brain, mechanisms of neural communication, neuroplasticity, the importance of sleep, and innovations in brain-enhancing technologies. This comprehensive exploration encouraged them to connect scientific concepts with personal well-being, underscoring the importance of applying science to everyday life.

The project aimed to deepen their understanding of brain structure, functions, and neuroplasticity by creating life-sized, interactive 3D brain and neuron models.

The project

Working in teams of 3-4, students undertook the intricate task of designing and assembling their models using clay and thread. Each student took on a specific role:

- Structure Lead: Responsible for shaping and constructing the brain's regions.
- Neurons Lead: Created detailed neuron structures using thread and clay.
- Labeling and Presentation Lead: Ensured accurate labeling and developed the group's presentation materials.
- Assembly Lead: Organized the overall layout and maintained the model's structural integrity.

Using color-coded sections to represent different brain areas, the students added interactive features to bring neuroplasticity to life, vividly illustrating the brain's adaptability and capacity to rewire itself.

Presentation and reflection

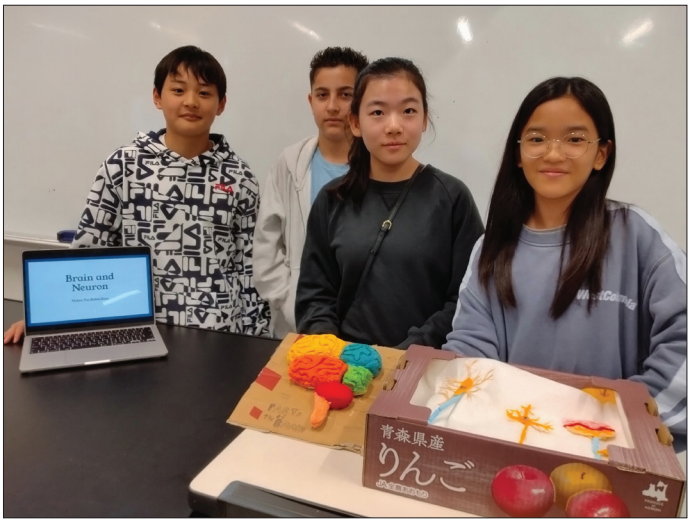
Each team presented their completed model, explaining its components and how it represented neuroplasticity. Students engaged in reflective discussions addressing questions such as the nature of neuroplasticity and why it is crucial for brain health, and what they learned about brain structure and function through this activity.

The presentations showcased the students' creativity, scientific comprehension, and teamwork as they explained how their models embodied the brain's dynamic and adaptive nature.

Learning outcomes

This hands-on project provided students with:

- A tangible understanding of complex biological systems.
- Valuable insights into the collaborative nature of scientific inquiry.
- A deeper appreciation of neuroplasticity and its significance for learning and mental well-being.





MYP: Science (continued)

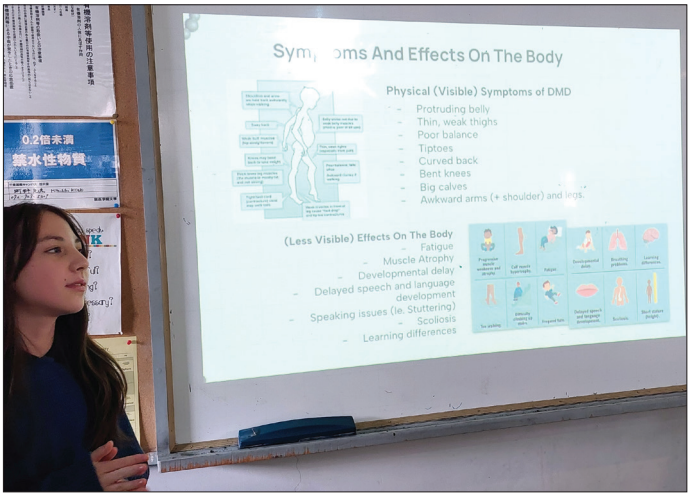


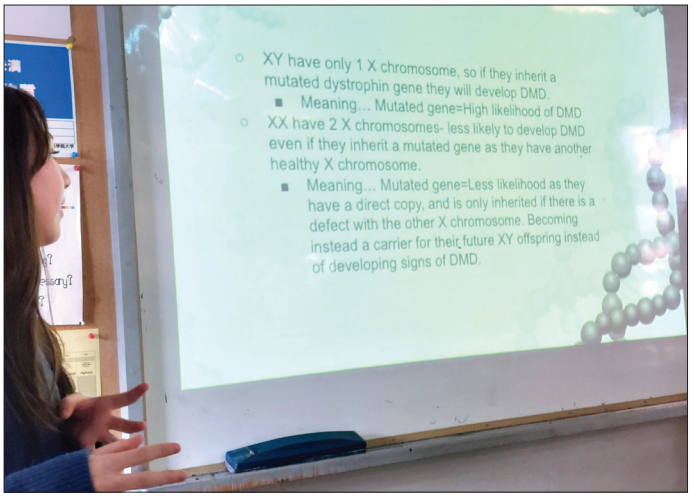
RANIA MOHAMED

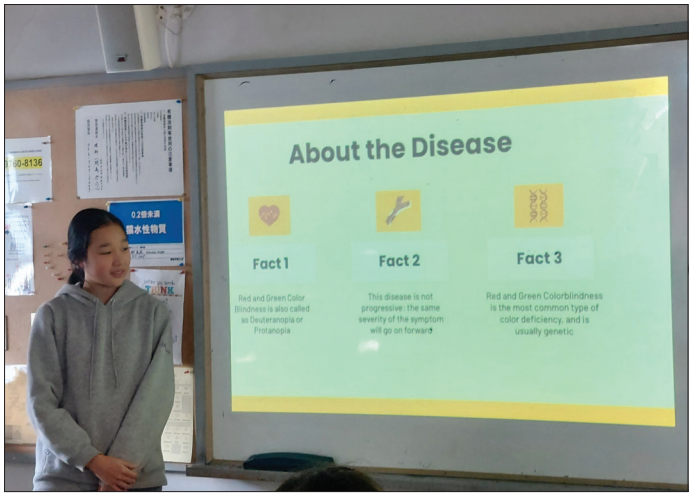
Grade 7: *Heredity, DNA, and Genetic Diseases*

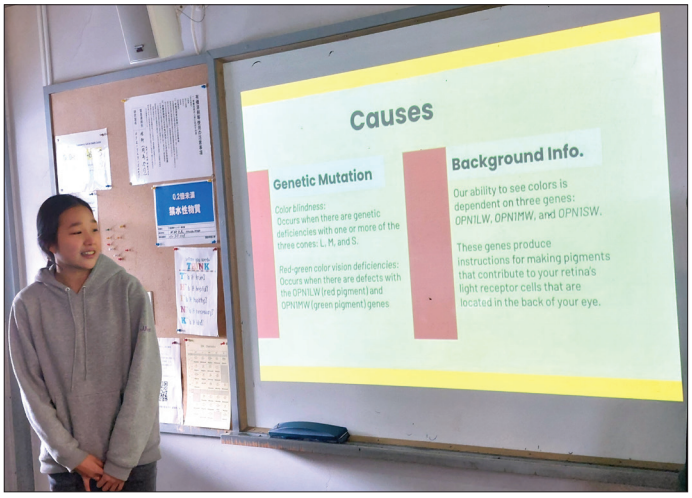
In this engaging unit, students explored the fundamental concepts of heredity, DNA, and genetic diseases. They delved into how traits are passed from parents to offspring, the structure and function of DNA, and the impact of genetic mutations on human health. Through independent and collaborative research, students investigated various genetic disorders, learning about their causes, symptoms, and potential treatments.

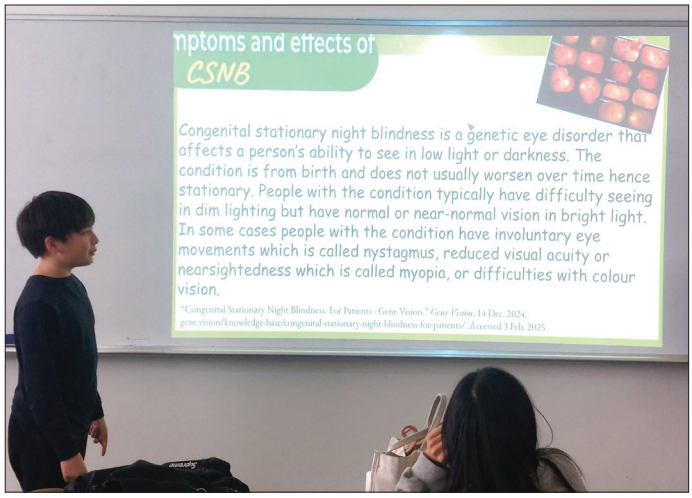
A hands-on highlight of the unit was the DNA isolation experiment, where students practiced extracting DNA from fruits such as strawberries. This practical activity helped them visualize and understand the physical properties of DNA, connecting theoretical knowledge with real-world application. The unit encouraged critical thinking, research skills, and scientific inquiry, fostering a deeper appreciation for genetics and its significance in modern science.











> A hands-on highlight of the unit was the DNA isolation experiment, where students practiced extracting DNA from fruits such as strawberries

MYP: Science (continued)



ANIL GHODAKE

Grade 8: *Outbreak Investigation - A Hands-On Exploration*

The focus of this grade 8 unit was an in-depth exploration of Biology, with particular emphasis on pathogens, pandemics, the human immune system, and the critical role of vaccination. The trimester was guided by the Statement of Inquiry: "Relationships exist between species that may be beneficial or harmful. Understanding these relationships is essential for balance in ecosystems and protecting the well-being of humanity."

Key concepts explored

Students explored fundamental concepts such as global interaction and interspecies relationships, while honing their ability to analyze evidence and understand the consequences of biological interactions.

Interactive outbreak investigation

One of the highlights of the trimester was a hands-on simulation of how public health experts investigate outbreaks. Using resources from the CDC, students worked in teams of 3-4 to tackle a fictional scenario involving an emerging respiratory disease outbreak, named NERD, at a summer camp.

Through this exercise, students:

- Developed hypotheses to explain the outbreak.
- Analyzed fictional outbreak data.
- Created communication materials tailored to diverse audiences, emphasizing the importance of delivering clear, actionable information.

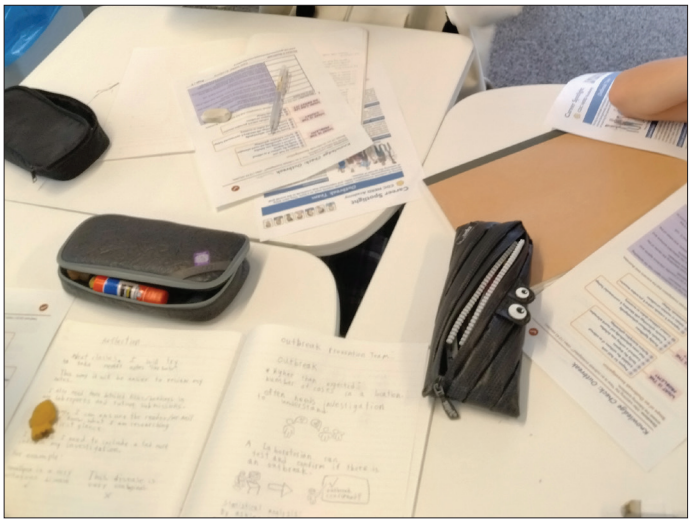
This immersive workshop enabled students to apply scientific principles in a real-world context, offering them a glimpse into the collaborative processes and tangible impact of science in public health.

The outbreak investigation module offered students more than just theoretical knowledge—it emphasized the multidisciplinary nature of public health. They gained a deep understanding of the collaborative roles played by epidemiologists, infection prevention specialists, behavioral scientists, biostatisticians, health communication specialists, laboratory scientists, and public health nurses. Each team member in these professions brings unique skills and perspectives to investigate outbreaks and reduce the spread of disease.

By engaging with this realistic scenario, students learned not only the scientific steps involved in investigating an outbreak but also the significance of teamwork and effective communication in protecting public health.

The Grade 8 students left this experience inspired and motivated, having seen the critical role of science in safeguarding communities. The activity fostered a deeper appreciation for the interdependence of species and the importance of vigilance and collaboration in addressing global health challenges.







MYP: Science (continued)

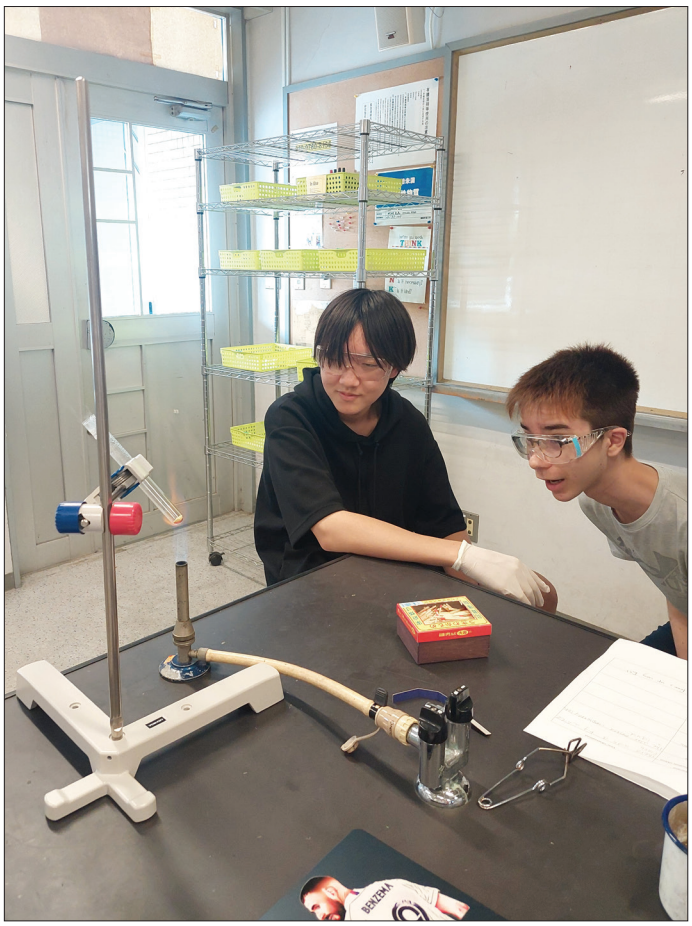


RANIA MOHAMED

Grade 9: *Motion, Speed, Velocity, and Acceleration*

This dynamic unit focused on the principles of motion, including speed, velocity, and acceleration. Students explored the relationships between these concepts, analyzing how they apply to real-world scenarios, such as transportation and sports. Through their research, they investigated the significance of motion in daily life and technological advancements.

To solidify their understanding, students conducted hands-on experiments where they collected data on moving objects. They measured distances, times, and velocities to calculate acceleration and identify patterns in motion. Emphasis was placed on interpreting data accurately, presenting findings through graphs and tables, and drawing meaningful conclusions. This unit helped students enhance their skills in scientific data collection, analysis, and communication while developing a deeper understanding of motion and its applications.



MYP: Science (continued)



ANIL GHODAKE

Grade 10: *Exploring Systems of Life*

This fall trimester, our Grade 10 Science students focused on Biology, and the intricate systems that sustain life. Through hands-on activities, experiments, and scientific investigations, students gained not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills essential for real-world scientific inquiry.

By engaging in tasks such as the osmosis lab investigation, students applied the scientific method to test hypotheses, analyze results, and evaluate experimental methods. Through these hands-on experiences, students achieved several key objectives in scientific exploration:

- *Identifying problems and formulating hypotheses:* Students learned to explain problems or questions to be tested by scientific investigations. They were tasked with formulating testable hypotheses, grounding their reasoning in established scientific principles, and identifying variables that could influence their results.
- *Manipulating variables and collecting data:* Students designed experiments by clearly explaining how to manipulate independent and dependent variables, as well as controlling constants to ensure fair testing. They also devised methods to systematically collect accurate data, learning how to select appropriate tools and procedures to minimize errors.
- *Designing and conducting investigations:* Students honed their ability to design well-structured scientific investigations, outlining detailed steps and procedures to achieve reliable results. They demonstrated independence and creativity while working collaboratively to address scientific questions.

continued on next page

MYP: Science (continued)

Analyzing and presenting data

After collecting data, students progressed to the critical step of presenting and interpreting their findings. They worked toward mastering the following objectives:

- *Presenting collected and transformed data:* Students organized raw data into clear tables, graphs, and charts, ensuring their results were easy to analyze and interpret.
- *Interpreting data using scientific reasoning:* By applying their knowledge of biological concepts, students explained trends, patterns, and anomalies in their results, effectively linking evidence to scientific principles.
- *Evaluating hypotheses:* Students critically evaluated the validity of their hypotheses based on experimental outcomes, demonstrating analytical thinking and adaptability in interpreting unexpected results.

Evaluating methods and improving investigations

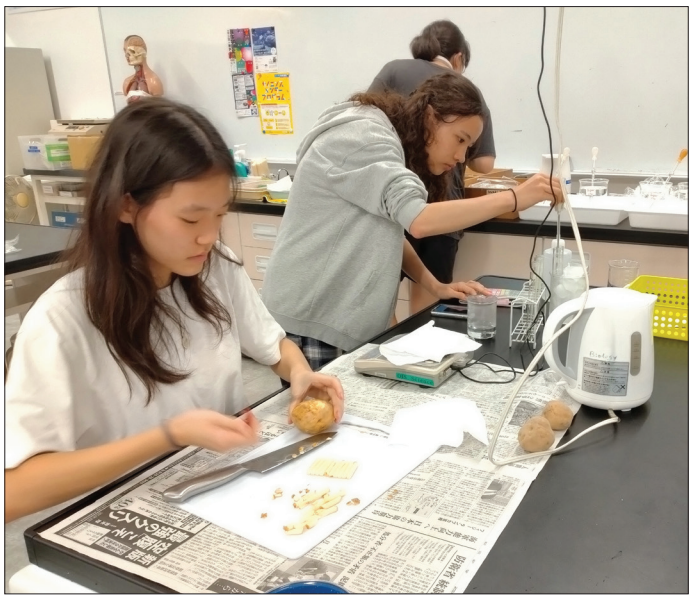
To refine their scientific inquiry skills, students reflected on the effectiveness of their methods and results. They were encouraged to:

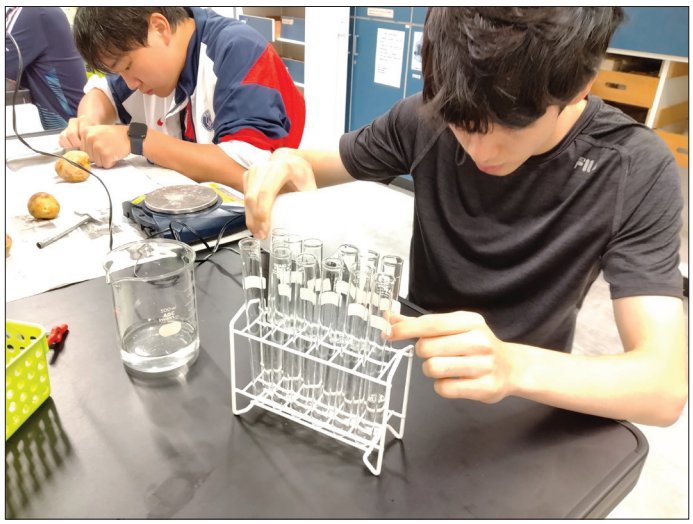
- *Evaluate the validity of the method:* Students identified strengths and weaknesses in their experimental design, assessing whether the data collected effectively addressed the research question.
- *Propose improvements or extensions:* Based on their reflections, students suggested practical improvements to experimental procedures and identified opportunities for further exploration, enhancing their investigative rigor.

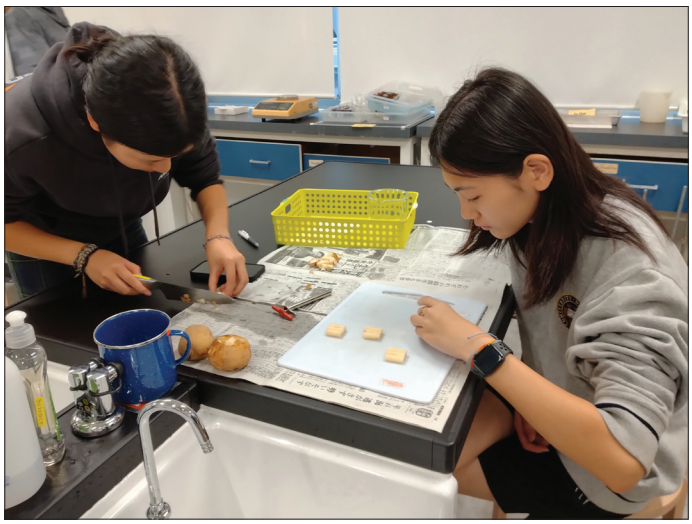
Bridging science with life

In addition to their experimental work, students explored topics like photosynthesis, human nutrition, and the respiratory, circulatory, and digestive systems. Hands-on presentations further expanded their understanding by linking biological concepts to real-world issues like climate change and global health.

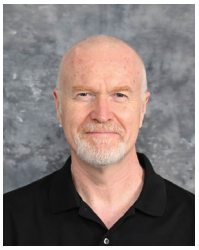








K:12: Approaches to Learning



STEPHEN FRATER

The fifth set of skills we will focus on in this edition of *The Educator* is research skills.

As a reminder, the Fall 2022 trimester's newsletter introduced a number of key skills that students need to develop to become lifelong learners and achieve long-term academic and career success. The concept of *Approaches to Learning* is fully integrated into the curriculum and teachers' lesson planning throughout the PYP, MYP, and DP, becoming increasingly important and prominent as students move up through the grades. The skills in demand include **oral** and **written communication skills**, **critical-thinking** and **problem-solving skills**, **professionalism** and **work ethic**, and **teamwork** and **collaboration skills**.

In the IB, particularly the DP where these skills need to be most highly developed, they are grouped or presented in the five clusters listed below, and in each edition of *The Educator* we will focus on one of these clusters.

Thinking skills	• Critical thinking • Creative thinking • Transfer
Communication skills	• Communication
Social skills	• Collaboration
Self-management skills	• Organisation • Affective • Reflection
Research skills	• Information literacy • Media literacy

Research Skills: Media & Information Literacy

The Challenge

There is an old axiom that 'seeing is believing', but is this still true when images and video can now be digitally altered, or even created from scratch, to represent just about any reality we can imagine? Now that the Internet is ubiquitous for so many of us, and finding information is just a click away, "it has never been more important to acquire the intellectual skills necessary to distinguish between fact and fiction, information and manipulation, reporting and propaganda" (Bobish, G. and Jacobson, T., 2014, p.115).

Of course people of any age are susceptible to believing inaccurate information or outright deception. However, whilst it is widely perceived that younger generations are inherently more "media savvy" than others, research suggests that is not actually correct (Stanford History Education Group, 2016).

The average American teenager (aged 13-18) spends more than 7 hours per day ***outside of school and homework*** using screen media (e.g., TV, video games, social media) (Rideout & Robb, 2019). Three quarters say they get news from social media "often" or "sometimes," and nearly 70% do so through Internet videos (Dautrich, 2018), and those students "are struggling to parse fact from fiction" (Terada, 2022).



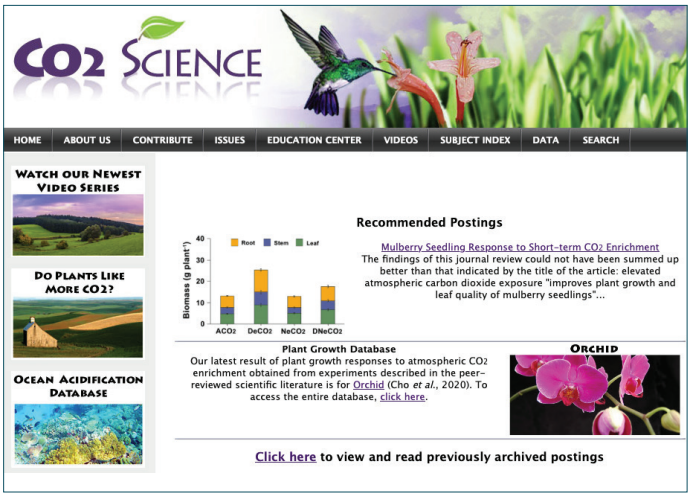
Image: security.org

Between 2015 and 2016, the Stanford History Education Group (2016) evaluated student ability to judge the credibility of online information. The study found:

- More than 80% of middle school students could not differentiate between a news story and an advertisement.
- More than 80% of high school students could not effectively distinguish between legitimate and dubious sources of information.
- Nearly 70% of undergraduate students could not effectively explain how the political agendas of different organizations might influence the content of tweets.

K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

In a similar study conducted in 2021, 3,446 high school students were tasked with investigating a website, CO2 Science (http:/ /www.co2science.org/), to evaluate whether it provided reliable information about human-induced climate change. Only 4% of students discovered that the site's chief sponsor was ExxonMobil. (Abrams, 2024). (The same exercise, although performed under less rigorous conditions, conducted with a class of middle school students at OIS, led to 100% of the students concluding that the website was trustworthy and a suitable authority on the topic).



It is not just students who are struggling; the reality is that the world is awash with information, and in an attempt to navigate the deluge we have all become increasingly dependent on other people and algorithms to provide neatly packaged lists, clips, and articles, to inform us. This includes relying on others to determine what is relevant and potentially interesting (Association of College & Research Libraries, 1989). That would not be so problematic if it were not for one more observation; a study of 5,000 adults in Canada, released in 2025, revealed that 56% of participants got most of their news from online sources (predominantly Facebook, YouTube, X, etc.), and 60% stated that they are "good at figuring out what is and what isn't real online". Given that 60% also believe "it is impossible to fact-check everything they read or see online", it is evident that a majority of people rely on prior knowledge, guesswork, and the perceived reliability/unreliability of content to determine whether something is true or false (Media Smarts, 2025). In other words, many people rely on heuristics and are therefore prone to biases and reliant on flawed mental models when judging sources.

The Problem

The information we all access online often blurs the lines between fact, fiction, and opinion, a phenomenon known as "information disorder." According to the Defence Information School, this term includes:

- **Misinformation**, which is false, but not created or shared with ill intent.
- **Disinformation**, which is created with the intention to mislead, harm, or manipulate.
- **Malinformation**, which is based in fact, but used out of context to mislead or harm.

Grouped together they represent false information which, according to a 2018 MIT analysis of Twitter (X) data, tends to be diffused "farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly" than the truth, by almost every known metric. Overall, mis- and disinformation were approximately 70% more likely to be retweeted than the truth (Vosughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).



Image: European Research Council

Not that people deliberately share false information. Instinctively, many people who want to verify information turn to the Internet for clarification and authentication. The problem is that these days the Internet is "both the world's best fact-checker and the world's best bias confirmer—often at the same time (Stanford History Education Group, 2016).

As the exercise with the CO2 website revealed, some of the traditional hallmarks of authority have been eroded to be almost meaningless. Unlike .gov or .edu sites, .org (which used to be associated with non-governmental organisations) is actually an "open" domain that any individual or group can obtain without needing to meet any benevolent criteria (Wineburg & Ziv, 2019). And "as news consumption has moved online, news organizations long recognized for their credibility and adherence to traditional standards of quality journalism have seen their profits disappear and their staffs decimated. As a result, we are losing a common source of information and a common authenticator of facts" (The News Literacy Project, 2019).

We can add to this troublesome mix the phenomenon of 'filter bubbles' and 'echo chambers' (Council of Europe, 2017, pp.49-56), and 'false amplification' which is when automated accounts are used to boost, i.e. promote and

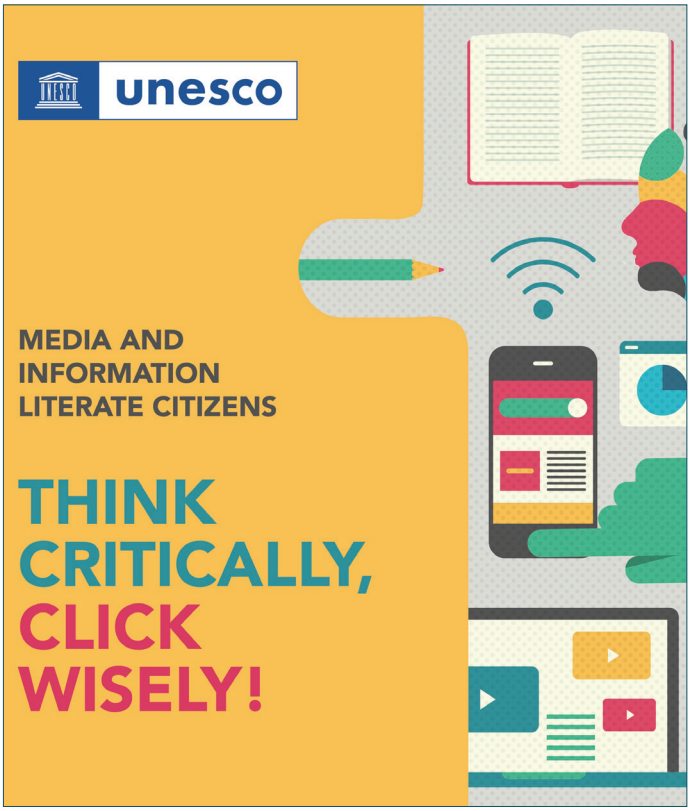
K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

disseminate, sensational and false content (The News Literacy Project, 2019). The result has been referred to as "information pollution at a global scale" (Council of Europe, 2017), and a bleak future if we cannot improve our students' awareness of these issues, and develop their information and media literacy skills to match the challenges they face.

The Response

The IB's *Approaches to Learning* groups information and media literacy under the umbrella of research skills. The development and practice of research skills is central to the PYP, MYP, and DP, which is why the PYP Exhibition, MYP Personal Project, and DP Extended Essay are all capstone elements of each programme. Research skills are also critical to the inquiry-based pedagogy which underpins all IB programmes. (IBO, 2025).

UNESCO defines media information literacy (**MIL**) as "an integrated set of competencies that enables people to interpret media content critically…and engage responsibly in the information environment." Those competencies are grouped into three distinct literacies: media literacy, information literacy, and digital literacy (UNESCO, 2025). It goes on to stress that MIL is crucial to a 21st-century education, giving individuals the power to recognise and "decode the persuasive strategies of media, distinguish between credible and unreliable sources, and contribute to the digital landscape ethically and effectively" (UNESCO, 2025).



More specifically, **information literacy** enables people to "find, evaluate, and use information effectively to solve a particular problem or make a decision". That information could be accessed via a computer, a book, a government agency, a film, or any number of other possible resources. (Association of College & Research Libraries, 1989). Information literate people are "able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information…They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand" (ibid).

Media literacy refers to the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication, which means any way in which data is distributed to an audience. The purpose could be to inform, entertain, or communicate, so it covers activities such as browsing the local newspaper or reposting videos on TikTok (New York State Education Department, 2025).

The impact of media information literacy can be felt on academic achievement, cultural awareness, and identity formation. In the first instance, students learn how to identify peer-reviewed sources, apply appropriate citation styles, and synthesize information across disciplines. Information-literate learners are better equipped to formulate research questions, conduct evidence-based investigations, and contribute to scholarly discourse. In the second instance, media messages play a significant role in shaping cultural narratives and personal identities, as norms around gender, race, beauty, and success are frequently communicated and reinforced through films, advertisements, and viral content.

Of course, literacy has long been a core objective of education, and we now have several decades of information literacy behind us also. However, as the production and delivery of media has become digital, typical approaches to teaching information literacy are often outdated. Printed media literacy skills often involved a ***vertical*** approach to assessing a source; starting from the top, check the publisher or domain/URL, then the title, then the author, then look at the content for mistakes, dubious assertions, or inconsistencies, and finally, check the bibliography (Terada, 2022).

These days, however, those checks may no longer be enough. For example, twenty years ago it was expensive to create a professional website, so many less authoratative or legitimate sites could be identified by poor spelling, cheap clip art, and inconsistent formatting. Similarly, as mentioned, it's easier and cheaper than ever to purchase a .org domain name, and Chat GPT is well-known for

K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

being able to whisk up an authentic-sounding bibliography on request in just seconds, even if some of the entries are purely fictional. As a result, a professional appearance and URL can now be very deceiving.

It is even harder to apply traditional approaches to literacy to visual media, especially 'slippery' visual misinformation that contains some element of truth or credibility. Visual misinformation includes:

- manipulated images and videos, including cropping or doctoring images
- images that are real but framed out of context
- misleading data visuals
- changing video speed
- adding filters
- and AI generated images



Screenshot of a video generated by Google's new Veo 3 AI tool. The video and audio are entirely AI generated. See the short clip here and see if you can spot the clues that the clip is fabricated.

Some scholars argue that visual misinformation is particularly problematic and dangerous, for several reasons. First, visuals are processed differently from text; they are much easier to recall and share. One study found that "humans process visual images several thousand times faster than text, while other research has shown that information conveyed with images is more intuitively understood and better recalled" (Bobish, G. and Jacobson, T., 2014, p103.) At the same time, "visual communication is in fact more difficult to learn and use than text…Whereas we know whether we can read a given word, it is easy to unwittingly misread an image" (ibid, p.104). Therefore, the "ease with which visual ***mis***information can be recalled and shared makes its reach much wider…In addition, visuals create richer sensory responses than text; the high degree of realism, and the tendency of visuals to evoke emotions, amplifies their impact. This has unique effects on what people believe and how they react to visual misinformation" (Media Smarts, 2025).

To sum up thus far, there are multiple ways in which people may be mistaken, misinformed, or disinformed, and an overdependence on instinct or an overconfidence in our own ability to detect it, including a reliance on traditional MIL approaches, are two of the reasons why our information and media literacy skills, especially in this digital age, may be getting worse rather than better. There are ways we address and reverse this trend, however.

Firstly, given the tendency towards overconfidence, it is important to approach this challenge with the intellectual humility to recognise the limits of our own knowledge, and the possibility that we might be wrong – sometimes quite often (Media Smarts, 2025).

Secondly, it is important to recognise how our own biases (such as confirmation bias) affect our interpretation of news and media. This will also help us to avoid idealogical echo chambers, which is "a closed system where other voices are excluded by omission, causing your beliefs to become amplified or reinforced". In other words, the tendency to look for and share information within networks of people and organisations that mirror your own perspectives and values, excluding other perspectives and information.

Thirdly, despite their shortcomings with regards to digital media, it is still important to apply the more traditional media and information literacy techniques consistently where appropriate, and not to rely on heuristics and our background knowledge and assumptions. The outline of those techniques are listed below, reproduced from the State University of New York's *The Information Literacy Users Guide* (Bobish, G. and Jacobson, T., 2014, p.70-71).

Traditional Media Literacy Approach

When you begin to look more deeply at your source, pay close attention to the following features of a document:

Introduction: Introductory sections can include background information on why the topic was chosen, the author's interest in the topic, context pertaining to why the topic is important, or the lens through which the topic will be explored. Knowing this information before diving in to the body of the work will help you understand the author's approach to the topic and how it might relate to the approach you are taking in your own research.

Table of Contents: Books (and sometimes entire websites) are usually divided into sections that each cover a particular aspect of the overall topic. Looking over the table of contents or menu may reveal if the resource offers a balanced range of perspectives or not.

List of references: Reviewing the bibliography/

K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

list of references will give you a better idea of the kind of work the author put into their own research. Can you tell from the citations if the sources used were credible? When were they published? Do they represent a fair balance of perspectives or do they all support a limited point of view? What information has the author chosen to use from these sources and in what way does he or she use that information?

There are several frameworks commonly used to assess the value and validity of resources. Two of the more common tools are outlined below.

OPCVL source analysis

This is a tool commonly used in MYP Individuals & Societies courses, where students are required to consider each of the following aspects of the sources they find through their research. It is primarily used to assess historical documents, although it can certainly be used more broadly.

Origin: To determine where the source comes from, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who created the source?
- What is the creator's background?
- When and where was the source created?
- When and where was the source published?
- What is the publisher's background?
- In what format is the source presented?
- Is it a primary or secondary source?

Purpose: To determine why the source exists, ask yourself the following questions:

- What does the source contain?
- Why was the source created (why does it exist?)
- Why was the source published (what is the goal of communicating this source)?
- Why was the source created in the format it is in?
- Who is the target audience (who is it for)?
- Does the source seek to inform, explain, persuade, or entertain?
- Do you think that there may be another reason for this source to exist beyond its stated purpose?

Content: To determine what the source is trying to say, ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the source about?
- What are the main ideas of the source?
- How does the author portray those main ideas (quotes)?
- What do we learn?
- What is the historical context?
- When and where does it take place?
- Who is involved?
- Why does it occur?

Value: To determine what value the source has as evidence, ask yourself the following questions:

- What can we tell about the author from the piece?
- What can we tell about the time period from the piece?
- Under what circumstances was the piece created and how does the piece reflect those circumstances?
- What can we tell about any controversies from the piece?
- Does the author represent a particular 'side' of a controversy or event?
- What is the author's bias? What can we tell about the author's point of views from the piece?
- What was going on in history at the time the piece was created and how does this piece accurately reflect it?

Limitation: To determine at what point the source ceases to be of value as evidence, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is the the source biased towards?
- Who is the source biased against?
- What part of the story can we NOT tell from this document?
- How can we verify the content of the piece?
- Does this piece inaccurately reflect anything about the time period?
- What does the author leave out and why does he/she leave it out (if you know)?
- What is purposely not addressed?
- How deep does the source delve into the content?
- How far removed is this source from the content it is describing?

As an extension of this tool, it is often important to consider the value and limitation for the source's origin, purpose, and even content separately.

The CRAAP test

Developed by California State University at Chico, the CRAAP test provides a good, overall set of elements to look for when evaluating a resource. It is suitable for a broader application of media and information literacy than the OPCVL tool.

Currency

- When was the item written, and how frequently does the publication it is in come out?
- Is there evidence of newly added or updated

K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

information in the item?
- If the information is dated, is it still relevant? (This will depend in part on how frequently the information on the topic tends to change.)

Relevance

- Does the item contain information relevant to your argument or thesis? (Read the article's introduction, thesis and conclusion; scan the table of contents and main headings, and identify article keywords)
- What is the material's intended audience?
- Does the information presented support or refute your ideas? (If the information refutes your ideas, how will this change your argument?)

Authority

- What are the author's credentials?
- What is the author's level of education, experience, and/or occupation?
- What qualifies the author to write about this topic?
- What affiliations does the author have? Could these affiliations affect their position?
- What organization or body published the information? Is it authoritative?
- Does it have an explicit position or bias?

Accuracy

- Is the source well-documented? Does it include footnotes, citations or a bibliography?
- Is information in the source presented as fact or opinion? Are biases clear?
- Can you verify information from referenced information in the source?
- Is the information written clearly and free of typographical and grammatical mistakes? Does the source look to be edited before publication? A clean, well-presented paper does not always indicate accuracy, but usually at least means more eyes have been on the information.

Purpose

- Is the author's purpose to inform, sell, persuade, or entertain?
- Does the source have an obvious bias or prejudice?
- Is the article presented from multiple points of view?
- Does the author omit important facts or data that might disprove their argument?
- Is the author's language informal, joking, emotional, or impassioned?
- Is the information clearly supported by evidence?

It is important to supplement these tools with an understanding of some common media techniques which sources may employ to influence audience perceptions. These include:

- **Framing** – The context and perspective chosen to present the story or information. Is it selective, comprehensive, balanced, or narrow and intended to guide the reader or audience towards a particular interpretation and conclusion?
- **Agenda-setting** – What topics are emphasized? Just as, or even more importantly, what has been omitted?
- **Symbolism and visual rhetoric** – Is there a deliberate use of images, colour, and editing intended to influence the reader's or audience's response?
- **Appeals to emotion** – Is the author using pathos-driven content to elicit feelings that will influence the reader's or audience's interpretation of the material?

Understanding these techniques enhances students' ability to critically evaluate persuasive media.

However, as mentioned earlier, a vertical approach to checking sources is not necessarily enough anymore in this digital age. Here there is something we can learn from professional fact checkers employed by news organisations. To paraphrase Wineburg et al. (2019), fact checkers use ***lateral*** reading to assess the authenticity, reliability, and bias of a source. This involves opening up new tabs across the horizontal axis of their browser and searching for information about the organization or individual behind it. Only after surveying what other sites have to say about the sources do they return to it and consider the information it contains. Using this approach, fact checkers can quickly uncover the source author(s)' intent and anyone backing or funding it. In contrast, students in Wineburg's earlier studies tended to use the information (including the self-edited 'About Us' information and visuals) on the site at face value, and consequently were deceived or at least misunderstood the veracity and value of the source material.



K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

Fact-checking Resources

U.C. Berkley Library has produced a list of fact-checking sites that it recommends. Several are primarily focused on U.S. politics, others are more global in reach and interest.

politifact.com: As the name suggest, it is primarily aimed at fact-checking the accuracy of claims by elected officials and others who speak up in American politics.
FactCheck.org: This is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, which is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organisation. Its articles and reports cover a range of public policy and news issues in the U.S., including climate change, the coronavirus pandemic, etc.
snopes.com: A wide-ranging "definitive Internet reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation." Largely but not exclusively U.S.-focused.
Duke Reporters' Lab: Fact Checking: This site maintains a searchable database of global fact-checking sites. There are currently around 450 verified sites on their list, including four in Japan:

- FactCheck Navi (in Japanese)
- InFact.press (the Japanese site is up-to-date, however the English and Chinese language sites have not been updated for some time)
- FactCheckCenter (the Japanese site is up-to-date, however the English language page is very sparse at this time)
- Litmus fact check (in Japanese)

There are also several sites in the U.K. that offer checks on international news issues:

- BBC News Verify (international news stories)
- Channel 4 News Fact Check (international news stories)
- Reuters.com Fact Check (international news stories)
- Full Fact (mainly UK & Irish news)
- PA media Fact Check (mainly UK & Irish news)

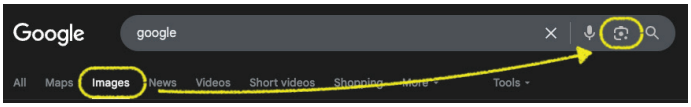
Checking the history of an image

CTRL-F is the YouTube channel from CIVIX, a Canadian NGO that supports civic engagement and civic education. The channel offers a wide range of videos on media literacy, including an excellent 8-minute tutorial on how to conduct a reverse image search to establish the provenance of online images.

One easy step, if you are using Google Chrome, is to right-click on the image and select ***Search with Google Lens*** from the drop-down menu.

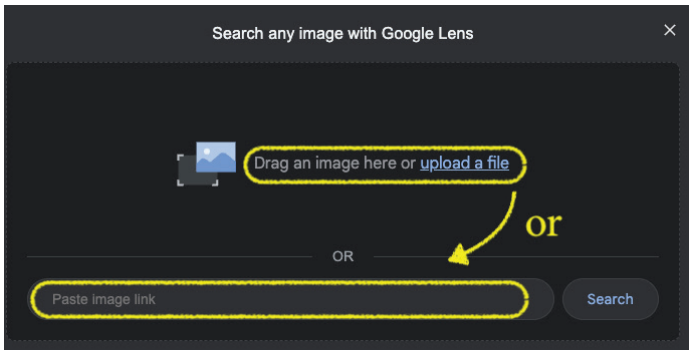


Alternatively, you can go to the Google search home page, and select ***Images***. From there, you can click on the camera icon to search for an image, either by pasting the web address / URL of the photo, or by uploading a copy of the picture that you have already downloaded from the Internet.



Step 1: go to the Google search page, and select Images

Step 2: upload the image or paste in the URL of the image you want to reverse look up



This article has touched on the context and the challenges we all face with the new opportunities and risks that digital technologies have given us. Media and information literacy is a complex but very important topic to understand and skill to acquire. Fortunately, we are increasingly aware of these challenges, and there are tools, resources, and sites designed to help us navigate the digital world successfully.

The first crucial step, though, does not require any of these. It is developing a critical way of thinking, and cultivating "a skeptical mindset in our students...[that] information should be considered dubious until verified" (Terada, 2022).

Part 2 of Research Skills will be included in the next edition of *The Educator*, when we will look at effective ways to find information, including searches that take students beyond the top hit on page 1 of a Google search query.

K:12: Approaches to Learning (continued)

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OIS Parent-Teacher Association

INTERNATIONAL FAIR 2024

Most of you have likely attended an SOIS International Fair (IF), traditionally held on a Saturday in November. The 2024 edition, as always, was organized as a collaboration between the SIS Parent Association and the OIS PTA, with the support of the School. Unlike the student-organized SOIS Festival in May, the IF is a parent-led initiative, though students are encouraged to contribute with their own booths, stage performances, and other activities.

On November 16, 2024, the event kicked off at 10 a.m. with 18 booths, 6 sports and games, 4 workshops, and nearly five hours of performances on the stage set up in the School's entrance hall. A packed audience enjoyed a lively lineup of solo singers, musicians, bands, and dancers, with the SOIS Gospel Choir — a beloved IF tradition — closing the show. While younger children tried their hand at ring toss, mini-golf, prize fishing, darts, and even *shuriken*, older students gravitated toward dodgeball, soccer, or less strenuous activities like e-sports, building coasters from recycled plastic, and getting henna tattoos (Indian-style hand painting). Adults seemed more attracted by hands-on experiences with *shamisens* and *ikebana*, or by professional advice and samples on skincare. For the first time in IF's history (as far as I know), outside professionals were invited to hold activities at the IF, provided they were introduced by an SOIS parent or teacher.

No matter the age, everyone descended upon the food booths, which were picked clean nearly two hours before closing!

In 2024, original IF merchandise made a comeback after a long hiatus dating back to pre-pandemic times. Students and parents from both OIS and SIS eagerly bought and wore the items — T-shirts, hoodies, and tote bags — which were seen proudly displayed throughout the school. Some enthusiastic collectors even purchased every variation, including different sizes, and many attendees were thrilled with the refreshed selection.

The IF is also a fundraising event in two ways. First, several student-led charities offered products for sale, including handmade soap, stuffed animals, coasters, T-shirts, handkerchiefs, accessories, crafts, bags, Afghan embroidery, fair-trade coffee, and other treats; all accompanied by thoughtful explanations of how the funds would be used.

The second channel of fundraising benefits SOIS directly. Revenue from all non-charity booths and activities is donated to the School in the form of educational items. This year, the IF Committee gifted an A0 printer (for posters), replacing the one donated by a past IF, which had broken down just a few months earlier.

The theme of the 2024 IF was "Join Hands, Celebrate Cultures", a call to build something meaningful together and to embrace the richness of diverse perspectives and traditions. Culture is at the heart of what makes us human, and we hope it can continue to be a source of growth and inspiration, not division.

We wish the organizers of the 2025 edition even more success!

Luca Baiotti, 2024 IF OIS co-president, with Yu Takahashi and Naoko Fujimoto





OIS Parent-Teacher Association

PROMOTING DIGITAL WELLNESS

As students move from parent-supervised screen time to independent digital habits, families face new challenges in managing technology use at home. To support this important transition, the OIS PTA has launched the **Digital Wellness Committee (DWC)**, working in close collaboration with the School and soon with the SIS Parents Association (SISPA).

While fully recognizing and supporting the value of productive, educational technology use, the committee's mission is to promote healthy, balanced digital habits across the SOIS community. It has begun with a school-wide **parent survey** to better understand concerns related to internet use, screen time, and mental well-being. The findings will guide optional support programs for parents, from workshops to peer forums and shared resources.And we still need your help for the anonymous survey please, which is available in English, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese.

Next steps include analyzing survey results, gathering teacher input, researching international best practices, and proposing practical strategies for digital wellness. Importantly, all initiatives will align with SOIS policies while encouraging collaborative action across parents, the PTA, and the School. Two of the main focuses of the DWC's work will be PTA-led support for families (helping parents manage digital habits at home) and home guidelines supported by OIS and SIS (providing non-mandatory recommendations for screen use).

The DWC invites all OIS families to get involved — your input and support are vital to shaping a healthier digital future for our students.

Luca Baiotti, for the PTA Digital Wellness Committee

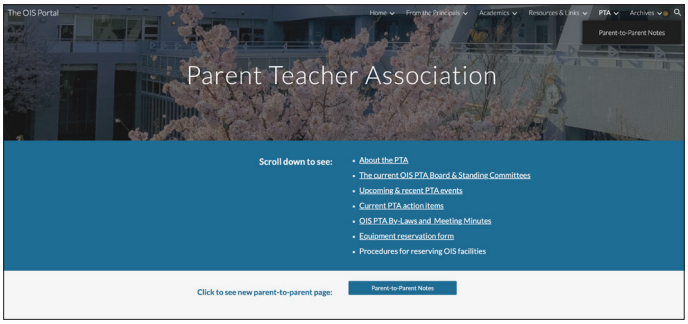
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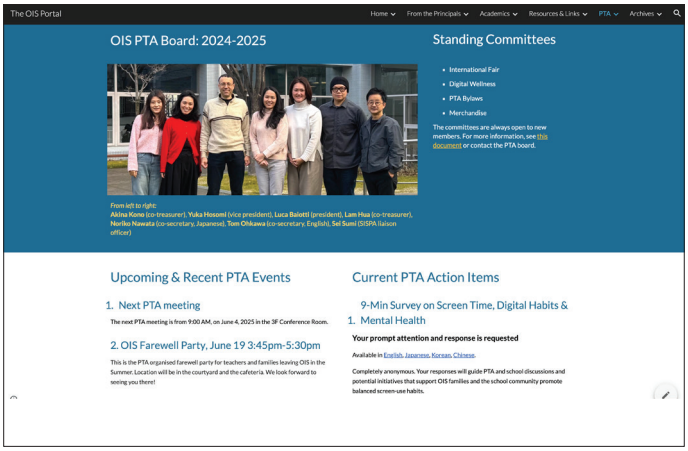
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   This contains key takeaways from the US Surgeon General Advisory (https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf)

OIS-PTA WEB PAGES

The OIS PTA page on the OIS Parent Portal has undergone a transformation this year, with the addition of new sections and many links to new resources. There is information on how to reserve school facilities, borrow equipment from the PTA, share information with other families about useful activities and clubs in the area, and more. Please take a look around the pages when you have chance.





DP: Chemistry



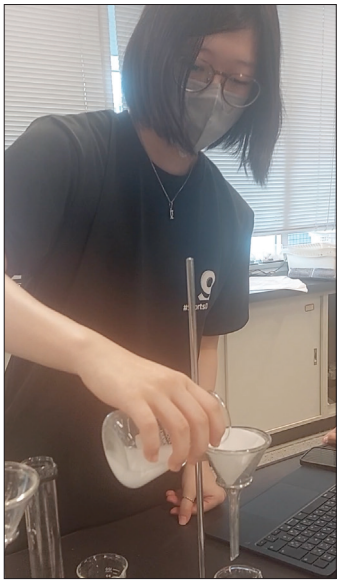
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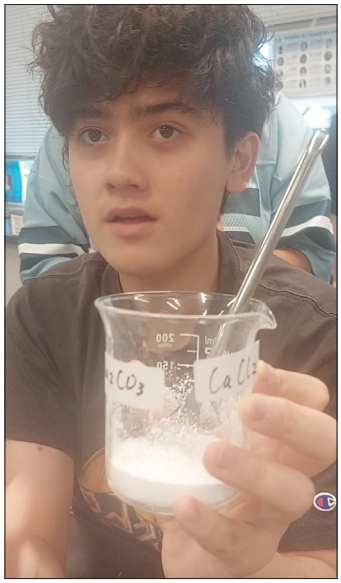
Grade 11: *Stoichiometry and gas laws*

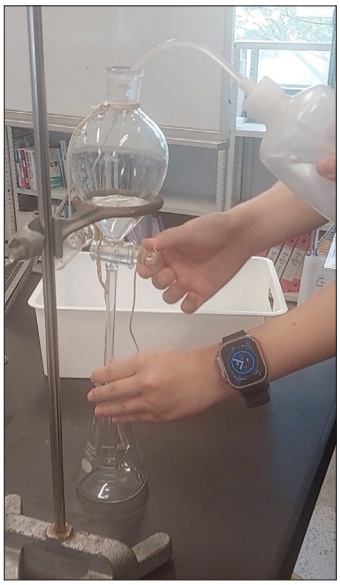
This unit introduced students to the fundamental principles of stoichiometry and the behavior of gases. The unit began with an introduction to mole concepts, chemical formulas, and balanced equations, progressing to an in-depth study of gas laws and the distinctions between ideal and real gases. Students examined the conditions under which real gases deviate from ideal behavior, connecting theoretical models to practical applications.

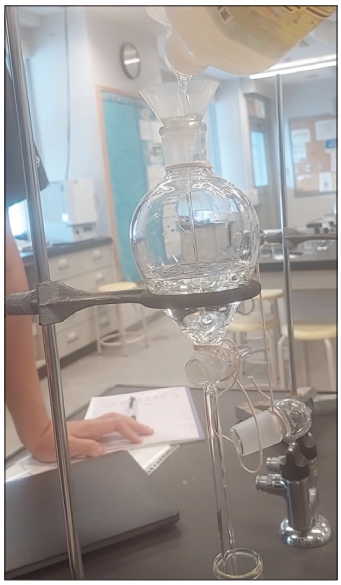
The unit emphasized the development of advanced experimental skills through hands-on laboratory work. Students determined the empirical formula of a compound by conducting precise measurements and calculations. Additionally, they applied their stoichiometry knowledge to measure the chlorine content in the school swimming pool using titration techniques. These practical investigations allowed students to refine their accuracy, precision, and analytical skills while fostering a deeper understanding of stoichiometric relationships.

By connecting gas behavior and stoichiometry to real-world situations, this unit reinforced students' problem-solving abilities and deepened their understanding of core chemistry principles.









Above right: G11
Below: G12





DP: Biology



ANIL GHODAKE

Grade 11: *Empowering Scientific Inquiry through Internal Assessment*

During the fall trimester, Grade 11 IB DP Biology students actively engaged in one of the most significant components of their course: the Internal Assessment (IA). This scientific investigation centered on inquiry, data analysis, and critical thinking, providing students with the opportunity to explore their personal interests in Biology while demonstrating their scientific skills and knowledge.

The Internal Assessment, mandatory for both SL and HL students, is a cornerstone of the IB DP Biology curriculum. It allows students to pursue self-directed investigations free from the time constraints and limitations of traditional exams, showcasing their capabilities in addressing real-world scientific questions

Open-ended scientific investigation

The Internal Assessment is an open-ended investigation where students:

- Formulate research questions within a specific and relevant biological context.
- Design well-structured investigations to collect and analyze both quantitative data and qualitative observations.
- Explain the methodological considerations associated with collecting sufficient and relevant data to answer their research questions.
- Carry out accurate and precise data recording, incorporating appropriate considerations for uncertainties.

Through their investigations, students addressed their research questions by processing and interpreting their data effectively. Statistical tools, graphs, charts, and calculations were employed to uncover patterns, trends, and significant relationships.

Key skills and objectives

This rigorous process enabled students to develop and refine a range of essential scientific and analytical skills:

1. **Scientific inquiry and data analysis**
   - Demonstrated critical thinking and problem-solving by controlling relevant variables.
   - Used a variety of methods to collect accurate and reliable data, ensuring data integrity and reproducibility.



   - Processed and analyzed data using statistical tools to address the research question appropriately and accurately.
2. **Evaluation and interpretation**
   - Justified conclusions that were directly relevant to the research question and fully consistent with their analysis.
   - Provided critical evaluations of results, including comparisons to accepted scientific contexts.
   - Explained the impact of methodological weaknesses or limitations and proposed realistic improvements to enhance the investigation.
3. **Communication and methodology**
   - Recorded and processed data clearly and precisely, showcasing strong communication skills.
   - Used appropriate language, scientific terminology, and logical structures to articulate their findings effectively.
   - Designed methodologies that allowed for investigations to be replicated with clarity.
4. **Personal and professional development**
   - Demonstrated time management and perseverance by meeting deadlines and overcoming challenges during the investigation process.
   - Showcased creativity, resilience, and a commitment to scientific inquiry through self-directed exploration.

Fostering real-world scientific skills

The Internal Assessment provided students with a platform to connect their scientific knowledge to real-world scenarios. By grappling with biological phenomena and conducting rigorous investigations, they gained a deeper appreciation for the complexities of science and its impact on the world.

Their work reflected their dedication to understanding biology on a deeper level, while their critical evaluations of methodologies and thoughtful suggestions for improvement highlighted their growing expertise in scientific inquiry.

see next page for samples of the G11 IAs

DP: Biology (continued)

Investigation of potential effects of ethnicity and socioeconomic status shifts on child obesity data in the UK National Child Measurement Program 2011/12 to 2023/24

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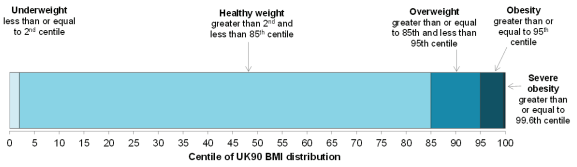
Research Question: "How does socioeconomic status and ethnic group prevalence influence increasing childhood obesity trends in Year 6 children in England, based on data from the National Child Measurement Programme (2011/12–2023/24)?"

Background Research:

Obesity, a medical condition defined as “abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health” by the World Health Organization (WHO), poses a significant global health challenge; being responsible for more than 30,000 deaths each year in England alone. (England) Child obesity specifically is a topic of interest, as it is often the root cause for a multitude of health problems both physically and mentally, such as diabetes, poor self-esteem, or breathing problems that lead into adolescence and then adulthood (“Childhood Obesity - Symptoms and Causes”).

The Body Mass Index (BMI) proves as a good indicator for levels of body fat (Dinsdale, Ridler, and Ells) while it is used widely as a risk factor for the development, or the prevalence, of various health issues (Nuttall). However, complexities within the reliability of the thresholds of the classifications based on the age, sex, or gender of the individual, cause anomalies to appear for weight classification: underweight, healthy, overweight, obese. To overcome these complexities, the BMI classification for children and adults is separated. Child BMI uses variable thresholds, taking into account the child’s age and sex, often derived from a reference population, known as a child growth reference. The process of identifying the thresholds consists of weighing and measuring a large sample of children to identify how BMI varies across the population. This allows for a child to be compared to a reference population with the ability to calculate their degree of variation from an expected value (Dinsdale, Ridler, and Ells).

Established in 2006 by the English government, the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) records annual measurements of the height and weight of over one million children.This is done for school age children in Reception (age 4 to 5 years) and year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) across nationwide state maintained primary schools, in order to tackle obesity and slow its increasing trend (NHS) (Health). The recorded data is used to calculate a BMI centile, a score to determine the threshold in which a child’s BMI belongs (Dinsdale, Ridler, and Ells) within the British 1990 growth reference (UK90) (Figure 1).



IA #1: clockwise from top left - pages 1, 2, 10, 11

Next,the number of children in both Reception and Year 6, in each decile of the IMD, was obtained from the annual NCMP database and summarised (Table 4).

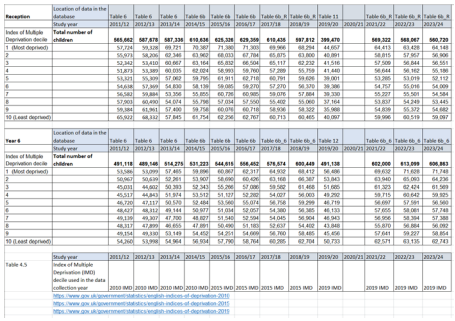


Table 4: Raw data of children populations for both Reception and Year 6 in each decile corresponding to the year of recording along with location of data in the database. Additional table 4.5 with Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) decile used in the data collection year

The prevalences of decile population were then calculated by dividing the number of children in a decile by the corresponding total number of children (Table 5 and 6).

Reception

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1 (Most Deprived)	10.20%	10.10%	11.87%	11.53%	11.41%	11.33%	11.46%	11.42%	11.18%		11.31%	11.17%	11.44%
2	9.90%	9.90%	10.62%	10.47%	10.88%	10.77%	10.79%	10.67%	10.24%		10.33%	10.20%	10.15%
3	9.25%	9.09%	10.33%	10.34%	10.53%	10.57%	10.67%	10.41%	10.39%		10.10%	10.01%	10.09%
4	9.17%	9.08%	10.22%	10.16%	9.43%	9.50%	9.38%	9.33%	10.37%		9.95%	9.89%	9.84%
5	9.43%	9.41%	9.72%	9.79%	9.90%	9.97%	9.96%	9.97%	9.76%		9.36%	9.33%	9.29%
6	9.66%	9.76%	9.34%	9.52%	9.45%	9.42%	9.38%	9.43%	9.86%		9.62%	9.68%	9.63%
7	10.00%	10.19%	9.08%	9.15%	9.71%	9.69%	9.68%	9.68%	9.85%		9.70%	9.77%	9.73%
8	10.24%	10.29%	9.21%	9.14%	9.12%	9.14%	9.08%	9.21%	9.30%		9.46%	9.55%	9.53%
9	10.50%	10.54%	9.77%	9.79%	9.61%	9.65%	9.65%	9.76%	9.01%		9.63%	9.75%	9.75%
10 (Least Deprived)	11.65%	11.63%	9.85%	10.11%	9.96%	9.97%	9.95%	10.11%	10.04%		10.54%	10.65%	10.54%

Table 5: Percentage data for Reception showing decile prevalence from 2011/12 to 2023/24

Year 6

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1 (Most Deprived)	10.91%	10.86%	11.17%	11.28%	11.18%	11.20%	11.26%	11.39%	11.50%		11.57%	11.68%	11.82%
2	10.38%	10.35%	10.16%	10.15%	10.78%	10.86%	10.96%	11.06%	10.96%		10.62%	10.62%	10.58%
3	9.17%	9.12%	9.80%	9.85%	10.15%	10.26%	10.33%	10.24%	10.52%		10.19%	10.18%	10.15%
4	9.27%	9.17%	10.11%	10.07%	9.39%	9.40%	9.37%	9.33%	10.04%		9.92%	9.89%	9.87%
5	9.51%	9.63%	9.83%	9.88%	9.83%	9.90%	9.84%	9.88%	9.51%		9.42%	9.39%	9.32%
6	9.86%	9.88%	9.56%	9.60%	9.37%	9.36%	9.43%	9.39%	9.39%		9.58%	9.47%	9.52%
7	10.01%	10.08%	9.28%	9.19%	9.46%	9.45%	9.37%	9.48%	9.56%		9.46%	9.52%	9.46%
8	9.84%	9.79%	9.07%	9.02%	9.27%	9.20%	9.13%	9.06%	8.93%		9.28%	9.28%	9.24%
9	10.01%	10.08%	10.33%	10.25%	9.96%	9.82%	9.84%	9.74%	9.26%		9.57%	9.66%	9.70%
10 (Least Deprived)	11.05%	11.04%	10.69%	10.72%	10.61%	10.56%	10.46%	10.44%	10.33%		10.39%	10.30%	10.34%

Table 6: Percentage data for Year 6 showing decile prevalence from 2011/12 to 2023/24

The 10 IMD deciles were combined into three groups,1-3 (Most Deprived), 4-7 (Medium) and 8-10 (Least Deprived) (Table 7), then plotted (Figure 4 and 5).

Reception

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1-3 (Most deprived)	29.35%	29.09%	32.81%	32.35%	32.82%	32.67%	32.92%	32.51%	31.81%		31.75%	31.37%	31.67%
4-7 (Medium)	38.26%	38.45%	38.36%	38.62%	38.49%	38.57%	38.40%	38.41%	39.84%		38.63%	38.67%	38.50%
8-10 (Least deprived)	32.39%	32.46%	28.83%	29.04%	28.68%	28.76%	28.68%	29.08%	28.35%		29.63%	29.95%	29.82%

Year 6

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
1-3 (Most deprived)	30.46%	30.33%	31.13%	31.28%	32.10%	32.32%	32.55%	32.69%	32.99%		32.37%	32.48%	32.55%
4-7 (Medium)	38.65%	38.76%	38.77%	38.74%	38.06%	38.10%	38.02%	38.07%	38.50%		38.38%	38.28%	38.17%
8-10 (Least deprived)	30.90%	30.92%	30.09%	29.98%	29.84%	29.58%	29.43%	29.24%	28.51%		29.25%	29.24%	29.28%

Table 7: Percentage data for both Reception and Year 6 showing total decile prevalence of the new allocated categories of most deprived, medium and least deprived

Figure 9:

Figure 10:

DP: Biology (continued)

How vaccination rates (MCV1) have affected the prevalence of Measles (Rubeola) in the United States of America and Nigeria between 2008 and 2020

Word Count: 2577

Research Question:

How did the vaccination rates of the first dose of Measles-containing vaccine in two countries (United States and Nigeria) impact the prevalence of measles-reported cases between 2008 and 2020?

Introduction

This lab investigates the effectiveness of vaccinations by comparing vaccination rates with reported cases, and seeing if vaccination rates have a direct correlation with the amount of cases that are reported. Confirmed cases of measles include cases that have been confirmed clinically, epidemiologically-linked or by laboratory investigation in exception of countries in which have eliminated measles cases. Cases in which reported cases have been confirmed clinically should not be included in the sum of total cases of measles have been eliminated from the country. Cases that have been discarded following laboratory investigation should not be included in the dataset. This investigation primarily uses data collected from the world health organization (WHO), U.S centers for disease control and prevention (CDC), nigeria center for disease control and prevention (NCDC). These sources were chosen as they are international Intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations or government agencies. The Nigeria Center for Disease Control and Prevention has an extensive data set including detailed information related to the relevance in certain states, occurrence cases separated by sex. (Sample screen on Figure 1)

The WHO database consists of three data sources, these are separated as Admin, Official Coverage and WHO/UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC). The estimates are made upon the information

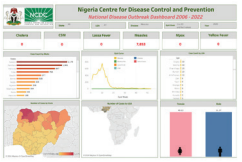


Figure 1 | *Database image for nigeria center for disease control and prevention*

provided to the WHO and UNICEF by the member states as well as from private social sectors like NGOs. Estimates were made upon the population estimates from the UN Population Division. These data are updated and reviewed annually, increasing its reliability of the information, as well as being consistent with the data. ("WHO/UNICEF")

Background information

Measles also known as rubeola is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus primarily spreading through airborne diseases when an infected individual breathes, coughs, or sneezes. Measles can cause severe health conditions and complications and could lead to death. Measles could be transmitted to any age, but is a common disease found in children. Measles infects the respiratory system then spreads through the individual's whole body. Some examples of symptoms include high fever, runny nose and rashes around the body (Figure 2). Measles is considered to be a preventable disease with vaccines invented in 1963, having a major impact on people around the world.



Figure 2 | *Child's cheek with rashes often a characteristic associated with measles (CDC. "Photos of Measles.")*

IA #2: clockwise from top left - pages 1, 2, 12

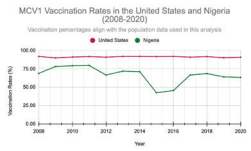


Table 9 | *MCV1 Vaccination rates*

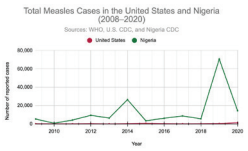


Table 9 | *Reported cases of measles*

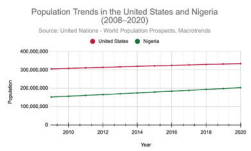


Table 10 | *Population trends in the two countries*

Data Analysis and Conclusion

This investigation aimed to discuss the impacts of the vaccination rates for the first dose of vaccine for measles with the prevalence of measles in the United States in Nigeria between 2008 and 2020, using digital databases. In-terms of visual trends, the United States of America remained consistent with vaccination rates with rates higher than 90%, and never below in the 12 year period. Nigeria had inconsistent vaccination rates in the 12 year frame, with vaccination rates low as 42.55% in 2015 and high as 79.67 in 2011. Outbreaks and spikes of vaccination have been observed in both countries; instance outbreaks were seen in 2014 and 2019 as well as decrease in vaccination was seen in 2015 for Nigeria. The United States did not experience many outbreaks or spikes, but had a significant increase in cases in 2019, despite the high consistent rate of vaccinations. According to the correlation coefficient, both values showed low correlation between the two factors, United

DP: Biology (continued)

Grade 12: *Celebrating the Success of Biology Lab Day*

The Grade 12 IBDP Biology students held their Biology Lab Day on October 18-19, 2024. This event was a pivotal moment in their academic journey, providing students with the dedicated time and resources to develop their Internal Assessment (IA), a critical component of the IB Biology curriculum that accounts for 20% of their final grade.

The objectives and outcomes of the Internal Assessment are explained in detail on page 35.

As part of the IA process, students submit their first drafts for review. Individualized feedback is provided to each student, helping them refine their work and improve their investigations. This iterative process fosters a constructive learning environment, encouraging students to critically reflect on their progress and strive for excellence.

Laying the foundation for future innovators

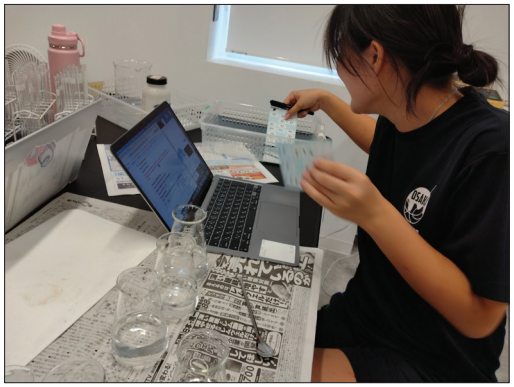
Biology Lab Day exemplifies the spirit of independent research and inquiry that defines the IB Diploma Programme. The skills students develop—ranging from scientific reasoning to effective communication—equip them for success in future academic and professional pursuits. Their work is a testament to the potential of the next generation of critical thinkers, innovators, and problem-solvers

I extend heartfelt congratulations to all Grade 12 Biology students for their creativity, dedication, and perseverance. Biology Lab Day was a resounding success, showcasing the remarkable abilities of our students to apply scientific principles to real-world questions and challenges.















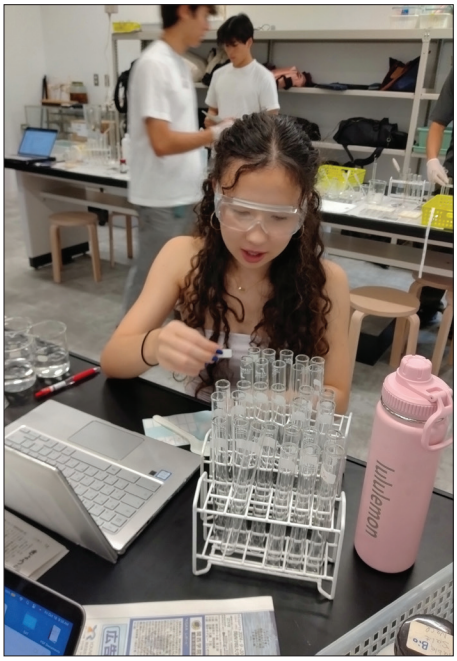














IB Diploma: Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)

Creativity, activity, service (CAS) is one of the three essential elements that every student must complete as part of the Diploma Programme (DP).

Studied throughout the Diploma Programme, CAS involves students in a range of activities alongside their academic studies.

It is not formally assessed. However, students reflect on their CAS experiences as part of the DP, and provide evidence of achieving the seven learning outcomes for CAS.

The three strands of CAS, which are often interwoven with particular activities, are characterized as follows:

- **Creativity** – arts, and other experiences that involve creative thinking.
- **Activity** – physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle, complementing academic work elsewhere in the DP.
- **Service** – an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

CAS enables students to enhance their personal and interpersonal development by learning through experience.

It provides opportunities for self-determination and collaboration with others, fostering a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment from their work.

At the same time, CAS is an important counterbalance to the academic pressures of the DP.

- https://ibo.org (2025)





G11: LU HE RIKUTO HONG

Building bridges, not walls

Interview with Accion Inspira Foundation

At just 17 years old, Rikuto Hong from Japan is leading a movement that redefines what it means to be young and devoted to peace. As the founder of World in Peace, a youth-led platform committed to global humanitarian work, Rikuto is empowering youth across borders to see themselves not just as observers, but as active builders of a more compassionate world.

A Vision Born from Contrasts

Raised in Japan but educated at an international school, Rikuto noticed stark differences between Western and Japanese educational philosophies. In countries like the United States and the UK, students were actively involved in nonprofit work. In contrast, Japan's conservative culture often limited youth involvement in social issues. This disparity lit a spark.

"We realized it wasn't a lack of interest from youth," Rikuto explains. "It was systemic. We needed a platform that enabled us to act."

That insight led to the founding of *World in Peace*, an organization with a mission to transform peace from an ideal into a lived reality. Their vision? A world where respect and unity replace conflict. A world where bridges are built instead of walls.

Turning Passion Into Impact

While Rikuto's personal experiences laid the foundation, his friends became co-architects of the mission. Together, they launched initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as donation drives and online concerts for hospitalized children. These early efforts instilled a belief: small acts can generate massive impact.

One of *World in Peace*'s standout projects is in Afghanistan. Collaborating with a local women's organization, they implemented sanitation and medical aid initiatives in the Laghman region. They started small—a few students fundraising online—but grew into an international collaboration, proving that awareness and empathy can stretch across oceans.

IB Diploma: Creativity, Activity, Service (CAS)



Supporting sanitation and medical aid initiatives in Afghanistan.

Hope After Disaster

In Japan, *World in Peace* also mobilized to respond to natural disasters. After an earthquake hit Ishikawa Prefecture in early 2024, and torrential rains followed months later, the organization provided emergency supplies and emotional support to displaced families. From hygiene kits to craft workshops and massage sessions, their goal was not just survival—but human connection.

"We wanted to stop people from isolating themselves," Rikuto says. "Stress and loneliness are dangerous, especially after trauma. We built programs to help neighbors become friends."

Similarly, after a devastating forest fire in Iwate Prefecture in 2025, they facilitated counseling sessions and provided essential supplies. Their goal: to turn relief into recovery.



Collaborating for Greater Good

World in Peace thrives through strategic partnerships. As their team is comprised of young volunteers, many of whom are preparing for university or studying abroad, direct on-site support is often coordinated through local organizations. This collaborative model expands their reach and ensures culturally appropriate and effective aid.

Funding remains a challenge. The organization is not legally registered in Japan—a choice made to allow flexibility for its international student leaders. However, this limits their access to traditional grants and can create trust barriers with potential donors. Rikuto remains undeterred.

"Our impact speaks louder than our paperwork," he asserts.

Looking to the Future

Rikuto dreams of expanding *World in Peace* into more regions, particularly focusing on underrepresented communities and conflict zones. Their ongoing Afghanistan project is a top priority. But he also wants to increase local engagement through community-based programs that foster grassroots trust.

His message to aspiring changemakers? Start small, but start now.

"You don't need to register an NGO on day one. Volunteer, observe, learn. Then build something better. That's what we did."

The Power of Youth in Peacebuilding

Rikuto Hong is not your typical teenager. He is proof that youth-led initiatives can be both strategic and empathetic, professional and passionate. From Japan to Afghanistan, from disaster zones to policy talks, his work is a testament to the enduring truth: peace begins with people who dare to care.

In a world where walls are easily built, Rikuto chooses to build bridges. And through World in Peace, he's inviting others to walk across them.



Sabers: Spotlight on High School Boys Soccer

The SOIS high school boys' varsity soccer team competed in the season-ending AISA tournament at Korea International School (KIS) in Seoul in mid-April. The team, which included OIS G12 Yuito Yanagi and Lucas Menezes in the early part of the season, and OIS G11 Hayato Hoori, G10 Leon Miyakawa, and Ken Jotani as starting members for the whole season, finished with a 'grand slam', winning all four tournaments that we entered.

Whilst SOIS has a proud record of winning WJAA and AISA tournaments in the past, it is special to win every tournament in a single season and to be awarded the AISA Fair Play award by the other teams' coaches and players as well. All credit to the players from both OIS and SIS for their superb commitment, skill, sportsmanship, and most importantly, teamwork.

The team finished the season with a record of: **20 Games • 16 Wins • 2 Draws • 2 Losses • 89 Goals For • 18 Goals Against**

Highlights of the tournaments are listed below.

SOIS HS Boys Soccer Futsall Tournament

SOIS 6 - 1 Osaka YMCA International School
SOIS 19 - 0 Sons of Light International Christian School
SOIS 6 - 0 Hiroshima International School

Final

SOIS 5 - 0 Marist Brothers International School

MC Perry HS Boys Soccer Tournament, Iwakuni

SOIS 3 - 0 Kinnick High School, Yokosuka
SOIS 4 - 0 Fukuoka International School
SOIS 9 - 1 Yokota High School, Yokota

Semi-Final

SOIS 6 - 0 Zama High School, Zama

Final

SOIS 2 - 1 MC Perry High School, Iwakuni

WJAA HS Boys Soccer Tournament, Kobe

SOIS 1 - 5 Chadwick International School, Incheon
SOIS 8 - 0 St. Maur International School, Yokohama
SOIS 1 - 1 Yokohama International School, Yokohama

Semi-Final

SOIS 2 - 1 Canadian Academy, Kobe

Final

SOIS 1 - 0 Chadwick International School, Incheon

AISA HS Boys Soccer Tournament, Seoul

SOIS 0 - 2 Yokohama International School, Yokohama
SOIS 4 - 1 Korea International School, Jeju
SOIS 6 - 0 Kaohsiung American School, Taiwan

Semi-Final

SOIS 3 - 2 Seoul International School, Seoul

Final

SOIS 3 - 2 Yokohama International School, Yokohama











Important Numbers

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Toshifumi Mitsuhashi	Activities Director	072-727-2137	tmitsuhashi@soismail.jp
Natsuko Inoue	School Nurse	072-727-5050	ninoue@soismail.jp
—	Student Attendance	072-727-2305	studentinfo@soismail.jp

Important Links

Policy Documents

Links to the Student-Parent Handbook and other important policy documents

ManageBac

For curriculum information (units), assignment grades and comments, and report cards

OIS Parent Portal

Weekly updates about recent and upcoming events, and links to resources for parents

Student Information Centre

For attendance, lost property, etc.

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