

Mountainside Middle School

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IB MYP Parent Guide

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MMS Mission and Vision

Mission

Mountainside Middle School strives to develop principled, caring, and inquisitive learners in order to prepare them to be knowledgeable and respectful global citizens.

Vision

To offer meaningful opportunities for all learners to explore and develop skills and traits needed to reach their highest potential as contributors to creating a better and more peaceful world.

Understanding the MYP Curriculum

The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is a comprehensive framework designed to support students in their early adolescence with a well-rounded and engaging education. It encompasses eight distinct subject groups, ensuring exposure to a broad range of academic disciplines.

Each year, students receive a minimum of 50 instructional hours per subject, promoting depth and consistency across all areas of learning. In the final two years of the programme, the MYP offers flexibility within the subject groups to help students fulfill local academic requirements and explore personal learning goals.

To learn more about the MYP and its global approach to education, please visit: ibo.org/myp

What is the IB Middle Years Programme?

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) is designed for students ages 11 to 16, offering a learning framework that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and thoughtful reflection. Through inquiry-based instruction and real-world connections, the MYP helps students develop essential 21st-century skills—such as communication, intercultural understanding, and global awareness.

The programme spans five years, though schools may offer it in shorter formats of two, three, or four years depending on their structure. Completing the MYP helps students build a strong academic foundation, preparing them for the IB Diploma Programme (DP) or the Career-related Programme (CP).

At Mountainside Middle School, MYP refers to students in Years 1–3 in grades 6 through 8.

To explore more about the MYP, visit ibo.org/myp

What does the MYP mean for students?

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) offers a student-centered framework designed to support holistic growth and lifelong learning. It provides meaningful experiences that help students develop into thoughtful, capable, and compassionate individuals.

Through the MYP, students:

- Explore learning that supports their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical well-being
- Build the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to navigate complexity and act responsibly in an ever-changing world
- Study a broad and balanced curriculum across eight subject groups, ensuring depth and variety in academic exploration
- Learn at least two languages—English and either Spanish, French, or Mandarin—to deepen their understanding of their own culture and those of others
- Engage in community service and local impact, building empathy and global citizenship
- Prepare for future academic pathways or career opportunities, including the IB Diploma Programme (DP) or Career-related Programme (CP)

The MYP encourages students to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences, cultivating a mindset that's inquisitive, reflective, and globally aware.

What does IB MYP look like?

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) offers a flexible yet robust curriculum framework designed to meet both school and subject-specific requirements while staying true to the IB's mission and educational philosophy.

Students engage in learning across eight subject groups, promoting a broad and balanced education:

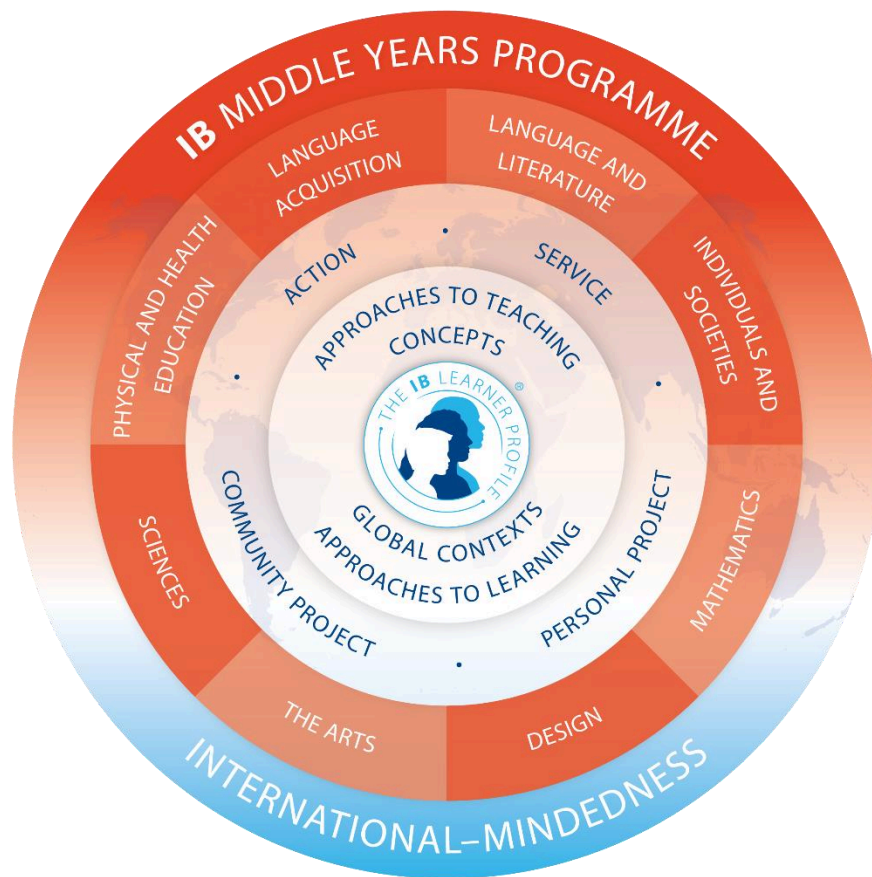
- Language and Literature
- Individuals and Societies
- Sciences
- Mathematics
- Language Acquisition (Spanish, French, or Mandarin)
- Physical and Health Education
- Design
- Arts

The MYP is grounded in the concept of balance, which serves several key purposes:

- Helps students gain essential knowledge and skills for future success
- Promotes deep understanding beyond memorization by encouraging application in new contexts
- Fosters awareness of interdisciplinary connections and their relevance to global and local issues
- Encourages students to reflect on how they learn best across diverse situations
- Supports the development of the whole child—intellectually, emotionally, creatively, and physically

The MYP goes beyond the classroom, recognizing the importance of each student's entire educational experience, including co-curricular activities, personal interests, and community involvement.

For additional information, visit: ibo.org/myp/curriculum



 Language Acquisition	 Language & literature	 Individual & Societies	 Sciences
 Mathematics	 Arts	 Physical & Health Education	 Design

Components of the MYP

Listed below are several components of the MYP. Each is described in greater detail on the following pages:

- 1.Learner Profile
- 2.Global Contexts
- 3.Approached to Learning
- 4.Service as Action
- 5.Community Project
- 6.Assessment

IB Learner Profile

The IB Learner Profile is a powerful set of values and learning outcomes that guide everything we do at Mountainside. It reflects the mission of the International Baccalaureate and helps shape students into thoughtful, well-rounded individuals who are prepared to thrive in a global society.

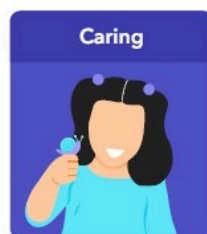
Throughout their time at Mountainside Middle School, students explore and reflect on ten key attributes that support academic success and personal growth:

- Inquirers – Curious and confident to ask questions and seek understanding
- Knowledgeable – Building depth across disciplines and global issues
- Thinkers – Using critical and creative thinking to solve problems
- Communicators – Expressing ideas effectively in multiple languages and forms
- Principled – Acting with integrity, fairness, and respect for others
- Open-Minded – Appreciating diverse perspectives and new ideas
- Caring – Showing empathy, compassion, and commitment to service
- Risk-Takers – Approaching challenges with courage and resilience
- Balanced – Understanding the importance of physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being
- Reflective – Thoughtfully evaluating experiences to grow as learners

These attributes are woven into classroom instruction, school-wide activities, and personal reflection. The Learner Profile encourages students to take ownership of their development and contribute meaningfully to their communities—inside and outside of school.

Each of the IB's programmes are committed to the development of students according to the IB learner profile.

The profile aims to develop learners who are:



IB explanations from <https://www.ibo.org/programmes/middle-years-programme/>

Global Contexts

In the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), learning isn't just about mastering content, it's about making connections that matter. Global contexts help students explore concepts through real-world lenses, encouraging them to see learning as relevant and purposeful.

These contexts guide teachers in shaping units that connect classroom ideas to broader themes like identity, culture, fairness, sustainability, and innovation. When a global context is selected, educators are asking:

- How does this topic relate to the world beyond school?
- What life situations make this learning meaningful for students?
- Why is this worth exploring?

By framing learning in global contexts, we empower students to think critically, explore diverse perspectives, and grow into thoughtful global citizens.

In the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), global contexts provide common entry points for students to explore what it means to be internationally minded. These contexts are more than themes, they are frameworks that shape inquiry and deepen understanding across all subject areas.

Through global contexts, the MYP promotes:

- Multilingualism
- Encouraging communication in multiple languages and valuing linguistic diversity
- Intercultural Understanding
- Fostering respect for different perspectives, traditions, and ways of life
- Global Engagement
- Connecting classroom learning to real-world challenges and opportunities

These contexts also:

- Build on the transdisciplinary themes introduced in the Primary Years Programme (PYP)
- Help students make meaningful connections between subjects and the world around them
- Ensure that learning remains relevant, engaging, and developmentally appropriate for adolescents

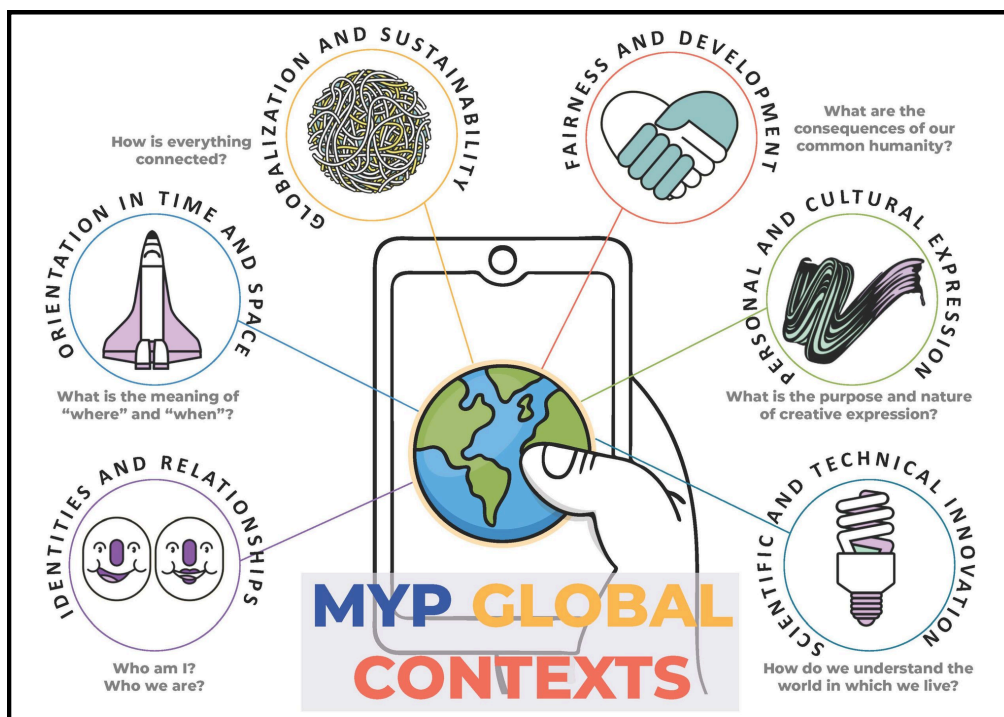


Image source: <https://www.jks.edu.sa/educational-programs-middle-school-6-10-global-contexts/>

Approaches to Learning (ATLs)

A unifying thread across all subject areas in the MYP, Approaches to Learning (ATLs) are essential skills that help students take ownership of their learning. These skills form the foundation for independent learning, academic success, and life beyond the classroom. ATLs empower students to “learn how to learn” by developing strategies they can apply across subjects and in real-world situations.

Students in the MYP are encouraged to develop and reflect on five key ATL skill categories:

- Communication Skills
 - Expressing ideas clearly and confidently in a variety of forms and contexts
 - Example: Giving a presentation using visual aids to explain a science experiment
- Social Skills
 - Working effectively with others, showing empathy, and building positive relationships
 - Example: Collaborating in a group project to design a community service initiative
- Self-Management Skills
 - Managing time, tasks, and emotions to become organized and resilient learners
 - Example: Creating a study schedule to prepare for assessments and meet deadlines
- Research Skills
 - Finding, evaluating, and using information effectively and ethically
 - Example: Gathering credible sources to support an argument in an essay
- Thinking Skills
 - Applying critical, creative, and reflective thinking to solve problems and make decisions
 - Example: Designing an innovative solution to reduce plastic waste in the school

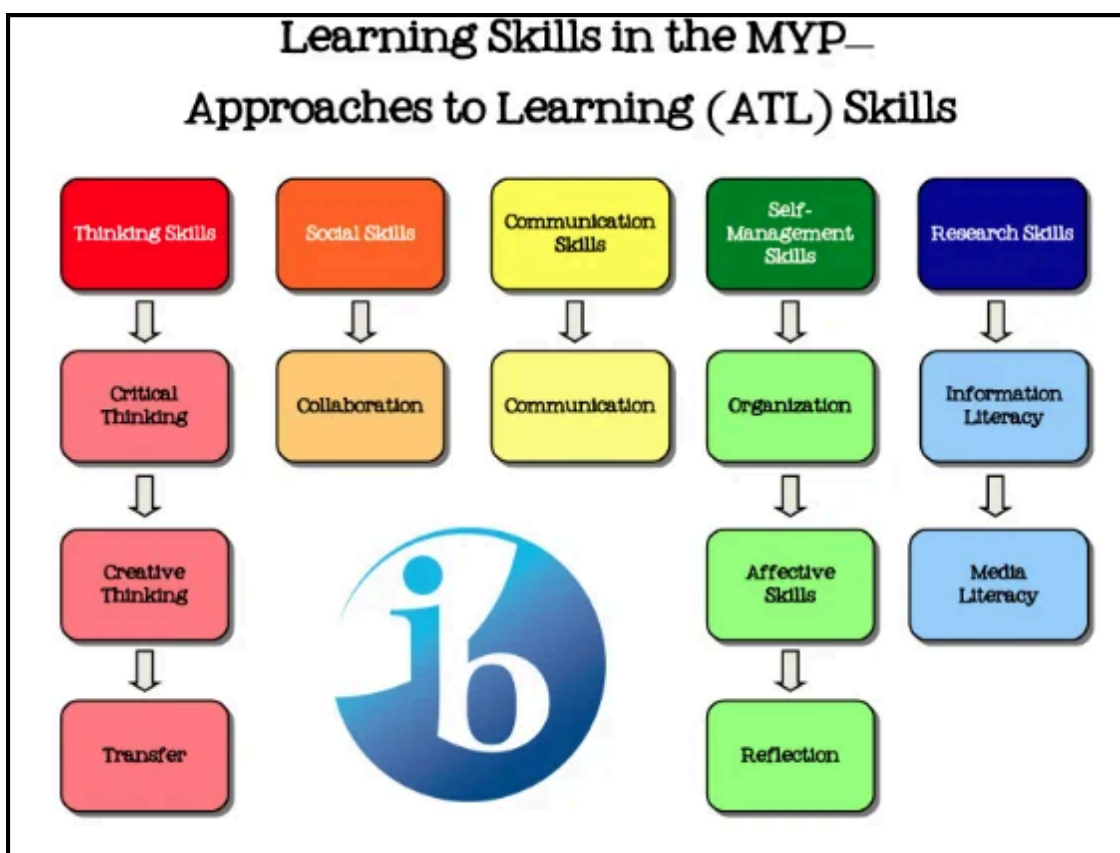


Image source: <https://www.jks.edu.sa/educational-programs-middle-school-6-10-global-contexts/>

Service as Action

In the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), students are encouraged to be caring members of their communities who demonstrate a commitment to service. This makes a positive difference in the lives of others and the environment.

Service as Action is a core component of the MYP and is embedded throughout the curriculum. It helps students develop empathy, intercultural awareness, and a sense of responsibility. Through service, students apply what they learn in the classroom to real-world situations, deepening their understanding and building essential life skills.

What is Service Learning?

Service learning is an instructional model that connects meaningful community service with academic content and learning goals. It is a developmental process that grows with students from 6th through 8th grade and culminates in the Community Project in Grade 8.

How Students Participate

- Service opportunities are integrated into classes and clubs
- Students are encouraged to volunteer in their local community
- A minimum of 10 service hours in Years 1-2 (Grades 6-7)
- Students must log their hours and reflect on their experiences

Examples of Service Projects

- Letters to Veterans – Operation Gratitude
- Hydrate AZ Water Drive – Salvation Army
- Back-to-School Supply Drive – Welcome to America
- Jump Rope for Heart – promoting heart health awareness
- AZIBS Day of Service – statewide IB community service event
- Campus Cleanup – taking pride in our school environment

Community Project

At MMS, all students in Year 3 of the MYP (8th grade) are required to complete the Community Project—a culminating experience that brings together the skills, knowledge, and values developed throughout their MYP journey. This student-led project encourages learners to engage in a meaningful inquiry that leads to service as action in their local community. It is designed to foster independence, deepen understanding, and promote responsible citizenship.

Key Features of the Community Project

- Student-Led Inquiry - students choose a topic they are passionate about and explore it through a structured process of investigation, planning, action, and reflection
- Service-Oriented - the project must result in a tangible service that benefits the local or global community
- Minimum of 15 Hours - students are expected to complete at least 15 hours of work outside of school hours, including research, planning, implementation, and reflection
- ATL skill development - the project provides an opportunity to demonstrate growth in Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills and to embody the IB Learner Profile attributes
- Preparation for Lifelong Learning - Through this experience, students develop independence, empathy, and a deeper understanding of how they can make a positive impact in the world

Assessment and Criteria

At Mountainside Middle School (MMS), we recognize that students learn in different ways. In keeping with the IB's holistic approach to education, we believe it's important to offer a variety of ways for students to demonstrate what they've learned. This belief is at the heart of MYP assessment.

How MYP Assessment Works

- **Criterion-Related Assessment** - MYP assessment is based on pre-determined criteria rather than comparisons between students. Each subject group has four specific criteria that describe what students should know and be able to do
- **Ongoing and Varied** - assessments happen throughout a unit and may include:
 - Open-ended tasks
 - Problem-solving activities
 - Tests and quizzes
 - Projects
 - Reflections and self-assessments
- **Rubrics and Achievement Levels** - at the end of each unit, teachers use criterion-based rubrics to evaluate student work. Each criterion is scored on a scale from 0 to 8, with descriptors that clearly define each level of achievement
- **Reporting Grades** - in an official IB report, only the achievement level (1–8) for each criterion is reported. While the IB encourages moving away from traditional letter grades, MMS uses the district letter grading system through Synergy. Therefore, IB scores are converted into percentages to align with our school's reporting system

Why This Matters

This approach to assessment:

- Encourages growth and reflection
- Focuses on what students can do
- Supports fair and transparent grading
- Prepares students for future academic success

Outline of the four criteria for each of the Eight MYP Subject Groups

	A	B	C	D
Language and literature	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language acquisition	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Individuals and societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
Arts	Investigating	Developing	Creating/performing	Evaluating
Physical and health education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
Community project	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
Personal project	Planning	Applying skills	Reflecting	
Interdisciplinary	Evaluating	Synthesizing	Reflecting	

Image source: <https://www.copenhageninternational.school/learning/welcome-to-our-secondary-school/assessment-in-the-myp/>

The most important aim of MYP assessment is to support and encourage student learning. It values both the process and the product of learning, recognizing that how students learn is just as important as what they learn.

To help students succeed:

- Assessment criteria (rubrics) are shared at the beginning of each unit, so students know what is expected.
- Students are encouraged to set goals and understand what it takes to reach the achievement level they aspire to.
- Teachers provide specific, criterion-based feedback that students can use to reflect on their progress and improve their learning.

This approach empowers students to take an active role in their education and develop the skills of self-assessment, goal setting, and continuous improvement.

MMS MYP Grading Guide

Rubric Grade	Proficiency Scale	Conventional grade	IB Wording Guide
8	Advanced	100	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills and the ability to apply them faultlessly in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of the analysis, synthesis and evaluation is shown where appropriate. The student consistently demonstrates originality and insight and always produces work of high quality.
7		93	
6	Proficient	88	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills, and the ability to apply them in a wide variety of situations. Consistent evidence of the analysis, synthesis and evaluation is shown where appropriate. The student generally demonstrates originality and insight.
5		83	A consistent and thorough understanding of the required knowledge and skills and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations. The student generally shows evidence of the analysis, synthesis and evaluation is shown where appropriate and occasionally demonstrates originality and insight.
4	Basic	78	A good general understanding of the required knowledge and skills and the ability to apply them effectively in normal situations. There is occasional evidence of the skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
3		73	Limited achievement with most of the objectives or clear difficulties in some areas. The student demonstrates a limited understanding of the required knowledge and skills and is only able to apply them in normal situations with support .
2	Limited	65	Very limited achievement with all objectives. The student has difficulty in understanding the required knowledge and skills and is unable to apply them fully in normal situations, even with support.
1		60	Minimal achievement of the objectives.
0	Unmet	50	Objectives not met. Evidence that objectives were achieved is lacking.

Continuing the IB Journey

Students who wish to continue their IB education beyond Mountainside Middle School have the opportunity to apply to the MYP Years 4–5 (Grades 9–10) and the IB Diploma Programme (DP) (Grades 11–12) at Desert Mountain High School. These programs offer a seamless continuation of the IB philosophy, emphasizing academic rigor, global awareness, and personal growth.

Why Continue in the IB Programme?

- Earn College Credit - students in the Diploma Programme can take DP exams, which may earn them college credit, similar to Advanced Placement (AP) exams
- Academic Advantage - research shows that former MYP students are 34% more likely than non-MYP students to take at least one AP or DP exam in high school (Wade & Wolanin, 2015)
- Global Recognition - the IB Diploma is recognized by universities around the world for its academic challenge and emphasis on critical thinking, research, and service
- Skill Development - students continue to build on the Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills and IB Learner Profile attributes developed in the MYP

Policies

All policies pertaining to IB MYP teaching and learning can be found on our website at:

<https://mountainside.susd.org/academics/mms-ib-myp-policies> and are subject to review annually.

1. Academic Integrity
2. Assessment
3. Language
4. Inclusion
5. Admission

References

Madison Meadows Middle School

IB MYP Parent Guide Revised December 2022

<https://sites.google.com/madisoned.org/madison-meadows-ib-myp/home?authuser=0>

Mount Eliza Secondary College

<https://mesc.vic.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MESC-MYP-Handbook.pdf>

ibo.org