

### **Social studies in the Primary Years Programme**

In the PYP, social studies is viewed as the study of people in relation to their past, their present and their future, their environment and their society. Social studies encourages curiosity and develops an understanding of a rapidly changing world. Through social studies, students develop an understanding of their personal and cultural identities. They develop the skills and knowledge needed to participate actively in their classroom, their school, their community and the world: to understand themselves in relation to their communities.

The aim of social studies within the PYP is to promote intercultural understanding and respect for individuals and their values and traditions. In support of the IB mission statement, the social studies component of the PYP curriculum will encourage students to “understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right”. Therefore, there is a strong emphasis on the reduction of prejudice and discrimination within the classroom, the school, the community and the world.

Social studies learning guides students towards a deeper understanding of themselves and others, and of their place in an increasingly global society. It provides opportunities for students to look at and think about human behaviour and activity realistically, objectively, and with sensitivity. Exposure to and experience with social studies therefore opens doors to key questions about life and learning. Evidence of student learning will be apparent in their willingness and ability to take action in order to make a difference in the world. (International Baccalaureate Organization 105)

Structured, purposeful inquiry is the main approach to teaching and learning social studies in the PYP. Social studies teaching and learning takes place within the programme of inquiry. In the PYP, social studies is essentially about people: how they think, feel and act; how they interact with others; their beliefs, aspirations and pleasures; the problems they have to face; how and where they live (or lived); how they interact with their environment; the work they do; and how they organize themselves.

#### **Social studies skills and processes**

The social studies curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop a range of social studies-specific skills and processes.

- Formulate and ask questions about the past, the future, places and society
  - Use and analyse evidence from a variety of historical, geographical and societal sources
  - Orientate in relation to place and time
  - Identify roles, rights and responsibilities in society
  - Assess the accuracy, validity and possible bias of sources.
- (International Baccalaureate Organization 105)

## Social studies concepts

Social studies concepts are divided into four social studies strands briefly described below.

<b>Social studies strands</b>	
<b>Human systems and economic activities</b>	The study of how and why people construct organizations and systems; the ways in which people connect locally and globally; the distribution of power and authority.
<b>Social organization and culture</b>	The study of people, communities, cultures and societies; the ways in which individuals, groups and societies interact with each other.
<b>Continuity and change through time</b>	The study of the relationships between people and events through time; the past, its influences on the present and its implications for the future; people who have shaped the future through their actions.
<b>Human and natural environments</b>	The study of the distinctive features that give a place its identity; how people adapt to and alter their environment; how people experience and represent place; the impact of natural disasters on people and the built environment.
<b>Resources and the environment</b>	The interaction between people and the environment; the study of how humans allocate and manage resources; the positive and negative effects of this management; the impact of scientific and technological developments on the environment.

(International Baccalaureate Organization1)

## Learning continuum

The IBO recognizes that learning in social studies is a developmental process and that the phases through which a learner passes are not always linear or age related. For this reason overall expectations are presented in a continuum divided into phases. The overall expectations provide a summary of the understandings and subsequent learning being developed in each phase.

## Overall expectations

### Phase 1

Students will explore their understanding of people and their lives, focusing on themselves, their friends and families, and their immediate environment. They will practise applying rules and routines to work and play. They will gain an increasing awareness of themselves in relation to the various groups to which they belong and be conscious of systems by which they organize themselves. They will develop their sense of place, and the reasons why particular places are important to people. They will also develop their sense of time, and recognize important events in their own lives, and how time and change affect people. They will explore the role of technology in their lives.

### Phase 2

Students will increase their understanding of their world, focusing on themselves, their friends and families and their environment. They will appreciate the reasons why people belong to groups, the roles they fulfil and the different ways that people interact within groups. They will recognize connections within and between systems by which people organize themselves. They will broaden their sense of place and the reasons why particular places are important to people, as well as how and why people's activities influence, and are influenced by, the places in their environment. Students will start to develop an understanding of their relationship with the environment. They will gain a greater sense of time, recognizing important events in their own lives, and how time and change affect people. They will become increasingly aware of how advances in technology affect individuals and the environment.

### Phase 3

Students will extend their understanding of human society, focusing on themselves and others within their own community as well as other communities that are distant in time and place. They will investigate how and why groups are organized within communities, and the ways in which communities reflect the cultures and customs of their people. They will recognize the interdependency of systems and their function within local and national communities. They will increase their awareness of how people influence, and are influenced by, the places in their environment. Students will explore the relationship between valuing the environment and protecting it. They will extend their understanding of time, recognizing important events in people's lives, and how the past is recorded and remembered in different ways. They will broaden their understanding of the impact of advances in technology over time, on individuals, society and the environment.



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### Phase 4

Students will recognize different aspects of human society, focusing on themselves and others within their own community as well as groups of people that are distant in time and place. They will extend their understanding of how and why groups are organized within communities, and how participation within groups involves both rights and responsibilities. They will understand the interdependency of systems and their function within local and national communities. Students will gain an appreciation of how cultural groups may vary in their customs and practices but reflect similar purposes. They will deepen their awareness of how people influence, and are influenced by, places in the environment. They will realize the significance of developing a sense of belonging and stewardship towards the environment, valuing and caring for it, in the interests of themselves and future generations. Students will consolidate their understanding of time, recognizing how ideas and actions of people in the past have changed the lives of others, and appreciating how the past is recorded and remembered in different ways. They will gain an understanding of how and why people manage resources. They will understand the impact of technological advances on their own lives, on society and on the world, and will reflect on the need to make responsible decisions concerning the use of technologies.

(International Baccalaureate 5)



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### Works Cited

*Primary Years Programme Social studies scope and sequence.* Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008.

*Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education.* Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2009.