



THE
I N T E R N A T I O N A L
SCHOOL OF TEXAS

2026-27 Primary Curriculum Guide

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Early Years Curriculum Overview

The International School of Texas Early Years curriculum is built upon the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) Early Years philosophy, creating a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Our program nurtures children's curiosity, creativity, confidence, and independence through purposeful play, inquiry, and meaningful relationships. Learning experiences are thoughtfully designed to develop conceptual understanding, essential skills, and positive dispositions while supporting each child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development. Our curriculum balances intentional teaching with child-initiated exploration, ensuring students develop strong foundational skills while engaging in authentic inquiry. Rich language experiences, early literacy and numeracy, scientific exploration, creative expression, and social-emotional learning are woven throughout the day to provide meaningful and engaging learning opportunities. Teachers intentionally scaffold learning to challenge every child and foster confidence, resilience, and a love of learning.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our Early Years program. Children investigate significant ideas through play, exploration, and collaboration, making meaningful connections across all areas of learning. These authentic experiences encourage children to ask questions, solve problems, communicate their thinking, and develop an understanding of themselves and the world around them. Inquiry is the foundation of learning in the Early Years at IST. Guided by skilled educators, children explore their interests, investigate new ideas, reflect on their experiences, and take an active role in their learning. Through high expectations, purposeful teaching, and joyful inquiry, students develop the confidence, curiosity, and foundational skills that prepare them for continued success in the Primary Years Programme.

Understanding the IST Early Years Programme of Inquiry**Central Idea**

A broad understanding that guides children's learning throughout the unit. Central ideas encourage children to make connections, ask questions, and develop an understanding of the world around them through meaningful experiences.

Concepts

Concepts help children explore big ideas such as Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility. These concepts encourage curiosity, conversation, and deeper thinking as children investigate their world.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These themes provide meaningful, real-world contexts for learning and help children make connections across all areas of development.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry provide a focus for learning while remaining flexible enough to follow children's questions, interests, and discoveries. They support curiosity, exploration, and student agency throughout the unit.

Learning Through Inquiry

Inquiry is the foundation of learning in the Early Years. Children develop understanding by asking questions, exploring materials, engaging in purposeful play, collaborating with others, and reflecting on their experiences. Teachers intentionally design learning experiences that nurture curiosity while developing strong foundations in language, mathematics, social-emotional development, and early conceptual understanding.

Learning Across the Curriculum

In the Early Years, learning is naturally integrated rather than taught as isolated subjects. Language, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and personal, social, and physical development are woven together through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, creating authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are	How The World Works
Central Idea	Communities are organized systems where everyone has a role and belongs.	Living things require basic elements to survive	Storytelling allows us to share our feelings, ideas, and experiences.	Our relationships and connections with others help us understand who we are.	Cycles can have many impacts on our lives.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into different people in our community and what they do, how we help each other in our community, how we work and play together.	An inquiry into living and nonliving things, habitats and shelters, working together and relationships.	An inquiry into essential components that make up a story, diverse methods and mediums through which stories can be communicated, the role of rhyme, rhythm, and repetition in enhancing storytelling.	An inquiry into different types of characteristics of relationships, how relationships influence our identity and behavior, and our responsibilities in building and maintaining healthy relationships.	An inquiry into different types of cycles, components and patterns of cycles and effects of responses to cycles.
Specified Concepts	Function Connection Responsibility	Form Function Responsibility	Function Perspective Causation	Form Connection Responsibility	Form Causation Change
Related Concepts	Jobs and Roles, Belonging, Community	Basic Needs, Environment	Literature, Creativity, acting	Feelings/emotion, perspective, empathy	Cycles, Interdependence
Field Trip Opportunities	Fire Station	Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower center	Bonzo Crunch retro clown onsite	TBD	Butterfly Sanctuary onsite visit or Zilker Park
Unit Description	"How We Organize Ourselves," explores how communities function as organized systems where every individual plays a vital role and finds a sense of belonging. Through inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems, students will discover what people do and how they help each other within their communities.	"Sharing the Planet" explores how living things depend on essential elements for survival, fostering an understanding of our shared responsibility to protect and sustain life on Earth. Students will inquire into the functions of living and nonliving things, the importance of habitats, and the interconnected relationships within our world.	"How We Express Ourselves," delves into storytelling as a powerful means of conveying emotions, ideas, and experiences. Through exploring essential story components, diverse communication methods, and the role of expressive elements like rhyme and body language	"Who We Are" explores how our relationships and connections with others shape our understanding of who we are, focusing on the nature of self and human relationships within families, friends, communities, and cultures. Through inquiry into different types of relationships, their influence on identity.	"How The World Works," explores how various cycles impact our lives, aligning with the central idea that "Cycles can have many impacts on our lives." Through inquiry into different types of cycles, their components, patterns, effects, and responses.

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Pre-K Program of Inquiry | 2026-2027

Transdisciplinary Theme	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are	How The World Works
Central Idea	Where we live affects how we live.	Communication happens in different ways	Senses help to process, interpret, and recall information.	People observe, sort, and classify to make sense of the world.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into how homes reflect community, access to resources between communities and how homes are influenced by those within them.	An inquiry into methods of communication, verbal and non-verbal communication, roles of sender and recipient, and communication devices.	An inquiry into five plus senses, loss of a sense and gathering and interpreting information.	An inquiry into identification of characteristics, how groups are organized and different types of classification.
Specified Concepts	Form Causation Connection	Perspective Responsibility Fuction	Form Function Perspective	Form Responsibility Change
Related Concepts	Structure, Relationship, adaptation	Needs, Choices, Initiative, storytelling	Classification, Interdependence, opinion	Classification, organization, choice
Field Trip Opportunities	Zilker Park Fairy Houses	Zach Scott Theatre	Austin Nature and Science Center - Bats	TBD
Unit Description	"Where We Are in Place and Time," explores how our living environments shape our lives, delving into the diverse forms of homes globally and the factors influencing their construction. Students will engage in inquiry-based learning to understand the connection between homes, communities, resources, and personal histories.	"How We Express Ourselves," for PreK students aged 3-4, explores the diverse methods of communication, both verbal and non-verbal. Through engaging inquiries, students will develop an understanding of how communication happens in different ways, fostering their roles as communicators within their community.	"Who We Are" unit explores how our senses help us process, interpret, and recall information. Students will inquire into the function and form of our five (plus) senses and how different perspectives influence our understanding of the world.	"How the World Works," delves into how people observe, sort, and classify to make sense of their environment. Through inquiry into form, change, and responsibility, students will develop foundational skills in organizing information and understanding their role in maintaining order.

In Grade 5, students deepen their mathematical understanding through rich problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and real-world applications. Building on prior knowledge, students strengthen computational fluency while developing confidence in explaining their thinking and selecting efficient strategies.

Number & Operations

Students build fluency and accuracy when working with whole numbers by exploring:

- Place value of large numbers
- Multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Mental math and estimation strategies
- Order of operations
- Multi-step problem solving

Fractions

Students extend their understanding of fractions by exploring:

- Equivalent fractions
- Comparing and ordering fractions
- Addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers
- Multiplication and division of fractions
- Solving real-world problems involving fractions

Decimals

Students develop confidence working with decimals through:

- Place value to thousandths
- Comparing and ordering decimals
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimals
- Connections between fractions and decimals
- Applying decimals in authentic contexts

Measurement

Students apply mathematical understanding to measurement by investigating:

- Metric and customary units
- Unit conversions
- Perimeter and area
- Volume of rectangular prisms
- Time and measurement in real-world situations

Geometry

Students explore geometric relationships by studying:

- Angles and angle measurement
- Properties of triangles and quadrilaterals
- Coordinate grids
- Geometric reasoning
- Spatial visualization

Data, Patterns & Algebraic Thinking

Students use mathematics to analyze information and recognize relationships through:

- Reading and interpreting graphs
- Representing and analyzing data
- Identifying patterns
- Numerical expressions and simple equations
- Multi-step problem solving using mathematical models

Throughout Grade 5, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using precise mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with challenging tasks. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a deep conceptual understanding that prepares students to apply mathematics in meaningful, real-world contexts.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In PreKindergarten, students develop the early literacy skills that form the foundation for future reading, writing, and communication. Our English Language Arts curriculum is informed by the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Through purposeful play, rich literature, meaningful conversations, and authentic learning experiences, students develop oral language, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and a love of books. High expectations, nurturing relationships, and engaging learning experiences foster curiosity, confidence, and a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Early Reading

Students begin developing early literacy skills by learning to:

- Develop concepts of print and book handling skills.
- Listen to and engage with a variety of stories and informational texts.
- Identify characters, settings, and key events.
- Retell familiar stories using words, pictures, and dramatic play.
- Build vocabulary through conversations, songs, and shared reading.
- Develop a love of reading and storytelling.

Early Writing

Students begin expressing their ideas through:

- Drawing, painting, and emergent writing.
- Exploring letters and letter formation.
- Dictating stories and sharing ideas.
- Writing their name and familiar words.
- Using pictures, symbols, and early writing to communicate meaning.

Foundational Literacy

Students develop the building blocks for reading and writing by learning to:

- Recognize and produce rhyming words.
- Develop phonological awareness.
- Identify and name uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Recognize letter sounds.
- Build early vocabulary and oral language.
- Strengthen fine motor skills for writing.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is woven throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to develop language through meaningful play and inquiry. As students explore transdisciplinary units, they listen, speak, draw, create, and share their ideas while making connections across all areas of learning. These authentic experiences nurture curiosity, creativity, confidence, and a joyful approach to learning.

Literacy Practices

Throughout PreKindergarten, students develop confidence as communicators while building the foundational literacy skills needed for future learning. Through purposeful play, rich language experiences, and authentic inquiry, they develop curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate in conversations with peers and adults.
- Listen attentively during stories and discussions.
- Ask and answer simple questions.
- Express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly.
- Follow multi-step directions and classroom routines.

Inquiry & Exploration

Students develop early inquiry skills by learning to:

- Ask questions about the world around them.
- Observe, explore, and investigate through play.
- Share ideas and discoveries with others.
- Make connections between experiences and new learning.
- Communicate understanding through speaking, drawing, building, and dramatic play.

The International School of Texas Primary School curriculum is built upon the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and enriched by internationally recognized, research-based curriculum frameworks. This ensures a rigorous, vertically aligned curriculum that develops students' knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills, and dispositions while fostering curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum combines explicit instruction with authentic inquiry to build strong foundational knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. English Language Arts is guided by the Common Core State Standards, Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Standards, the IB Language Scope and Sequence, and UFLI Foundations. Mathematics is taught through Singapore Math: Dimensions, while Science is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These frameworks provide a strong academic foundation while supporting the development of the whole child.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Students investigate significant concepts that connect across subject areas, making learning meaningful, relevant, and authentic. While many learning outcomes are developed through units of inquiry, explicit instruction in core knowledge and skills ensures students develop both deep conceptual understanding and strong academic proficiency.

Inquiry is the driving force behind teaching and learning at IST. Guided by expert educators, students ask meaningful questions, investigate ideas, analyze evidence, reflect on their learning, and take purposeful action. Through high academic expectations and authentic inquiry, students become confident, knowledgeable, and internationally minded learners prepared for future success.

How to Read the IST Programme of Inquiry

Central Idea

A broad conceptual statement that captures the enduring understanding students develop throughout the unit. Central ideas focus on what students will understand and apply beyond the classroom, rather than simply what they will know.

Specified Concepts

Concepts help students explore ideas that are timeless, transferable, and relevant across disciplines and cultures. They encourage deeper thinking and support students in developing conceptual understanding throughout the unit. The seven concepts are Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility.

Related Concepts

Related concepts provide greater depth and context within each unit of inquiry. They are specific ideas or themes that help students deepen their understanding of the central idea and make meaningful connections to their learning.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These broad themes connect learning across subject areas and encourage students to explore significant real-world issues from multiple perspectives.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry define the direction of the unit and guide student learning. They help focus investigations while remaining open enough to encourage curiosity, deeper questioning, and student agency.

Main Subject Focus

Although English Language Arts and Mathematics are taught as dedicated subjects, units of inquiry intentionally integrate learning across Science, Social Studies, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Learning (PSEL). This transdisciplinary approach helps students make meaningful connections across disciplines while developing both conceptual understanding and subject-specific knowledge.

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are
Central Idea	Systems enhance communities.	The connection between the responsibilities of humans and their impact on earth.	Celebrations are an opportunity to reflect and appreciate cultures and beliefs.	Transformations are discovered in the world around us.	Understanding who you are shapes relationships.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into identifying systems, connections of systems, structure of communities.	An inquiry into ways to sustain resources, protecting our planet.	An inquiry into how celebrations help us express ourselves, significance of celebrations, ways that cultural connections influence celebrations.	An inquiry into cause and effect, patterns and expression of culture.	An inquiry into discovery of self, similarities and differences of people and relationships.
Specified Concepts	Form Function Causation	Connection Function Responsibility	Causation Perspective Connection	Causation Change Perspective	Change Connection Responsibility
Related Concepts	Classification, cycles, systems, community	Relationship, Purpose, action	Expression, Traditions, Sequencing, Culture, Beliefs	Cycles, creativity, ownership, culture, symbols, nature	Similarities/differences, Relationships, discovery, classification, communication
Field Trip Opportunities	Sweet Berry Farms	Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center	Zach Scott Theatre	The Thinkery	TBD
Unit Description	"How We Organize Ourselves," explores the transdisciplinary theme of systems and their impact on communities. Students will inquire into identifying various systems, understanding their connections, and recognizing how these structures enhance the communities around them.	"Sharing the Planet" explores the vital connection between human responsibilities and their impact on Earth. Through inquiry into sustainable practices like the 3 Rs (Recycling, Reusing, and Reducing), students will discover ways to protect our planet's precious resources.	"Where We Are in Place and Time" explore diverse celebrations from around the world, fostering an appreciation for different cultures and beliefs. Students will discover the significance of these traditions and how they connect people across various communities.	"How We Express Ourselves," explores transformations discovered in the world around us. Students will delve into our appreciation of the aesthetic and the ways in which we reflect on, extend, and enjoy our creativity.	"Who We Are," explores how understanding one's identity shapes relationships, delving into the nature of the self for kindergarteners. Through inquiries into self-discovery, similarities and differences, and relationships, students will explore their past, present, and future selves.

In Kindergarten, students develop a strong foundation in mathematical thinking through exploration, play, and hands-on learning. Through the Singapore Math: Dimensions program, students build number sense, recognize patterns and relationships, and begin to solve problems using concrete materials, visual models, and mathematical language. Students are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and make connections between mathematics and the world around them.

Number & Operations

Students develop early number sense by exploring:

- Counting, reading, and writing numbers
- Comparing and ordering numbers
- Composing and decomposing numbers
- Addition and subtraction within 10
- Building fluency with number relationships

Patterns & Number Relations

Students build mathematical thinking by exploring:

- Recognizing, creating, and extending patterns
- Sorting and classifying objects
- Comparing quantities
- Number bonds and part-whole relationships
- Identifying mathematical relationships

Data & Graphing

Students begin to collect and interpret information by:

- Sorting and organizing data
- Creating simple picture graphs
- Comparing groups
- Asking and answering questions using data
- Making observations about information collected

Measurement

Students investigate measurement by exploring:

- Length, height, and weight
- Capacity
- Comparing and ordering objects
- Time through daily routines
- Using non-standard units to measure

Geometry

Students develop geometric understanding by studying:

- Two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes
- Identifying and describing shape attributes
- Positional language and spatial awareness
- Composing and building shapes
- Recognizing shapes in everyday life

Mathematical Thinking & Problem Solving

Students strengthen their mathematical understanding by:

- Exploring mathematical ideas through play and inquiry
- Explaining their thinking using words, pictures, and manipulatives
- Using multiple strategies to solve simple problems
- Recognizing patterns and making connections
- Applying mathematics in everyday experiences

Throughout Kindergarten, students develop positive mathematical habits by exploring, questioning, and making sense of the world around them. They use hands-on materials, collaborate with their peers, and communicate their thinking through words, drawings, and models. Students are encouraged to persevere, try different strategies, and build confidence as they discover that mathematics is meaningful, engaging, and connected to everyday life.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Kindergarten, students begin their literacy journey by developing the foundational skills needed to become confident readers, writers, and communicators. Our English Language Arts curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Students receive explicit, systematic literacy instruction through UFLI Foundations while engaging with rich literature, purposeful play, and meaningful learning experiences. Through purposeful instruction and high academic expectations, students build the foundational reading, writing, communication, and critical thinking skills needed for future success.

Reading

Students engage with a wide range of literary and informational texts while developing the ability to:

- Develop concepts of print and book handling skills.
- Identify characters, settings, and key events in stories.
- Retell stories and discuss important details.
- Ask and answer questions about texts.
- Make predictions and connections to personal experiences.
- Build vocabulary through shared reading and discussion.

Writing

Students write for meaningful purposes while learning to:

- Express ideas through drawing, labeling, and writing.
- Write simple sentences using words and pictures.
- Explore narrative, informational, and opinion writing.
- Use phonetic spelling to communicate ideas.
- Share writing with classmates and teachers.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate actively in classroom discussions.
- Listen attentively and respond respectfully.
- Ask and answer questions about learning.
- Share ideas using complete sentences.
- Collaborate with peers during discussions and inquiry.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills across all areas of learning. Through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students explore meaningful concepts, ask questions, make connections, and communicate their understanding in authentic ways. These experiences nurture curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Kindergarten, students think critically, communicate effectively, and begin taking ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the foundational literacy skills, confidence, and curiosity needed for future success.

Research & Inquiry

Students strengthen their inquiry skills by learning to:

- Ask questions about topics of interest.
- Observe, explore, and gather information.
- Sort and organize ideas.
- Share learning through speaking, drawing, and writing.
- Communicate discoveries through oral, visual, and written presentations.

Foundational Literacy

Students develop strong foundational reading and writing skills through UFLI Foundations by learning to:

- Build phonological and phonemic awareness.
- Recognize and produce letter sounds.
- Apply beginning phonics skills to decode words.
- Develop early encoding (spelling) skills.
- Build automatic recognition of high-frequency words.
- Read simple, decodable texts with increasing confidence.

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Central Idea	Persuasions may influence decisions	Conflicts can lead to consequences and opportunities.	Stories and artifacts provide us clues to the past.	Creativity and expression can be interpreted differently.	Our location in the world impacts our health.	Forces affect objects and can cause change.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into elements and effects of persuasion, responsibilities and consumers, values and action.	An inquiry into reflect, choose and act, change can occur from conflicts, opportunities can come from action.	An inquiry into history through stories, artifacts and their clues, what we leave behind.	An inquiry into types of creativity and the ways they are expressed, interpretation of the creative process, creative expression around the world.	An inquiry into personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health.	An inquiry into the engineering design process, force and motion and forces in everyday life.
Specified Concepts	Function Connection Responsibility	Causation Responsibility Change	Form Causation Perspective	Form Perspective CHange	Change Casation Responsibility	Casation Form Connection
Related Concepts	Choice, Persuasion, Value	Action, Civilization, Resolution	Culture, Civilization, Interpretation	Impact, Interpretation, Expression, Processes	Geography, Health, Lifestyle	Physics, Change, Properties, Movement, Prediction, Energy
Field Trip Opportunities	Bank, Restaurant (other goods/services places-reach out to parents)	Natural History Museum at UT	Bob Bullock History Museum	Zach Scott Theatre	Austin Science and Nature Center, Farm	Science Museum in Johnson City
Unit Description	"How We Organize Ourselves" unit, will explore how persuasion influences decisions within economic systems and their impact on the world. They will investigate the functions and connections of various systems, understanding their responsibilities as producers and consumers. The unit aims to empower learners to make informed, principled choices that benefit their community and environment.	"Sharing the Planet" explores how conflicts can lead to consequences and opportunities, empowering students to understand their role in creating positive change. Through inquiry into causation, change, and responsibility, students will learn to reflect, choose, and act thoughtfully.	"Where We Are in Place and Time," explores the past by examining stories and artifacts as valuable clues to understanding history. Our central idea is that these provide insights into how life has evolved and shaped our present.	"How We Express Ourselves," explores the transdisciplinary theme of creativity and diverse interpretations of expression. Students will investigate various forms of creative expression globally, developing an appreciation for aesthetics and fostering open-minded communication.	"Who We Are" explores how our geographical location and surrounding environment significantly impact our overall health and well-being. Through inquiry into healthy choices, and maintaining balance, students will understand their responsibility in making informed decisions for their personal, physical, mental, social, and spiritual health.	"How the World Works," explores how forces affect objects and cause change in the natural world. Students will engage in the engineering design process by building cars to investigate scientific principles, fostering an understanding of motion, friction, and gravity through hands-on exploration and problem-solving.

In Grade 1, students build a strong foundation in mathematical thinking by developing number sense, problem-solving skills, and confidence with basic operations. Through the Singapore Math: Dimensions program, students explore mathematical concepts using hands-on experiences, visual models, and real-world applications as they develop a deep understanding of numbers and relationships.

Number & Operations

Students develop strong number sense by exploring:

- Place value to 100
- Counting, comparing, and ordering numbers
- Addition and subtraction within 100
- Mental mathematics strategies
- Solving one and two-step word problems

Number Relationships

Students build understanding of how numbers work by exploring:

- Number bonds
- Fact families
- Making ten
- Doubles and near doubles
- Composing and decomposing numbers

Data & Graphing

Students learn to collect and interpret information by:

- Sorting and classifying objects
- Creating picture graphs
- Reading and interpreting simple graphs
- Comparing data
- Answering questions using data

Measurement

Students investigate measurement by exploring:

- Length
- Time to the hour and half hour
- Money
- Comparing and ordering measurements
- Using non-standard and standard units

Geometry

Students develop geometric understanding by studying:

- Two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes
- Identifying and describing attributes of shapes
- Composing and decomposing shapes
- Position and spatial relationships
- Fractions as equal parts of a whole

Data, Patterns & Algebraic Thinking

Students strengthen their mathematical reasoning by:

- Explaining their thinking using words, pictures, and models
- Selecting appropriate strategies to solve problems
- Making connections between mathematical ideas
- Recognizing patterns
- Applying mathematics in everyday situations

Throughout Grade 1, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using words, pictures, models, and mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with new challenges. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a strong conceptual foundation that prepares students for future mathematical learning.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Grade 1, students build confidence as readers, writers, and communicators while developing strong foundational literacy skills. Our English Language Arts curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Students receive explicit, systematic literacy instruction through UFLI Foundations while engaging with rich literature and applying their literacy skills across meaningful transdisciplinary learning experiences. Through purposeful instruction and high academic expectations, students develop the reading, writing, communication, and critical thinking skills needed for continued growth.

Reading

Students engage with a wide range of literary and informational texts while developing the ability to:

- Read with increasing accuracy, fluency, and expression.
- Identify characters, setting, and key events.
- Retell stories and identify central ideas.
- Ask and answer questions about what they read.
- Make predictions and simple inferences.
- Build vocabulary through reading and discussion.

Writing

Students write for a variety of authentic audiences and purposes while learning to:

- Craft narrative, informational, and opinion writing.
- Organize ideas using simple sentence structures.
- Add details to communicate meaning clearly.
- Revise and edit writing with teacher support.
- Share and publish writing in a variety of ways.

Foundational Learning

Students develop strong foundational reading and writing skills through UFLI Foundations by learning to:

- Strengthen phonemic awareness.
- Master letter-sound relationships.
- Apply phonics and decoding strategies.
- Develop encoding (spelling) skills.
- Build automatic recognition of high-frequency words.
- Read with increasing fluency and confidence.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to apply reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills across all areas of learning. Through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students explore meaningful concepts, make connections between disciplines, and communicate their understanding in authentic ways. These experiences foster curiosity, creativity, and a growing sense of agency as learners.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Grade 1, students think critically, communicate effectively, and take increasing ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the literacy skills and confidence needed for continued success.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate actively in classroom discussions.
- Listen respectfully and respond appropriately.
- Ask and answer questions to deepen understanding.
- Share ideas clearly using complete sentences.
- Build on the ideas of classmates during collaborative learning.

Research & Inquiry

Students strengthen their inquiry skills by learning to:

- Ask questions about topics of study.
- Gather information from teacher-selected sources.
- Sort and organize information.
- Share learning through speaking, drawing, and writing.
- Communicate ideas through written, oral, and visual presentations.

The International School of Texas Primary School curriculum is built upon the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and enriched by internationally recognized, research-based curriculum frameworks. This ensures a rigorous, vertically aligned curriculum that develops students' knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills, and dispositions while fostering curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum combines explicit instruction with authentic inquiry to build strong foundational knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. English Language Arts is guided by the Common Core State Standards, Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Standards, the IB Language Scope and Sequence, and UFLI Foundations. Mathematics is taught through Singapore Math: Dimensions, while Science is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These frameworks provide a strong academic foundation while supporting the development of the whole child.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Students investigate significant concepts that connect across subject areas, making learning meaningful, relevant, and authentic. While many learning outcomes are developed through units of inquiry, explicit instruction in core knowledge and skills ensures students develop both deep conceptual understanding and strong academic proficiency.

Inquiry is the driving force behind teaching and learning at IST. Guided by expert educators, students ask meaningful questions, investigate ideas, analyze evidence, reflect on their learning, and take purposeful action. Through high academic expectations and authentic inquiry, students become confident, knowledgeable, and internationally minded learners prepared for future success.

How to Read the IST Programme of Inquiry

Central Idea

A broad conceptual statement that captures the enduring understanding students develop throughout the unit. Central ideas focus on what students will understand and apply beyond the classroom, rather than simply what they will know.

Specified Concepts

Concepts help students explore ideas that are timeless, transferable, and relevant across disciplines and cultures. They encourage deeper thinking and support students in developing conceptual understanding throughout the unit. The seven concepts are Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility.

Related Concepts

Related concepts provide greater depth and context within each unit of inquiry. They are specific ideas or themes that help students deepen their understanding of the central idea and make meaningful connections to their learning.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These broad themes connect learning across subject areas and encourage students to explore significant real-world issues from multiple perspectives.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry define the direction of the unit and guide student learning. They help focus investigations while remaining open enough to encourage curiosity, deeper questioning, and student agency.

Main Subject Focus

Although English Language Arts and Mathematics are taught as dedicated subjects, units of inquiry intentionally integrate learning across Science, Social Studies, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Learning (PSEL). This transdisciplinary approach helps students make meaningful connections across disciplines while developing both conceptual understanding and subject-specific knowledge.

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are	How The World Works
Central Idea	The ways we measure, organize, and communicate shape our daily lives.	The world is made up of diverse systems whose parts are interdependent.	Innovations have changed how we live our lives.	People read and write for different purposes and for a variety of audiences.	Exploring cultures helps shape our understanding of who we are.	Environments and societies are interconnected.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into reasons systems are created, different types of measurement and how they are used, how systems organize our lives.	An inquiry into ecosystems depend on relationships between living things, cycles occur within nature, human responsibility to protect earth's ecosystems.	An inquiry into innovations over time, how inventions have changed our world, impacts of innovations.	An inquiry into different forms of writing, literacy genres, reasons for reading and writing.	An inquiry into different cultures, how communities maintain identity, how ancient cultures impact, the modern world.	An inquiry into the changes of the earth, the structure of the land and its physical properties, interaction between communities and their environments.
Specified Concepts	Form Causation Responsibility	Perspective Causation Responsibility	Causation Function Change	Form Function Perspective	Connection Responsibility Perspective	Change Form Connection
Related Concepts	Measurement, Organization	Balance, Relationships	Utility, Progress, Transformation	Communication Genre Expression	Influence, Identity	Movement, Structure
Field Trip Opportunities	TBD	Austin Nature & Science Center-request tour guide	Pioneer Farms	Austin Public Library	TBD	TBD
Unit Description	"How We Organize Ourselves," students will explore the central idea that "The ways we measure, organize, and communicate shape our daily lives." We will inquire into why systems are created, various types of measurement, and how these structures bring order to our world. This unit aims to develop an understanding of human-made systems and their vital role in our daily lives and communities.	"Sharing the Planet," explores the central idea that the world is made up of diverse, interdependent systems. Students will inquire into ecosystems, natural cycles, and human responsibility to understand their crucial role in protecting Earth's environment.	"Where We Are In Place And Time," explores how innovations have changed our lives, focusing on the discoveries and impacts of inventions over time. Students will investigate the function, causation, and change related to innovations, culminating in an "Invention Convention" where they apply critical thinking and creativity to design their own solutions.	"How We Express Ourselves," invites students to explore the diverse world of reading and writing, recognizing that people communicate for various purposes and audiences. Through inquiry into different forms, literary genres, and the power of perspective, students will understand how authors express ideas and how readers interpret them.	"Who We Are," explores how culture shapes our understanding of ourselves. Students will investigate different cultures, how communities maintain their identity, and the lasting impact of ancient cultures on the modern world. They will develop a deeper appreciation for their own cultural heritage.	"How the World Works." Students will inquire into the changes of the Earth, the structure of land, and the interactions between communities and their environments. Through research, mapping activities, and creative projects, learners will develop a deep understanding of landforms and the forces that shape our planet.

In Grade 2, students build a strong foundation in number sense while developing confidence in solving mathematical problems. Through the Singapore Math: Dimensions program, students deepen their conceptual understanding, strengthen computational fluency, and apply mathematical thinking to meaningful, real-world situations.

Number & Operations

Students develop fluency with numbers by exploring:

- Place value to 1,000
- Addition and subtraction strategies
- Mental mathematics and estimation
- Even and odd numbers
- Multi-step problem solving

Multiplication Foundations

Students are introduced to multiplication concepts by exploring:

- Equal groups
- Repeated addition
- Arrays
- Skip counting
- Building early multiplication understanding

Data & Graphing

Students learn to collect and interpret information by:

- Creating picture graphs and bar graphs
- Organizing and analyzing data
- Reading graphs to answer questions
- Comparing data
- Solving problems using information presented in graphs

Measurement

Students investigate measurement by exploring:

- Length using metric units
- Mass and capacity
- Time to the nearest minute
- Money
- Comparing and estimating measurements

Geometry

Students develop geometric understanding by studying:

- Two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes
- Attributes of shapes
- Fractions as equal parts of shapes
- Symmetry
- Spatial reasoning

Mathematical Thinking & Problem Solving

Students strengthen their mathematical reasoning by:

- Explaining their thinking
- Using models and drawings to solve problems
- Selecting appropriate strategies
- Making connections between mathematical ideas
- Applying mathematics in everyday situations

Throughout Grade 2, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using precise mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with challenging tasks. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a deep conceptual understanding that prepares students to apply mathematics in meaningful, real-world contexts.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Grade 2, students become increasingly confident readers, writers, and communicators as they strengthen foundational literacy skills and develop greater independence. Our English Language Arts curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Students receive explicit, systematic literacy instruction through UFLI Foundations while engaging with rich literature and applying their literacy skills across meaningful transdisciplinary learning experiences. Through purposeful instruction and high academic expectations, students develop the reading, writing, communication, and critical thinking skills needed for continued academic success.

Reading

Students engage with a wide range of literary and informational texts while developing the ability to:

- Read with increasing accuracy, fluency, and expression.
- Identify characters, setting, plot, and central ideas.
- Ask and answer questions using evidence from the text.
- Make predictions, inferences, and meaningful connections.
- Compare texts and identify text features.
- Build vocabulary using context clues and word study strategies.

Writing

Students write for a variety of authentic audiences and purposes while learning to:

- Craft narrative, informational, and opinion writing.
- Organize ideas with a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Develop ideas using relevant details.
- Revise and edit writing with teacher guidance.
- Publish and share writing in a variety of formats.

Foundational Literacy

Students develop strong foundational reading and writing skills through UFLI Foundations by learning to:

- Strengthen phonemic awareness.
- Apply phonics and decoding strategies.
- Develop encoding (spelling) skills.
- Build automatic recognition of high-frequency words.
- Read with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to apply reading, writing, speaking, and research skills across all areas of learning. Through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students investigate significant concepts, make meaningful connections, and communicate their understanding in authentic ways. These learning experiences encourage students to become curious, reflective, and internationally minded learners.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Grade 2, students think critically, communicate effectively, and take increasing ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the literacy skills and confidence needed for continued success.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate actively in collaborative discussions.
- Listen thoughtfully and respond respectfully.
- Ask meaningful questions and build on the ideas of others.
- Present ideas clearly using appropriate language.
- Communicate effectively for different audiences and purposes.

Research & Inquiry

Students strengthen their inquiry skills by learning to:

- Ask meaningful questions about topics of study.
- Gather information from a variety of sources.
- Organize and share information clearly.
- Use evidence to support their ideas.
- Communicate learning through written, oral, and visual presentations.

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Our curriculum combines explicit instruction with authentic inquiry to build strong foundational knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. English Language Arts is guided by the Common Core State Standards, Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Standards, the IB Language Scope and Sequence, and UFLI Foundations. Mathematics is taught through Singapore Math: Dimensions, while Science is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These frameworks provide a strong academic foundation while supporting the development of the whole child.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Students investigate significant concepts that connect across subject areas, making learning meaningful, relevant, and authentic. While many learning outcomes are developed through units of inquiry, explicit instruction in core knowledge and skills ensures students develop both deep conceptual understanding and strong academic proficiency.

Inquiry is the driving force behind teaching and learning at IST. Guided by expert educators, students ask meaningful questions, investigate ideas, analyze evidence, reflect on their learning, and take purposeful action. Through high academic expectations and authentic inquiry, students become confident, knowledgeable, and internationally minded learners prepared for future success.

How to Read the IST Programme of Inquiry

Central Idea

A broad conceptual statement that captures the enduring understanding students develop throughout the unit. Central ideas focus on what students will understand and apply beyond the classroom, rather than simply what they will know.

Specified Concepts

Concepts help students explore ideas that are timeless, transferable, and relevant across disciplines and cultures. They encourage deeper thinking and support students in developing conceptual understanding throughout the unit. The seven concepts are Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility.

Related Concepts

Related concepts provide greater depth and context within each unit of inquiry. They are specific ideas or themes that help students deepen their understanding of the central idea and make meaningful connections to their learning.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These broad themes connect learning across subject areas and encourage students to explore significant real-world issues from multiple perspectives.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry define the direction of the unit and guide student learning. They help focus investigations while remaining open enough to encourage curiosity, deeper questioning, and student agency.

Main Subject Focus

Although English Language Arts and Mathematics are taught as dedicated subjects, units of inquiry intentionally integrate learning across Science, Social Studies, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Learning (PSEL). This transdisciplinary approach helps students make meaningful connections across disciplines while developing both conceptual understanding and subject-specific knowledge.

Grade 3 Program of Inquiry | 2026-2027

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are	How The World Works
Central Idea	Systems provide structure to the world around us.	We adapt and coexist in a complex world.	Explorations and journeys can lead to discoveries	Our creativity helps us communicate ideas and emotions.	Our beliefs and values evolve over time.	Understanding scientific principles helps people create solutions to problems.
An Inquiry Into:	An Inquiry into human-made systems, systems that provide global support and our responsibilities within systems.	An inquiry into the relationship between living and non-living things, living things respond to challenges and human impact.	An inquiry into reasons for exploration, challenges of exploration and the impact of discoveries.	An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values.	An inquiry into how experiences shape our understanding of the world, our belief system guides the choices we make and inherited traits versus learned behavior.	An inquiry into understanding the world through discovery, design, and innovation.
Specified Concepts	Function Connection Responsibility	Connection Change Responsibility	Causation Change Perspective	Causation Form Connection	Change Perspective	Fuction Perspective Responsibility
Related Concepts	Safety, Systems, Communication	Interdependence, ecosystems, impact	Struggles, exploration, discovery	Structure, Expression, Interpretation	Values, Culture, Belief	Relationships, Pattern, Expression
Field Trip Opportunities	State Capitol, Third Court of Appeals Court Tour	TBD	LBJ Wildflower Center	Blanton Museum of Art	TBD	TBD
Unit Description	How The World Works," explores the central idea that "Energy moves through systems, causing change and connecting the world around us." It will delve into the forms and flows of energy, energy transfer and transformation, and the human use and impact of energy.	"Sharing the Planet," explores how living things adapt and coexist in a complex world. We will investigate the relationships within ecosystems, how living things respond to challenges, and our collective human responsibility to ensure a sustainable future.	"Where We Are in Place and Time," students will inquire into how explorations and journeys lead to discoveries, examining the reasons, challenges, and impacts of humankind's ventures. Students will develop critical thinking skills and cultivate attributes of risk-takers and reflective learners.	"How We Express Ourselves," delves into the central idea that "Our creativity helps us communicate ideas and emotions." Students will explore the form, causation, and connection of diverse creative expressions, from poetry and art to fashion, to understand how they convey meaning and foster human connection.	"Who We Are," explores into the profound central idea that "Our beliefs and values evolve over time." Through an engaging inquiry, students will explore what shapes their understanding of the world, how their belief systems guide their choices, and the interplay between inherited traits and learned behaviors.	'How the World Works' will explore how understanding scientific principles allows people to design innovations that solve problems and shape our world. We will inquire into the function of renewable energy systems, how engineers design solutions, and the role of force and motion in new technologies world.

In Grade 3, students strengthen their understanding of number concepts while developing confidence in solving increasingly complex mathematical problems. Through the Singapore Math: Dimensions program, students build conceptual understanding, computational fluency, and mathematical reasoning by exploring patterns, relationships, and real-world applications.

Number & Operations

Students develop strong number sense by exploring:

- Place value of whole numbers
- Addition and subtraction within 10,000
- Multiplication and division concepts and strategies
- Mental mathematics and estimation
- Multi-step problem solving

Fractions

Students are introduced to fractions by exploring:

- Understanding fractions as equal parts of a whole
- Representing fractions using models
- Comparing and ordering simple fractions
- Equivalent fractions
- Applying fractions in everyday contexts

Geometry

Students develop geometric understanding by studying:

- Properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes
- Angles
- Lines and symmetry
- Area as an introduction to measuring space
- Spatial reasoning

Measurement

Students investigate measurement by exploring:

- Length, mass, volume, and capacity
- Measuring with metric units
- Perimeter
- Time and elapsed time
- Money and real-world measurement problems

Data & Problem Solving

Students develop analytical thinking through:

- Collecting and organizing data
- Reading and creating graphs
- Identifying patterns
- Solving multi-step word problems
- Applying mathematics to real-world situations

Mathematical Reasoning

Students strengthen their understanding by:

- Explaining mathematical thinking
- Using visual models and multiple strategies
- Making connections between mathematical concepts
- Communicating solutions clearly
- Developing confidence and perseverance

Throughout Grade 3, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using precise mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with challenging tasks. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a deep conceptual understanding that prepares students to apply mathematics in meaningful, real-world contexts.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Grade 3, students transition from learning to read toward reading to learn as they become more independent readers, writers, and communicators. Our English Language Arts curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Students engage with increasingly complex texts, write for authentic purposes, and apply literacy skills across meaningful transdisciplinary learning experiences. Through purposeful instruction and high academic expectations, students develop the critical thinking, communication, and research skills needed for continued academic success.

Reading

Students engage with a wide range of literary and informational texts while developing the ability to:

- Determine central ideas and supporting details.
- Analyze characters, setting, and plot.
- Make inferences using evidence from the text.
- Compare texts and identify author's purpose.
- Build vocabulary through context and word study.

Writing

Students write for a variety of authentic audiences and purposes while learning to:

- Craft narrative, informational, and opinion writing.
- Organize ideas using a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Develop ideas with supporting details and evidence.
- Revise and edit for clarity and organization.
- Publish and share writing in a variety of formats.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to apply reading, writing, speaking, and research skills across all areas of learning. Through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students investigate significant concepts, make meaningful connections across disciplines, and communicate their understanding in authentic ways. These learning experiences encourage students to think critically, collaborate effectively, and become reflective, internationally minded learners.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Grade 3, students think critically, communicate effectively, and take increasing ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the literacy skills and confidence needed for future academic success.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate actively in collaborative discussions.
- Listen thoughtfully and respond respectfully.
- Ask meaningful questions and build on the ideas of others.
- Present information clearly using appropriate language.
- Adapt communication for different audiences and purposes.

Research & Inquiry

Students strengthen their research skills by learning to:

- Investigate questions using a variety of resources.
- Gather and organize relevant information.
- Draw conclusions using evidence.
- Summarize information from multiple sources.
- Communicate learning through written, oral, and digital presentations.

Language

Students strengthen their command of language by developing:

- Grammar and sentence structure.
- Vocabulary development and word study.
- Prefixes, suffixes, and spelling patterns.
- Accurate spelling and language conventions.
- Clear and purposeful word choice.

The International School of Texas Primary School curriculum is built upon the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and enriched by internationally recognized, research-based curriculum frameworks. This ensures a rigorous, vertically aligned curriculum that develops students' knowledge, conceptual understanding, skills, and dispositions while fostering curiosity, independence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our curriculum combines explicit instruction with authentic inquiry to build strong foundational knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. English Language Arts is guided by the Common Core State Standards, Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Standards, the IB Language Scope and Sequence, and UFLI Foundations. Mathematics is taught through Singapore Math: Dimensions, while Science is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These frameworks provide a strong academic foundation while supporting the development of the whole child.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Students investigate significant concepts that connect across subject areas, making learning meaningful, relevant, and authentic. While many learning outcomes are developed through units of inquiry, explicit instruction in core knowledge and skills ensures students develop both deep conceptual understanding and strong academic proficiency.

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How to Read the IST Programme of Inquiry

Central Idea

A broad conceptual statement that captures the enduring understanding students develop throughout the unit. Central ideas focus on what students will understand and apply beyond the classroom, rather than simply what they will know.

Specified Concepts

Concepts help students explore ideas that are timeless, transferable, and relevant across disciplines and cultures. They encourage deeper thinking and support students in developing conceptual understanding throughout the unit. The seven concepts are Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility.

Related Concepts

Related concepts provide greater depth and context within each unit of inquiry. They are specific ideas or themes that help students deepen their understanding of the central idea and make meaningful connections to their learning.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These broad themes connect learning across subject areas and encourage students to explore significant real-world issues from multiple perspectives.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry define the direction of the unit and guide student learning. They help focus investigations while remaining open enough to encourage curiosity, deeper questioning, and student agency.

Main Subject Focus

Although English Language Arts and Mathematics are taught as dedicated subjects, units of inquiry intentionally integrate learning across Science, Social Studies, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Learning (PSEL). This transdisciplinary approach helps students make meaningful connections across disciplines while developing both conceptual understanding and subject-specific knowledge.

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are	How The World Works
Central Idea	People trade goods and services to meet needs and take responsibility for their choices.	People's choices and responsibilities influence how communities use and protect natural resources.	The movement of animals across the planet reveals patterns of change and connection in the natural world.	Art evolves to express society's shifting values and beliefs	Understanding different perspectives helps us connect and value each other's stories.	Energy moves through systems, causing change and connecting the world around us.
An Inquiry Into:	An inquiry into how people make a living, trade locally and globally, and the effects of their choices on others.	An inquiry into how our rights and responsibilities shape the use and care of natural resources in communities.	An inquiry into how the movement of animals across the planet reveals patterns of change and connection in the natural world.	An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values	An inquiry into how people's perspectives are shaped by their experiences, ways that understanding others builds stronger relationships and how we show responsibility in valuing and protecting other's stories.	An inquiry into how energy flows, transforms, and affects systems in everyday life, and how humans use this knowledge to solve problems.
Specified Concepts	Function Perspective Responsibility	Connection Perspective Responsibility	Form Causation Connection	Change Causation Connection	Perspective Connection Responsibility	Function Change Connection
Related Concepts	Economics, Decision making, Societies	Interdependence, Sustainability, Impact	Adaptation, Movement, Interdependence	Preservation, Communication, Value	Diversity, Respect	Impact, Technology, Adaptation
Field Trip Opportunities	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Unit Description	'How We Organize Ourselves,' explores economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment. Students will investigate how people trade goods and services to meet needs, considering diverse perspectives and the responsibilities and consequences of their choices.	'Sharing the Planet' explores how natural resources connect people and the environment, examining how choices and responsibilities influence their use and protection. They will investigate fair ways to share and care for resources, understanding the interdependence between human actions and our planet's health.	'Where We Are in Place and Time,' explores animal migration as a lens to understand global patterns of change and connection. Students will investigate why animals migrate, how their movements relate to environmental shifts, and human efforts in tracking and protecting migratory species.	'How We Express Ourselves,' delves into how art evolves to express society's shifting values and beliefs. Through inquiries into the transformation of artistic expression over time and the influence of societal changes on art, students will explore the powerful connection between art, culture, identity, and shared stories.	'Who We Are' explores how diverse perspectives, shaped by unique experiences, foster connection and mutual respect for each other's stories. This understanding is key to building stronger relationships and valuing the rich tapestry of human experiences."	How The World Works," explores the central idea that "Energy moves through systems, causing change and connecting the world around us." It will delve into the forms and flows of energy, energy transfer and transformation, and the human use and impact of energy.

In Grade 4, students build on their understanding of number concepts while developing greater confidence in solving multi-step problems. Through the Singapore Math: Dimensions program, students strengthen computational fluency, mathematical reasoning, and conceptual understanding by exploring meaningful mathematical relationships and applying their learning to real-world contexts.

Number & Operations

Students develop fluency with whole numbers by exploring:

- Place value of whole numbers
- Multi-digit addition and subtraction
- Multiplication and division strategies
- Mental mathematics and estimation
- Multi-step problem solving

Fractions

Students deepen their understanding of fractions by exploring:

- Equivalent fractions
- Comparing and ordering fractions
- Addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators
- Mixed numbers
- Fractions in real-world contexts

Decimals

Students are introduced to decimal concepts through:

- Place value to hundredths
- Comparing and ordering decimals
- Addition and subtraction of decimals
- Connections between fractions and decimals
- Solving practical problems involving decimals

Measurement

Students investigate measurement by exploring:

- Metric units of length, mass, and capacity
- Perimeter and area
- Time and elapsed time
- Unit conversions
- Applying measurement to everyday situations

Geometry

Students develop geometric understanding by studying:

- Lines, angles, and angle measurement
- Properties of triangles and quadrilaterals
- Symmetry
- Two-dimensional shapes
- Spatial reasoning

Data, Patterns & Algebraic Thinking

Students strengthen their reasoning skills through:

- Collecting and interpreting data
- Reading and creating graphs
- Identifying numerical patterns
- Understanding variables and simple expressions
- Solving multi-step problems using mathematical models

Throughout Grade 4, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using precise mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with challenging tasks. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a deep conceptual understanding that prepares students to apply mathematics in meaningful, real-world contexts.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Grade 4, students become increasingly independent readers, writers, and communicators as they engage with more complex texts and authentic learning experiences. Our English Language Arts curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Students strengthen their ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and apply literacy skills across meaningful transdisciplinary learning experiences. Through purposeful instruction and high academic expectations, students develop the literacy and research skills needed for continued academic success.

Reading

Students engage with a wide range of literary and informational texts while developing the ability to:

- Analyze characters, themes, and author's purpose.
- Support ideas using evidence from the text.
- Compare texts, perspectives, and text structures.
- Interpret figurative language and determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Draw conclusions and synthesize information from multiple sources.

Writing

Students write for a variety of authentic audiences and purposes while learning to:

- Craft narrative, informational, and opinion writing.
- Organize ideas using clear structure and supporting details.
- Develop and strengthen writing through planning, revising, and editing.
- Use evidence from texts to support their thinking.
- Publish and present writing using a variety of formats.

Language

Students strengthen their command of language by developing:

- Grammar and sentence structure.
- Vocabulary development and word study.
- Prefixes, suffixes, and word meaning.
- Accurate spelling and language conventions.
- Precise and purposeful word choice.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated throughout the IB Primary Years Programme, allowing students to apply reading, writing, speaking, and research skills across all areas of learning. Through transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students investigate significant concepts, make meaningful connections across disciplines, and communicate their understanding in authentic ways. These learning experiences encourage students to become thoughtful, reflective, and internationally minded learners.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Grade 4, students think critically, communicate effectively, and take increasing ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the literacy skills and confidence needed for success in upper elementary and beyond.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate actively in collaborative discussions.
- Listen thoughtfully and respond respectfully.
- Present ideas using clear organization and supporting details.
- Build on the ideas of others through meaningful discussion.
- Adapt communication for different audiences and purposes.

Research & Inquiry

Students strengthen their research skills by learning to:

- Investigate questions using a variety of reliable sources.
- Gather and organize relevant information.
- Draw conclusions using evidence.
- Summarize and synthesize information.
- Communicate learning through written, oral, and digital presentations.

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Our curriculum combines explicit instruction with authentic inquiry to build strong foundational knowledge alongside critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. English Language Arts is guided by the Common Core State Standards, Educational Records Bureau (ERB) Standards, the IB Language Scope and Sequence, and UFLI Foundations. Mathematics is taught through Singapore Math: Dimensions, while Science is informed by the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). These frameworks provide a strong academic foundation while supporting the development of the whole child.

As an IB World School, transdisciplinary learning is at the heart of our curriculum. Students investigate significant concepts that connect across subject areas, making learning meaningful, relevant, and authentic. While many learning outcomes are developed through units of inquiry, explicit instruction in core knowledge and skills ensures students develop both deep conceptual understanding and strong academic proficiency.

Inquiry is the driving force behind teaching and learning at IST. Guided by expert educators, students ask meaningful questions, investigate ideas, analyze evidence, reflect on their learning, and take purposeful action. Through high academic expectations and authentic inquiry, students become confident, knowledgeable, and internationally minded learners prepared for future success.

How to Read the IST Programme of Inquiry

Central Idea

A broad conceptual statement that captures the enduring understanding students develop throughout the unit. Central ideas focus on what students will understand and apply beyond the classroom, rather than simply what they will know.

Specified Concepts

Concepts help students explore ideas that are timeless, transferable, and relevant across disciplines and cultures. They encourage deeper thinking and support students in developing conceptual understanding throughout the unit. The seven concepts are Form, Function, Causation, Change, Connection, Perspective, and Responsibility.

Related Concepts

Related concepts provide greater depth and context within each unit of inquiry. They are specific ideas or themes that help students deepen their understanding of the central idea and make meaningful connections to their learning.

Transdisciplinary Theme

Each unit of inquiry is organized around one of the six IB Primary Years Programme transdisciplinary themes. These broad themes connect learning across subject areas and encourage students to explore significant real-world issues from multiple perspectives.

Lines of Inquiry

Lines of inquiry define the direction of the unit and guide student learning. They help focus investigations while remaining open enough to encourage curiosity, deeper questioning, and student agency.

Main Subject Focus

Although English Language Arts and Mathematics are taught as dedicated subjects, units of inquiry intentionally integrate learning across Science, Social Studies, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Learning (PSEL). This transdisciplinary approach helps students make meaningful connections across disciplines while developing both conceptual understanding and subject-specific knowledge.

Transdisciplinary Theme	How We Organize Ourselves	Sharing the Planet	Where We Are in Place and Time	How We Express Ourselves	Who We Are PYPX	How The World Works
Central Idea	Effective decision-making sparks action.	Having sufficient water impacts our daily lives and the environment around us in important ways.	When people are displaced, they adapt, rebuild, and create new understandings of home and belonging.	People express emotions, ideas, and perspectives through creative choices in language and performance.	Student Led	Scientific and technological advancements affect human lives and environment in different ways.
An Inquiry Into:	Decisions we make in our every day lives. How our decisions change the lives of others. Things we learn and how we grow from our decisions.	Distribution and availability of water. Aspects of our lives affected by access to water. Our responsibility for water conservation.	Reasons behind human migration Impact of migration on societies and cultures Economic and environmental consequences of migration	Ways people express themselves through poetry and performance How interpretation and perspective affect meaning How creative choices communicate emotion and mood	Student Led	Ways technology impacts human lives. How scientific advancements influence the environment. Managing the balance of technological progress with human responsibility
Specified Concepts	Risk-taker Balanced Form	Connection Causation Responsibility	Change Perspective Connection	Form Responsibility	Student Led	Causation Responsibility Connection
Related Concepts	Choice, Impact, Consequences	Sustainability, Economics, Ownership	Transformation	Advocacy, Movement, Empowerment	Student Led	Impact, sustainability, systems
Field Trip Opportunities	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Unit Description	"How we organize ourselves" explores how effective decision-making leads to meaningful action and influences our lives and communities. Students examine the impact of their choices, learn from real-world examples, and develop essential skills across multiple subjects. The unit encourages reflection, responsibility, and taking action to make a positive difference.	"Sharing the Planet" investigate the importance of water in our lives and the impact of water scarcity on people and the environment. Through inquiry and action, they explore how water is shared, their responsibilities in conservation, and ways to make a positive difference as global citizens.	"Where We Are in Place and Time," investigates the complexities of human displacement, focusing on how individuals adapt, rebuild, and create new understandings of home and belonging in unfamiliar environments. Students will explore the reasons for migration and the profound impact it has on people and communities.	"How We Express Ourselves," explores how creative choices in language and performance allow people to communicate emotions, ideas, and perspectives. Students will investigate diverse forms of expression, understanding how interpretation and perspective influence meaning and foster powerful communication.	The PYP Exhibition is a culminating, student-led inquiry where Grade 5 students collaboratively investigate real-world issues. They synthesize learning, develop solutions, and showcase their understanding to the community, demonstrating agency and all elements of the PYP.	"How the World Works" explores how our daily choices, self-perception, and relationships influence personal well-being. Students will investigate strategies for maintaining physical and mental balance, understanding how perspective and connection foster a mindful and healthy life.

In Grade 5, students deepen their mathematical understanding through rich problem solving, mathematical reasoning, and real-world applications. Building on prior knowledge, students strengthen computational fluency while developing confidence in explaining their thinking and selecting efficient strategies.

Number & Operations

Students build fluency and accuracy when working with whole numbers by exploring:

- Place value of large numbers
- Multi-digit addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Mental math and estimation strategies
- Order of operations
- Multi-step problem solving

Fractions

Students extend their understanding of fractions by exploring:

- Equivalent fractions
- Comparing and ordering fractions
- Addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers
- Multiplication and division of fractions
- Solving real-world problems involving fractions

Decimals

Students develop confidence working with decimals through:

- Place value to thousandths
- Comparing and ordering decimals
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimals
- Connections between fractions and decimals
- Applying decimals in authentic contexts

Measurement

Students apply mathematical understanding to measurement by investigating:

- Metric and customary units
- Unit conversions
- Perimeter and area
- Volume of rectangular prisms
- Time and measurement in real-world situations

Geometry

Students explore geometric relationships by studying:

- Angles and angle measurement
- Properties of triangles and quadrilaterals
- Coordinate grids
- Geometric reasoning
- Spatial visualization

Data, Patterns & Algebraic Thinking

Students use mathematics to analyze information and recognize relationships through:

- Reading and interpreting graphs
- Representing and analyzing data
- Identifying patterns
- Numerical expressions and simple equations
- Multi-step problem solving using mathematical models

Throughout Grade 5, students develop the confidence and skills to think like mathematicians. They explore mathematical ideas through inquiry, collaborate to solve problems, and communicate their thinking using precise mathematical language. Students are encouraged to reason, make connections, justify their strategies, and persevere when faced with challenging tasks. These mathematical practices foster curiosity, resilience, and a deep conceptual understanding that prepares students to apply mathematics in meaningful, real-world contexts.

ERB Standards | IB Primary Years Programme

In Grade 5, students become analytical readers, thoughtful writers, and confident communicators as they prepare for the transition to middle school. Our curriculum is benchmarked against the high expectations of the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and delivered through the inquiry-based framework of the IB Primary Years Programme. Through the exploration of increasingly complex texts and authentic transdisciplinary learning experiences, students develop the critical thinking, communication, and research skills needed for success in an ever-changing world.

Reading

Students engage with a diverse range of literary and informational texts as they learn to:

- Analyze themes, characters, and author's craft.
- Cite textual evidence to support ideas and conclusions.
- Compare perspectives across multiple texts.
- Interpret figurative language and academic vocabulary.
- Evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

Writing

Students write for authentic audiences and purposes while developing the ability to:

- Craft narrative, informational, and argumentative pieces.
- Organize ideas with clarity and logical structure.
- Support claims using evidence from texts and research.
- Revise and edit for precision, organization, and style.
- Publish and present writing using a range of formats.

Language

Students strengthen their command of language through:

- Grammar and sentence structure.
- Vocabulary development and academic language.
- Morphology, including prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots.
- Accurate spelling and language conventions.
- Purposeful word choice to enhance communication.

Transdisciplinary Learning

Literacy is integrated across the IB Primary Years Programme through meaningful units of inquiry. Students read, write, research, discuss, and reflect as they investigate significant concepts and real-world issues. By applying literacy skills across subject areas, students make meaningful connections, consider multiple perspectives, and communicate their understanding with confidence, creativity, and purpose.

Literacy Practices

Throughout Grade 5, students think critically, communicate effectively, and take ownership of their learning. Through rigorous instruction and authentic inquiry, they develop the literacy skills, confidence, and resilience needed for success in middle school and beyond.

Speaking & Listening

Students become confident communicators by learning to:

- Participate thoughtfully in collaborative discussions.
- Listen critically and respond respectfully.
- Present ideas using clear organization and supporting evidence.
- Engage in academic conversations.
- Adapt communication for different audiences and purposes.

Research & Inquiry

Students apply literacy skills across the curriculum by:

- Conducting research using a variety of reliable sources.
- Evaluating information and identifying credible evidence.
- Synthesizing ideas from multiple texts.
- Asking meaningful questions to deepen understanding.
- Communicating findings through written, oral, and digital presentations.