

Using MYP assessment criteria

The MYP assessment criteria across subject groups can be summarized as follows.

	A	B	C	D
Language and literature	Analysing	Organizing	Producing text	Using language
Language acquisition	Comprehending spoken and visual text	Comprehending written and visual text	Communicating	Using language
Individuals and societies	Knowing and understanding	Investigating	Communicating	Thinking critically
Sciences	Knowing and understanding	Inquiring and designing	Processing and evaluating	Reflecting on the impacts of science
Mathematics	Knowing and understanding	Investigating patterns	Communicating	Applying mathematics in real-world contexts
Arts	Knowing and understanding	Developing skills	Thinking creatively	Responding
Physical and health education	Knowing and understanding	Planning for performance	Applying and performing	Reflecting and improving performance
Design	Inquiring and analysing	Developing ideas	Creating the solution	Evaluating
MYP projects	Investigating	Planning	Taking action	Reflecting
Interdisciplinary	Disciplinary grounding	Synthesizing	Communicating	Reflecting

Schools must regularly report student progress towards the MYP objectives using the prescribed subject-group assessment criteria. The criteria for each subject group represent the use of knowledge, understanding and skills that must be taught. They encompass the factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive dimensions of knowledge. Assessment criteria for years 1, 3 and 5 of the programme are provided in MYP subject-group guides, and their use is mandatory.

In practice, schools often introduce objectives and criteria for MYP years 3 and 5 in the previous year so that students in MYP years 2 and 4 become familiar with, and begin working towards, stated requirements, adapting and interpreting them in ways that are developmentally appropriate.

Alignment of assessment criteria with subject-group objectives

In figure 11, a graphic representation of a particular subject group, MYP objectives are described in terms of what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme. Each objective is aligned with its corresponding assessment criterion: objective A is aligned with criterion A, objective B with criterion B, and so on.

The general description of objective A is reflected in the general information provided about criterion A. The general information gives teachers guidance on how the criterion should be used to design appropriate tasks and how it should be applied to measure student performance. This alignment is shown by arrow 1.

Arrow 2 shows how the various strands of objective A, shown in bulleted form, are aligned with the descriptors of one of several achievement levels. Each achievement level describes student performance in ways that teachers can use to determine how successfully each student has met the objective.

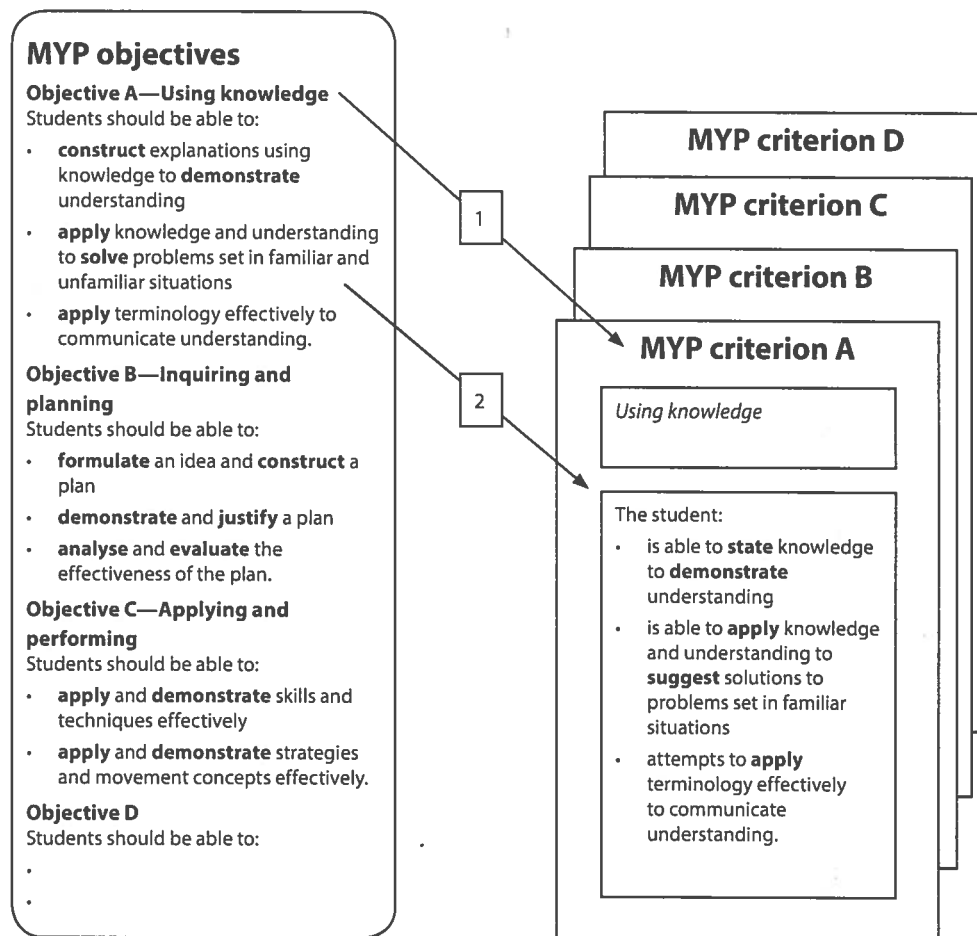


Figure 11

The relationship of a subject group's objective A to the same subject group's assessment criterion A and its descriptors of the various achievement levels

All strands of an objective must be addressed in order to determine a final achievement level.

Achievement levels

Each criterion is divided into various achievement levels (numerical values) that appear in bands, and each band contains general, qualitative value statements called level descriptors. The levels 1 and 2 appear as the first band, levels 3 and 4 as the second band, and so on. Level 0 is available for work that is not described by the band descriptor for levels 1 and 2. All criteria have four bands and a maximum of eight achievement levels. All MYP subject groups have four assessment criteria divided into four bands, each of which represents two achievement levels. MYP criteria are equally weighted.

The level descriptors for each band describe a range of student performance in the various strands of each objective. At the lowest levels, student achievement in each of the strands will be minimal. As the numerical levels increase, the level descriptors describe greater achievement levels in each of the strands.

MYP command terms

Command terms are embedded in the objectives and assessment criteria of each subject group in the MYP. The outcome of using command terms is that students understand and know what to do when asked to “describe” as opposed to “discuss”, or to “infer” as opposed to “explain”. An understanding and mastery of the command terms is an ATL skill that can be applied in new situations across the MYP subject groups as well as in further study, including in the DP and IBCC.

Schools should provide opportunities for the explicit explanation of command terms within the context of the subject groups and the development of interdisciplinary ATL skills. By sharing command terms with students, teachers are able to give opportunities to practise relevant skills; to check understanding of the terms used to direct tasks; and to discuss what is expected or required, and the steps involved in completing tasks successfully. Each command term refers to specific thinking skills, practices and processes that constitute a subject or discipline, along with its content. In order to understand a discipline, which is a particular way of knowing, it is necessary to be fluent in the relevant command terms. Most command terms are applicable across subject groups.

Teachers use command terms when giving instructions, when questioning students, when posing problems and when eliciting responses from a class. Students are expected to understand and be able to respond effectively to the command terms present in teaching instructions, questions and problems presented to them. While the definitions for the command terms remain the same, the expectation for the level of sophistication of students’ understanding, responses and performances is expected to progress with students’ maturity and intellectual development.

Having a consistent definition of a command term enables students to understand the meanings and their application across disciplines. This clarity of terminology is especially important for students with diverse learning needs and complex language profiles. Consistent application of command terms reduces stress and confusion about their meaning, and empowers students to manage their own learning and transfer cognitive processes and academic skills.

Appendix 3 lists the MYP command terms, which are fully aligned with the command terms used in DP assessment.

Building shared understanding of MYP criteria

With reference to the published MYP assessment criteria, the descriptors of the various achievement levels and the qualitative value statements within each descriptor, teachers need to meet in subject teams to:

- identify individual similarities and differences in their understanding of the statements, using student work to provoke and promote discussion
- consult reference materials, such as IB-published teacher support materials and workshop materials
- agree on working definitions of the various statements as they apply to their situations.

For example, teachers of an MYP subject would need to agree, in the context of a particular assessment task, on the meaning of qualitative statements found within a strand of a particular criterion by discussing their expectations and using examples of student work to exemplify various achievement levels.

Internal standardization

Where more than one teacher is teaching the same subject group, the process of internal standardization must take place before final achievement levels are awarded. Internal standardization of assessment is also required for the personal project (or the community project if the school's programme ends in MYP years 3 or 4). The process involves teachers meeting to come to a common understanding on the criteria and achievement levels and how they are applied. In so doing, teachers increase the reliability of their judgments.

Standardization throughout the school year promotes consistency and builds common understandings about student achievement with respect to MYP objectives.

Determining achievement levels

At the end of a period of learning, teachers must make judgments on their students' achievement levels in each subject-group criterion. To determine these achievement levels, teachers must gather sufficient evidence of achievement from a range of learning experiences and assessments. Teachers need to ensure that this evidence comes from the performance of the student over the duration of the units taught.

A carefully constructed assessment task on an individual unit may provide evidence of achievement in all strands of a criterion or criteria.

When applying the assessment criteria to student performance, the teacher should determine whether the first descriptor describes the performance. If the student work exceeds the expectations of the first descriptor, the teacher should determine whether it is described by the second descriptor. This should continue until the teacher arrives at a descriptor that does not describe the student work; the work will then be described by the previous descriptor. In certain cases, it may appear that the student has not fulfilled all of the descriptors in a lower band but has fulfilled some in a higher band. In those cases, teachers must use their professional judgment in determining the descriptor that best fits the student's performance.

The descriptors, when taken together, describe a broad range of student achievement from the lowest to the highest levels. Each descriptor represents a narrower range of student achievement. Teachers must use their professional judgment to determine whether the student work is at the lower or the higher end of the descriptor, and award the lower or higher numerical level accordingly. Some other factors may also influence the teacher's decision on an achievement level, including the following.

- Student support—students will experience varying levels of support in their units, since peer-conferencing, formative assessment with feedback from the teacher, editing and correcting are all essential learning tools. Teachers should be mindful that achievement levels accurately reflect what students can do.
- Group work—teachers need to document carefully the input of individuals working in a group situation so that the achievement levels for individual students can be determined.

In these ways, at the end of a period of learning, evidence of student learning, gathered from a range of learning experiences in each of the objectives, can be matched to the appropriate assessment criteria to determine the student's achievement level.

Reasonable adjustments

Students with learning support requirements may require reasonable adjustments to access the MYP curriculum framework, including internal and external assessments. A reasonable adjustment is an action taken to remove or decrease a disadvantage faced by students with learning support requirements. A reasonable adjustment could be unique to a specific student and may include changes in the presentation of the test or method of response. Where reasonable adjustments involve changes to specific aspects or specific criteria of the assessment, the overall learning outcome must remain the same.

Modification of the curriculum

Students with more challenging learning support requirements may require modifications to subject-group objectives/assessment criteria or assessment criteria descriptors. If students participate in the programme with modifications to the required MYP curriculum framework, the IB is not able to validate grades or award the IB MYP certificate. Students who complete the personal project or school-based community service requirements in MYP year 5 are eligible to receive IB MYP course results.