

# IB Curriculum: The Difference is the Core

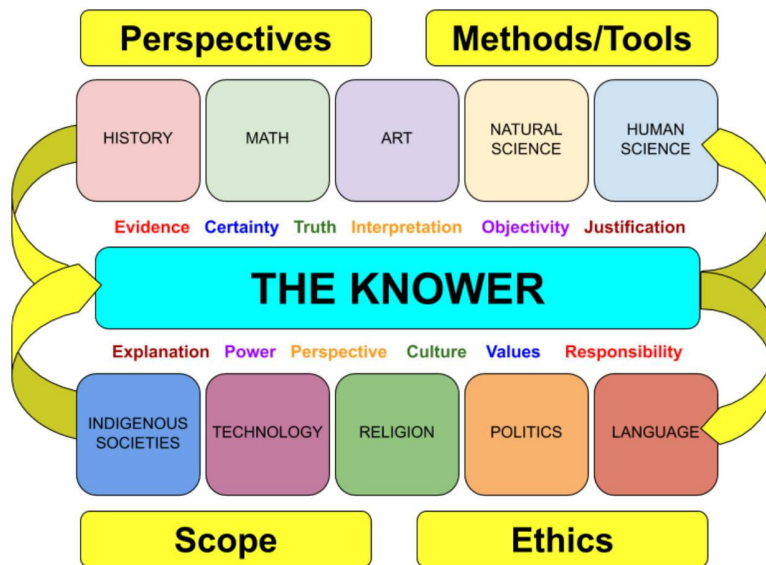
*In addition to rigorous courses, which are featured in all the specialty programs in HCPS, IB offers its core components:*

**Experiential Learning:** This component, called Action and Service in the Middle Years Program and Creativity Action and Service in the Diploma Program, provides students with hands on learning experiences using what IB calls “the design cycle.” This cycle codifies investigative techniques students will use throughout their lifetimes. By tackling a problem or a goal through researching possibilities, designing approaches, planning strategies, creating new things, and then evaluating how well the product or process went, students are equipped to face their academic, professional and personal futures. Students demonstrate and document aspects of the design cycle by making goals that also address eight learner outcomes: increasing awareness, undertaking challenges, planning and initiating activities, working collaboratively, showing perseverance, engaging with global issues, considering ethical implications, and developing new skills. This core aspect is required in both the Middle Years and Diploma Programs.



**The Personal Project:** Using the same design cycle introduced through Action and Service, students begin a Personal Project in grade nine and finish it in grade ten. The project may take many forms – original art, drama, dance, music or literature; a research project; a scientific experiment; an invention or specially designed object or system; or an entrepreneurial or philanthropic project. Students have a supervisor and receive support through their academic classes as well as weekly seminar. Students are required to complete the Personal Project as a culmination of their MYP experience and as an entrance requirement to the Diploma Program.

**Theory of Knowledge:** TOK is the capstone course in the Diploma Program and the IB experience. In this two year course, students pursue understanding the great questions of the human condition by identifying ways of knowing, definitions of knowledge, knowledge questions, ways in which knowledge is verified and organized, areas of knowledge, and ethical implications of knowledge. In a course in which the world is their textbook, students learn to analyze critically knowledge claims as well as their underlying assumptions and implications. Through a broad array of experiences, students study how to communicate effectively and efficiently in both written and oral media. The TOK assessments, the exhibition and the essay, are required for students pursuing the IB Diploma.



**The Extended Essay:** Just as the Personal Project is the culminating project of the Middle Years Program, the Extended Essay is the core component of the Diploma Program. Beginning in their junior year, students embrace a topic of their choosing in an IB approved subject area. Students engage in high-level research and even experimentation on this topic in order to produce a 4000-word independent essay which analyzes their chosen topic. Subjects range from literature to history, from chemistry or biology or business, from world religions to politics. Just as with the Personal Project, students are supervised and supported by individual teacher supervisors, as well as through Theory of Knowledge and in weekly seminar. The Extended Essay is a requirement for the IB Diploma.