



THE IB MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAM FOR STAGE 4

Source: Wikimedia commons at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/82/Mont_Blanc%2C_2017.jpg

The MYP: How the IB's inquiry focus supports the teaching and assessing of Landscapes and Landforms

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The IB: International Baccalaureate

The IB Middle Years Program (MYP) is designed for students aged 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning that emphasises intellectual challenge and encourages connections between studies in traditional subjects and the real world. The MYP focuses on “learning how to learn” through the systematic development of approaches to learning (ATL) skills for communication, collaboration, organisation, self-management, reflection, research, informational literacy, media literacy, creative and critical thinking, and transfer of learning. It also fosters intercultural understanding and global engagement —essential qualities for young people today (International Baccalaureate 2014). One of the significant features of the most recent rewrite of the New South Wales Geography syllabus was the inclusion of the Key Inquiry Questions. These are a way in which teachers and students could frame investigations that facilitated more deep and meaningful learning. The benefits of inquiry-based learning have been known for some time as have the pursuit of critical thinking skills and the capacity to allow students to make their own connections. The shift in education has moved from knowing being centred upon the repetition of information to the ability to find information and to apply it in other contexts.

The MYP: A statement of inquiry

Planning for units in the MYP centres upon a statement of inquiry; this is a way of expressing the relationships between the concepts and context. For the unit on Landscapes & Landforms the statement of inquiry we had adopted was *Landscapes and landforms are shaped by natural and human processes and are used and valued by different people in different ways*. This statement, along with the FOUR Key Inquiry Questions outlined in the syllabus, formed the basis for the entire unit of work.

Along with a focus upon ‘learning how to learn’ the value of inquiry-based learning is that it leads to transferable conceptual understanding, particularly apparent in the way in which the MYP undertakes assessment. The remainder of this article focuses upon an MYP assessment task for Landscapes and Landforms.

The context: Stage 4 Landscapes and Landforms

Within our school setting we introduce Landscapes & Landforms as the first unit to Year 7 students. For many of them this is the first instance of specific Geography lessons, although many of them have engaged with portions of the subject at primary school, particularly aspects of physical geography.

Stage 4 Landscapes and Landforms

Task Description

Goal: To show your understanding of how landscapes are formed.

Role: You are trying to get a freelance job working for National Geographic as a reporter.

Audience/Scenario: Your editor has asked you to investigate the ways in which landscapes and landforms are transformed by environmental and human processes. You will cover one of the following MOUNTAIN landscapes:

- Mt Vesuvius (you are to select this if you are studying Latin)
- Mont Blanc (you are to select this if you are studying French)

Product:

Complete a 500 word report that investigates the geomorphic process that led to the formation of this landscape. Your article must also discuss the human processes (how humans have/do use it) that have taken place in this landscape over time.

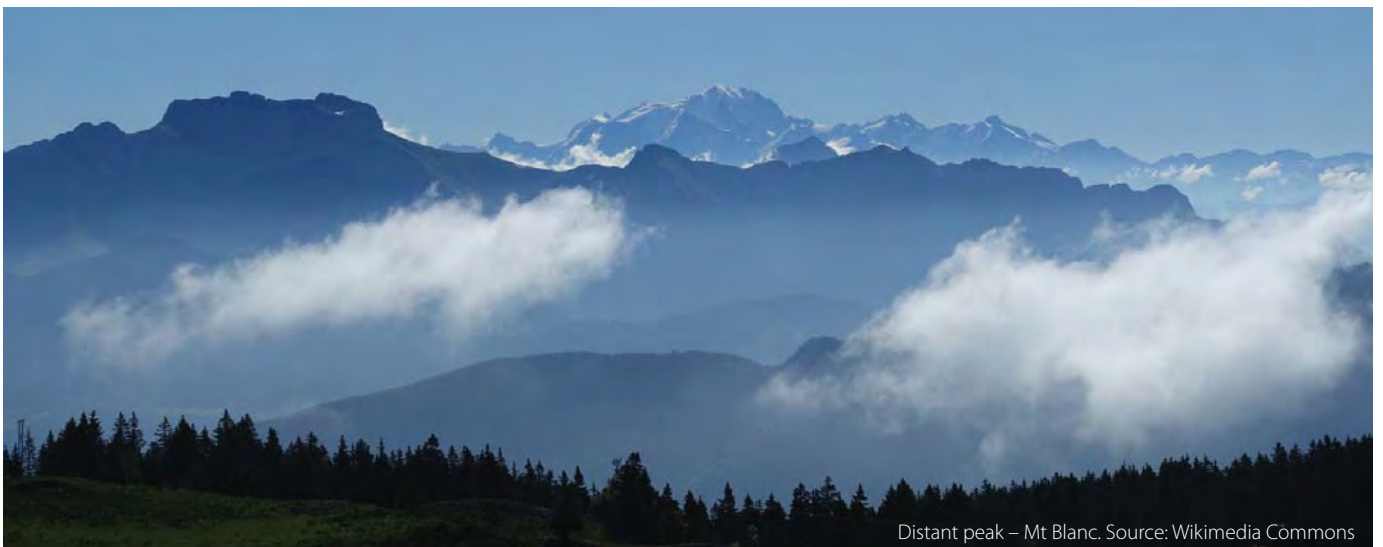
Use the editor's template below to ensure you follow the magazines format. The visual aspect of this is vital and as such your editor has asked for a minimum of 1 image for each section.

Success Criteria

In your report, you must provide information on the following points;

- LOCATION: Describe the location, include a map with BOLTS
- GEOMORPHIC PROCESSES: How the landscape and surrounding landforms were created
- HUMAN PROCESSES: How the landscape and surrounding landforms have been altered

There has been a raft of plagiarism happening in the publishing world. Many writers have had their laptops stolen and articles sold freelance to other publications. As such National Geographic insists that all work belongs to the author. Information may be used if acknowledged correctly (see bibliography guide) but sites such as Wikipedia can NOT be taken from directly.



Distant peak – Mt Blanc. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Assessment Marking Criteria

Level of Learning	A – Knowledge & Understanding	C – Communicating
	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
	The student: i. makes limited use of terminology ii. demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of a natural disaster and causes through limited descriptions and/or examples.	The student: i. communicates information and ideas in a way that is not always appropriate for National Geographic ii. makes limited use of headings, subheadings, bullet points and/or paragraphs and correct sentence structure. iii. makes no attempt to format using correct referencing style
	The student: i. uses some terminology accurately ii. demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a natural disaster and causes through simple descriptions, explanations and examples.	The student: i. communicates ideas and information in a style that is somewhat clear in report format some images (maps, graphs, diagrams) are included to support key information. ii. communicates ideas and information in a style that is somewhat clear in report format some images (maps, graphs, diagrams) are included to support key information. iii. creates a reference list with 1–2 sources. Some attempt has been made to format using appropriate referencing style
	The student: i. uses considerable and relevant terminology accurately ii. demonstrates substantial knowledge and understanding of a natural disaster and causes through descriptions, explanations and examples.	The student: i. demonstrates clear communication of ideas and information in report format containing headings, subheadings and bullet points. Relevant images (maps, graphs, diagrams) are included to support key information. ii. uses headings, subheadings, bullet points and/or paragraphs and correct sentence structure effectively. Relevant visual sources used to support key information iii. creates a reference list with at least 3–5 sources in an appropriate referencing style, usually cites sources.
	The student: i. consistently uses a range of terminology accurately ii. demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of a natural disaster and causes through developed and accurate descriptions, explanations and examples.	The student: i. demonstrates effective communication of ideas and information in report format containing headings, subheadings and bullet points. Relevant images (maps, graphs, diagrams) are included to support key information. ii. structures information and ideas completely according to the task instructions iii. creates a complete reference list containing at least 6 sources in an appropriate referencing style, always cited



Mt Vesuvius viewed from the Pompeii archeological site. Source: Wikimedia Commons

About the assessment criteria

Note that the marking criteria does not have marks assigned to it. The focus for this assessment is to look at two specific criteria, they are Knowledge and Understanding (criteria A) and Communicating (criteria C). The MYP has two other criteria for Geography, Investigating (criteria B) and Critical Thinking (criteria D). We have elected not to assess these specifically with this task although there is obviously a need for a student to apply these skills throughout the task. This allows for the demonstration of learning that has been developed throughout the course. We have removed marks in order to place a focus upon what capabilities students have demonstrated. By directing them to the continuum they can see where progress can be made and how they are capable of improving.

The use of the GRASP (Goal, Role, Audience, Scenario, Product) model for meaningful assessment aligns with not only the IB philosophies but also those key inquiry aspects proffered in Geography. The choice of options of specific landscapes has been directed to align with the student's choice of languages (Latin or French). This supports the 'connection between' subject areas and is a simple way of breaking down the silo's that often occur within departments in schools.

The focus upon inquiry in learning has always been central to the teaching and assessment in Geography. The assessment framework provided by the MYP allows for the targeting of key competencies. The IB desires to offer intellectual challenge and this is supported in Geography through the use of key inquiry questions.

GTA NSW & ACT SCOOP.IT pages

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Go to <https://www.scoop.it/u/lorraine-chaffer>



The Geography Teachers' Association of NSW & ACT

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The purpose of the course is to build teachers' understanding of these core concepts. By completing the learning activities participants will demonstrate their capacity to use three of the concepts – place, space and environment – to create engaging Geography lessons.

Skills developed in this course include: applying knowledge of the content and teaching strategies of Geography to develop engaging teaching activities (NESA Standard 2.1.2), providing opportunities for ATSI respect and understanding (NESA Standard 2.4.2) and contributing to collegial discussions to improve professional knowledge and practice (NESA Standard 6.3.2).

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