



## Great Books and the Middle Years Programme

The Great Books Foundation publishes effective, inquiry-based programs that feature anthologies of world literature and primary source documents combined with a collaborative method of learning. This marriage of literature and method helps develop critical thinking, cross-disciplinary connections, and greater global perspective and understanding.

### Middle Years Programme

#### I.

The International Baccalaureate Organization aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. The IBO works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment

- An international perspective which celebrates the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences
- An inquiry-based approach to learning supporting student-driven curiosity and emphasizing learning “how to learn” and “how to find out”
- An integrated approach to teaching through interdisciplinary themes promoting connections and in-depth learning
- An individualized, flexible framework that provides schools and individual teachers the opportunity to develop curriculum that answers the specific needs of their school and classroom populations

### Great Books Programs

Great Books programs incorporate reading, writing, and discussion activities using the Shared Inquiry method and, in its over forty years, has been noted for its

- World literature selections by some of the greatest classic and contemporary authors and other documents of enduring human concern, providing opportunities for students to become passionate readers and thinkers
- An inquiry-based model of collaborative learning which helps develop in students skills of close reading, critical thinking abilities, and habits for well-informed global citizenship and civil discourse
- Professional development modules which support teachers in their desire to develop authentic inquiry-based classrooms and plan interdisciplinary units
- Components of pre-discussion activities and post-discussion extensions that are intended to be used flexibly by teachers and school systems to fit into a variety of curriculum models.

## Middle Years Programme

### II.

The Middle Years Programme aims to develop students as active, compassionate and lifelong learners who are, as defined by the IB Learner Profile:

- Inquirers
- Knowledgeable
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Risk-takers
- Principled
- Caring
- Open
- Balanced
- Reflective

IB students become independent, active learners whose love of learning guides them in their lives.

They explore ideas and issues that have global relevance and apply their thinking skills critically and creatively.

They express themselves clearly, confidently, and courageously in groups.

They demonstrate respect and empathy to the ideas and needs of others and are open to multiple perspectives.

They are reflective in regards to their own learning and personal development.

## Great Books Programs

In the Shared Inquiry™ method, students work collaboratively, as on an archaeological dig, to unearth answers to authentic questions of meaning that lie embedded in richly written texts. By taking risks, wrestling with the ideas and questions in these selections, they become knowledgeable with a frame of reference of some of the world's greatest writers and thinkers. Through this process, they learn to

- Ask questions which drive opportunities for group discussion and individual writing
- Build multiple literacy with an in-depth understanding of important writers and thinkers across a range of disciplines
- Communicate orally, stating their ideas clearly, fully, and with confidence
- Work in a group, listening carefully to their peers and weighing and analyzing different perspectives
- Develop, articulate and support their ideas with textual evidence
- Reflect carefully on all ideas presented, evaluating the ideas presented and their own learning

Through engagement in this method of civil discourse, students develop as critical thinkers and build new intellectual alliances across different backgrounds and perspectives. By going into depth in a text, they learn to sustain focus and take the strategies and insights gained into other applications.

## Middle Years Programme

### III.

At the center of the MYP curriculum model are students who, engaged in this program, develop an awareness of broader and more complex global issues. The MYP presents holistic learning, integrating the acquisition of skills, self-awareness, and the development of personal values.

The **five areas of interaction** give the MYP its distinctive core. This is where learning through in-depth and interdisciplinary projects afford students opportunities to develop their special voice and creative potential.

The AOI are the five lenses through which students view the subject matter.

- **Approaches to Learning** help students evolve into critical, coherent and independent thinkers.
- **Community Service** engages students in thinking and acting outside the classroom and promotes citizenry skills to do so effectively.
- **Health and Social Education** helps students develop responsibility for the physical and social environment
- **Environment** helps develop student awareness of their interdependence with the earth
- **Homo faber** encourages interactions with science, aesthetics, technology, and ethics. It helps students consider the responsibilities for humankind's creations.

## Great Books Programs

**The Shared Inquiry method of learning** was developed based on the principles of Socratic teaching and philosopher-educator Mortimer Adler's understanding of active readership. There is great emphasis placed on the understanding of the use and levels of questioning strategies and many opportunities for both teacher and student to become better at identifying and developing questions which carry them the farthest in their discoveries. A collaborative discussion, at the heart of the method, builds intellectual stamina through an examination of interpretive issues of the text. The process, driven by a focused, authentic question, engages students to delve deeply into both the meaning and resonance of a great work.

The Shared Inquiry method offers an accelerated cycle of learning, which bears some parallels to an IB cycle of reflection, choice, and action. In this method, students use a text as model and springboard to drive their own inquiry. They also gain skills of participatory citizenship by engaging in the process. They develop as independent thinkers and writers, moving their critical thinking across disciplines into further research, creative or evaluative writing, and other applications both personal and global in scope.

## Middle Years Programme

### IV.

Teachers are encouraged to introduce students to a variety of texts and genres, including novels, short stories, poetry, drama and essays.

The strands of reading, writing, and speaking, listening and viewing in the primary language of delivery emphasize the connections to reasoning and critical thinking. Students must be able to explain their interpretation of a text supporting it with evidence from the text.

The Middle Years Program wants students to develop high-level vocabulary as well as written fluency in tackling several genres. Students engage in personal essays as well as creative and persuasive writing opportunities.

There is much emphasis in collaborative learning with the expectations that students will learn to contribute and work constructively in a group. The students must complete a Personal Project that reflects their interest in a specific topic and help synthesize their questioning.

## Great Books Programs

Great Books student anthologies and teachers' editions are designed to be used flexibly, making the program compatible with the needs of the International Schools Curriculum.

A schedule of possible activities is attached to every story unit in the teachers' edition, and teachers are encouraged to choose those activities which best suit their curricular needs, the developmental needs of their students, and their available time. (Art and drama activities are included and there are many opportunities for transdisciplinary extensions including social studies and technology.)

Teachers may teach any number of stories in any sequence, selecting texts which best fit into their thematic units. Audiotapes are also available of the selections for students at different reading levels or English language acquisition. Many of these well-regarded texts are also available in other languages on line for dual language programs.



Foundation

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