

Parent guide to personal inquiries in the PYP

What are personal inquiries?

Personal inquiries provide an opportunity for mid to upper primary children to focus on their own interests and be motivated to drive their own learning. Personal inquiries seek to ignite passion and develop agency in children. They emphasize integrated learning and create a wide variety of opportunities for skill development across subject areas. Personal inquiries engage children in a deep, authentic learning experience that builds academic skills, fosters reflection, and can inspire action.



Agency, IBO, PYP 2018.

Role of the family in personal inquiries

Family members are encouraged to contribute their expertise and feedback where possible. They can support their child to:

- explore ideas
- listen and question for clarification and deeper understanding
- prioritize goals
- establish timelines
- browse and suggest suitable resources
- designate check-in times to see how learning is progressing and discuss next steps
- share their inquiries with extended families or friends
- plan and carry out action (e.g. volunteering, writing a letter or helping make family or community decisions)
- celebrate learning and daily achievements

For families with multiple children, a family inquiry, rather than multiple personal inquiries could be planned and carried out. Members involved with this inquiry could collaboratively agree upon an area of interest.

Specific ideas

- Support your child in working through the inquiry planner template as independently as possible. To do this, help them set up their learning space and support their organization, if needed.
- Check in regularly and be curious about what and how your child is learning. Try to keep conversations going to encourage exploration and reflection. Keep the discussion conversational rather than interrogative. Show interest in what and how they have learned so far.
- Ask questions so that your child has opportunities to explore ideas, wonderings, problems and solutions. Try to give time for independent discoveries and hold back from giving too many suggestions. Ask what is challenging in their learning, or what they feel they need help with. Make time for talking through their ideas, wonderings and problems to enable them to come up with their own solutions.
- Have regular check-ins to support active engagement and interest.
- Consider pairing your child up with a friend (virtually via Skype, Google, or another digital tool, by phone etc.) so that they can share their learning and give feedback throughout the inquiry process.
- Focus on the learning process rather than the product. Personal inquiries are an opportunity for your child to develop critical thinking skills, learn how to research and investigate, learn to ask questions that deepen their learning and inspire further questions.

Possible questions to ask

- What did you learn today that made you want to keep finding out more?
- What don't you understand yet?
- What new questions do you have now?
- Have your ideas or thinking changed? Why?
- What different opinions/views are there on this subject? What's your opinion and why?
- Can you explain your learning in different ways?
- How does your learning connect to the local/global world?

- What do you want to learn more about?
- What can you already do?
- What will you work on next?
- What can you do to become a more effective learner?

Stay in touch

Social media platforms offer support for parents to connect with others, learn more about the PYP and share ideas and experiences.

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Learner profile in action, PYP, IBO, 2018.