

r/IBO MYP Personal Project Guide- it's a work in progress.

(Written by pariax.)

What is the Personal Project?

In the final year of MYP, or MYP5, students are tasked to come up with a project. This project is said to be similar to the Extended Essay in the Diploma Programme.

This project is quite long-term, and it will usually start in September, and finish in April. Your school may also choose to start this project towards the end of MYP4 and end it in the middle of MYP5 sometime around January. Either way, make sure you don't leave this all for the last minute, and even if your school isn't breaking it down into parts for you, give yourself mini-deadlines, to stay on track. It's so easy to forget about the Personal Project when you're busy with everything else. But it's not fun at all when the final deadline is approaching and you've barely progressed.

This project is a big responsibility, and it's your *own* responsibility, from the start to the end. No one's gonna nudge you and make you work, so try your best to be disciplined. Maybe you can form a group with your friends and keep one another accountable.

In this project, you will get to choose your own learning goal(s) and product goal(s). Try to make this project based on your interests, to give yourself an easier time dealing with it (it's gonna take a lot of your time). Also, this project can look good on your portfolio, so if you can find a common area between your interests and your future career choice, then that's bullseye! This project is a perfect chance to use your creativity and develop new knowledge or improve existing knowledge!

Lots of people choose a topic that will produce a product that can be of service to others, but that's not necessary!

What are the Approaches to Learning (ATL)?

APPROACHES TO LEARNING

How can I be an effective learner?

COMMUNICATION



INTERACTION

I can exchange thoughts, messages and information effectively through interaction.



LANGUAGE

I can read, write and use languages to communicate information effectively.

SOCIAL



COLLABORATION

I can work effectively with others.

RESEARCH



INFORMATION LITERACY

I can find, interpret, judge and create information.



MEDIA LITERACY

I can interact with media to use and create ideas and information.

SELF-MANAGEMENT



AFFECTIVE SKILLS

I can manage my own state of mind, concentrate and be focused. I can learn from mistakes and problems.



ORGANIZATION SKILLS

I can manage my time and tasks effectively. I use technology well.



REFLECTION

I can (re)consider the process of learning. I can choose and use effective ATL skills.

THINKING



CRITICAL THINKING

I can analyse and evaluate issues and ideas.



CREATIVE THINKING

I can generate new ideas and perspectives.



TRANSFER

I can use knowledge and skills in new contexts.

ATL Skill clusters from MYP-FPIP (2014) @sjtylr [icons by Freepik on Flaticon]

[Image Source](#)

In your personal project, your teachers will assess how you're using ATLs in real life; how you will approach a problem that's presented to you, using what you've learned in the past four years of MYP. All of the skills above will be useful in your Personal Project, one way or another. This project is about developing and perfecting your ATLs, as much as possible.

How will I be assessed?

You will not be assessed on how successful/what your project is, but on how you approach it. The way you approach the project is largely shown in the process journals. So instead of focusing on creating a complex product, focus more on documenting it correctly!

Usually, your school will give you *formative* feedback on your process journals, and drafts of your outcome.

After submission, you will be assessed by your supervisor, or your personal project coordinator, internally. If your project is chosen, it may be sent to IBO for external moderation. That means examiners from IBO will have a look at it and grade it, again.

How's the grading system?

You are given a grade out of 24 (maximum grade of 8 for each of the criteria) - [source](#)

Crit. A:

Level	Descriptor
0	The student does not achieve a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: → states a learning goal → states their intended product → presents a plan that is superficial or that is not focused on a product.
3-4	The student: → states a learning goal and outlines the connection between personal interest(s) and that goal → states their intended product and presents basic success criteria for the product → presents a plan for achieving the product and some of its associated success criteria
5-6	The student: → states a learning goal and describes the connection between personal interest(s) and that goal → states their intended product and presents multiple appropriate success criteria for the product → presents a detailed plan for achieving the product and most of its associated success criteria.

7-8	The student: → states a learning goal and explains the connection between personal interest(s) and that goal → states their intended product and presents multiple appropriate, detailed success criteria for the product → presents a detailed plan for achieving the product and all of its associated success criteria.
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Crit. B:

Level	Descriptor
0	The student does not achieve a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: → states which ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their learning goal → states which ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their product.
3-4	The student: → outlines which ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their learning goal, with superficial examples or evidence → outlines which ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their product, with superficial examples or evidence.
5-6	The student: → describes how the ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their learning goal, with reference to examples or evidence → describes how the ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their product, with reference to examples or evidence.
7-8	The student: → explains how the ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their learning goal, supported with detailed examples or evidence → explains how the ATL skill(s) was/were applied to help achieve their product, supported with detailed examples or evidence.

Crit. C:

Level	Descriptor
0	The student does not achieve a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: → states the impact of the project on themselves or their learning → states whether the product was achieved.
3-4	The student:

	→ outlines the impact of the project on themselves or their learning → states whether the product was achieved, partially supported with evidence or examples.
5-6	The student: → describes the impact of the project on themselves or their learning → evaluates the product based on the success criteria, partially supported with evidence or examples.
7-8	The student: → explains the impact of the project on themselves or their learning → evaluates the product based on the success criteria, fully supported with specific evidence or detailed examples.

Who can I go to for help?

Your school will assign a supervisor to you. It is *your* responsibility to contact them and make sure that they're on the same page as you. They're experienced teachers or school faculty, so use them as a resource.

However, this doesn't mean that you can't reach out to other people and ask for help! Just like online resources, teachers, other people that have also gone through the personal project (e.g. your seniors), and subject experts can guide you in your way! Most students contact experts outside school, as well, to get help with the investigation, and maybe even get help as they overcome challenges with their product.

It's always best to take notes of these meetings, so you can use them in your journals, and also recall their content whenever you need to.

Furthermore, the #pre-ib-talk channel in r/IBO Discord is always open to questions!

How to record meetings?

You can record the audio of your meetings, with consent, or take meeting minutes. These will not only be handy in your process journals, but they can also help you recall what happened in your meetings later when you're working on your product, itself.

It also helps to have an informal 'agenda' before meeting up with the person in question, so you don't forget to address everything you'd like addressed.

Final Project Checklist

The final report must follow a required structure. Below, you can find a checklist/guide.

Labeled sections:

- Investigating
- Planning
- Taking Action
- Reflecting
- Process Journal
- Works Cited

- Appendix (optional)

If your report is written, on paper or electronically, the maximum word count is 3,500 words.

If your report is oral or visual, the maximum length is 15 minutes.

If your report is a mix, per each minute of video/audio, the maximum word count decreases by 700.

Hence if you're having a 3-minute recording, your written report can only be 2,800 words.

You may use 15 pages, maximum. (5 per section)

Process Journal

The way you approach, organise, plan, initiate, and complete the project is shown through the process journals. These journals record your success and failures, as well as your plans and ideas. They walk a third person through your journey, making your product. They should be a record of all your thoughts, decisions, and moves throughout, and provide the reader with a comprehensive record. You should add pictures, and diagrams (electronic or on paper) to provide evidence for the progress you're making.

You must have a process journal, with the following criteria:

- A maximum of 10 entries, providing evidence of meeting the criteria
- Clearly numbered, with the numbers referred to in the write-up.
- Clearly state the objectives being met
- Around 2 entries are recommended per each criterion

Again, your process journals have to show your process. For example, for a process journal that's related to the investigation part, you should show your sources, and why they're valid (See the image below). You should explain the methodology of your research. You can also include diagrams of your thought process for your research.

Origin	Purpose	Content	Value	Limitation
Where did the source come from?	Why was this created?	What is the message of the source?	What does it show about a time and a place?	Is it biased?
Who created it?	Who is the intended audience?	What information or examples does the author use to support their point?	What does it show about society?	What information was not available to the author when it was created?
When was it created?	Why do you think the author/creator is communicating this message?		What does it show about the thinking at that time?	Was information specifically left out or intentionally emphasized?
What do you know about the author/creator?			Is there new information that helps us understand it better?	How does historical context influence your interpretation?
Is the author/creator an authoritative source?				
Is this a primary or secondary source?				

[Image Source](#)

A process journal is not used on a daily basis, and it's not made *after* the project is completed. It's begun at the same time that you start the project. It's not extra work on top of your personal project, but a record of all your steps as you're doing it. You can store useful resources and information in it, which can be handy as you're completing the project.

Your process journals can be used a lot when it comes to reflection - you can reflect on your process and your decisions! Also, you can feel very accomplished and satisfied when you see how much your ATLs have improved since you first started the project, and now, that you're done with it.

Please don't treat the process journals as diaries or as documents with a very uniform format. They can be a mix of written text, graphs, diagrams, images, drafts, and even video files.

Your journals should:

- Have a font size of 11, minimum.
- Have single-line spacing.
- Not exceed an A4 page.
- If having video or audio, they can't be more than 30s.
- Include an ATL you're hitting, and briefly describe how you're improving it.

Below, you can find the three criteria for the personal project. Each is graded out of 8.

Crit A. Planning

There are three main objectives to be stated for this section:

1. Learning goal
 - Explain (go into detail) the personal connection this goal has with you
2. Product goal
 - Multiple detailed and appropriate success criteria to assess that goal
3. Clear and detailed plan for achieving the product
 - This should include each of the success criteria and how to approach them as well.

For your process journals, regarding the planning section, it's good to include a 'brainstorm' of some sort, showing your thought process, and answering questions such as:

- From whom/where can I find information?
- Do I need primary or secondary data?
- Do I need a survey, and if yes, do I need to analyse its results?
- Do I need to interview anyone?
- Do I need to visit certain locations?
- Do I need any materials, and if yes, where can I find them?

You can use the website [coggle](#) for this, to neatly and aesthetically represent the above.

Try to list sources to demonstrate your prior learning, in other words, the information you had already gathered - whether they were only for the purpose of your Personal Project, or your general interest.

- To demonstrate your research skills, you are recommended to make a set of questions and try to answer them.
- Use a range of resources, and make sure to assess (at least most of) them using OPCVL (use below)
- Explain how the information you gather is relevant to the project, to you, to the goal, and to the product.

In order to develop the success criteria for your project, you must remember that the variables must be measurable, and they must determine the extent of 'success' or 'failure' of your project.

There are three things to look out for here:

- Criteria
 - To evaluate the success
For example: The quality of the music, how much donation is made, etc.
- Tools
 - To measure the success
For example: Asking other people to give your product a score from 1-10
- Target
 - To measure the way the audience has reacted
For example: The audience learning more about a certain subject after using the product, measured by two tests.

To explain the specifications for your success criteria, you can:

- a. Clearly note the specification.
- b. Explain the importance of the specification.
- c. State how you will achieve that specification, in the process of creating the intended product.
- d. Explain how the specifications are measurable, and how you plan on evaluating them.

Reference the investigation section as much as you can, showing what you've learned in the form of flowcharts, tables, sketches, etc. Go through 2-3 solutions, and choose one, weighing the pros and cons. Then, create an action plan, giving yourself deadlines, or a to-do list of some sort. This section is advised to contain:

- Due dates for actions
- Dates you're not available (semester exams)
- Resources and locations specific to tasks
- Alterations made to the plan
- Reflections on how your ATL has improved
- Tests and improvements

Crit B. Taking Action

You need to demonstrate three things in this criterion:

- Communication and social skills
- Thinking skills
- Service as action, or a product/outcome

For your process journals, regarding the applying skills section, this is what you're advised to do:

- Regular updates regarding how the product has been progressing (screenshots or pictures can be helpful)
- The used sources
- The obstacles, and how you have tackled them

- Plans to show your time management and organisational skills
- Any tests, surveys, interviews, etc. - This includes but is not limited to your meetings with your supervisors.

First, create a product/outcome in response to the goal, the context, and your own criteria, using your planning and investigation sections, and referencing their relevant process journals as necessary. Please take pictures or screenshots of the process, and insert them in the referenced journal entries.

Second, document any challenges you have come across and how you used critical and creative thinking to solve them. Please also state the information you have researched and applied to make informed, well-calculated decisions as you were progressing through your outcome.

It's also important to mention any skills and/or knowledge you have developed or tried to develop in the process, but also how your prior knowledge and skills have helped you in the process. If you have designed any improvements and have done any tests to get feedback, this would be the proper place for you to elaborate on them.

Third, you need to show your communication skills. Document your communication with experts and supervisors, and how their advice and feedback helped the creation and completion of your personal project. You can add screenshots of meeting minutes or emails to your journals.

If you have read various sources for information on your topic and transferred the information given to you onto your outcome, whilst drawing conclusions, mention them here. (There is no if, you should be doing this.)

Crit C. Reflecting

You might think this section isn't the most important part of your personal project, but it's just as important as the other two. You need to do two things for this criterion:

1. Explain how this project influenced you, on a personal and academic level, with evidence.

This could refer to any aspect of the project → from the investigation up to reflection. (meaning the progress you made to achieve the goal also counts).

It's supposed to represent how you have grown your ATL skills as a learner.

2. Evaluate your product/outcome based on the criteria you created, with evidence and detailed examples.

You don't have to meet all the criteria. A successful personal project doesn't have to have a perfect product. Reflecting on your mistakes can in fact help you get a better grade, than manipulating your criteria to make your product perfect.

However, it is critical that the criteria and the testing methods are clearly stated and explained. Include examples of you testing the product against each of the criteria. You can, for example, include screenshots of a survey you have made, or pictures of certain functions.

Works Cited

Any idea, picture, video, product, etc. that you are using that does not belong to you, needs to be cited. If you're using it in your project, then it needs to have in-text citations. Please read the appropriate rules

about citation, depending on which method you(r school) use.

Academic integrity is very important, and you don't want to get flagged for plagiarism, so please ask your teachers or peers for help with citations if you have doubts.

What can be my goal / how do I set a goal?

This is a long project. Do yourself a favour and choose something you actually do give two shits about.

The IB advises you to choose goals that can be done within 25 hours. A goal can have a global context, be related to service as action, be a self-inquiry, or even be a hobby.

Tips:

- ★ First and foremost - HAVE COPIES OF YOUR WORK. Don't lose your whole project because of a technical or human error.
- ★ Don't slack on journaling. You can make it prettier or easier to comprehend later but do scribble down stuff that you find useful as you're going on about your project. You can always get rid of useless stuff later.
- ★ Peer reviews save lives.
- ★ Don't try to cure cancer as your product. Even knitting a simple scarf is good enough if you do the write-up properly + sell the personal connection.
- ★ Drop your ATL skills anywhere you can in the process journals.