Global engagement: Teaching and learning about cooperation and governance

A series for teachers in IB World Schools that explores some of the global challenges we face in creating a better and more peaceful world. This resource offers background information, resources to explore and ideas to consider for teaching and learning.

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

The IB does not endorse specific understandings or practices for addressing global challenges that involve cooperation and governance. IB World Schools promote sustained inquiry, critical reflection and responsible action that respect local and global contexts for teaching and learning.
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What it’s about

Historical perspectives
Throughout time, people have organized governments in order to meet the needs of communities and individuals. Groups have created institutions and processes that have many forms and functions. Monarchies, republics, tribes, parliaments, presidents, dictators: these and other patterns of rule express a range of human values and reflect varied understandings of history and culture.

At the heart of governance are questions about the distribution of resources, the making of laws, and the balance of power between individuals and the communities in which they live. In the modern world, nation states, and increasingly, non-state actors wrestle with ethical questions that surround societies and how they are governed. Teaching and learning about contemporary governance goes beyond discussions about how national governments manage resources or how national leaders shape domestic and foreign public policy. Today, governance can also mean considering how a farmers’ association shapes local decisions on agriculture, how civil society organizations (CSOs) spearhead a global health campaign, how multinational corporations shape policies on the use of fossil fuels, and how global financial institutions interact with national development.

As the global political and economic landscape becomes increasingly interconnected and changes with incredible speed, today’s students and tomorrow’s leaders need to reflect critically on the kind of institutions the world needs for effective cooperation and governance across a variety of scales (local, regional, national, international and global).

Forms of government
At the national level, governments can range from theocracies to oligarchies to democracies, and within these broad categories there is great diversity. In democratic societies, people choose their own system of government and have the right and responsibility to participate in their own governance. Democratic governments are accountable to the people who choose them. Scholars and politicians debate the cultural contexts, limits and diversity of democratic governance, although democracy is enshrined as a core value by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Note: Creativity, Action, Service has been renamed to Creativity, Activity, Service. Although the word Action may appear in this document, please ensure you refer to it as Activity when leading this workshop.

Note: IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) has been renamed to Career-related Programme (CP). Although the term IBCC may appear in this document, please ensure you use the correct term CP when leading this workshop.
Good governance

Even in the face of diverse beliefs and practices about government, an emerging international consensus is growing about what constitutes “good governance”. The United Nations describes good governance as participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and respectful of the rule of law (http://www.unescap.org/pdd/prs/ProjectActivities/Ongoing/gg/governance.asp). Good governance involves not only making but also implementing the laws and administrative procedures necessary to conduct public affairs and manage public resources.

One of the most important governance issues facing the world today is the prevalence of corruption. Bribery, as well as ongoing questions about the connection between wealthy interests and political decision-making, can undermine the civic trust that is a hallmark of strong societies. Cultures of corruption (and the organized criminal activity that they can support) create complex challenges for many communities. Corruption in weaker states and other fragile situations can pose great risks for neighbouring countries and the larger international system.

Citizen advocacy, legal reforms, the separation of powers, and the promotion of the rule of law are practices that can help to keep corruption in check. The ethical development and principled action of individuals is also central to rooting out corruption over time.

Global governance

Corruption is just one of many global risks that will impact many societies. Contemporary political leaders, policymakers and involved citizens face important challenges that are emerging in an era of increasing globalization, such as the spread of infectious diseases, rising greenhouse gas emissions, population growth, extremes of wealth and poverty, cyber threats, and water shortages. Many challenges cross borders and cannot be solved with the resources of a single nation or regional coalition.

To address global challenges, the international community has developed complex frameworks for establishing and maintaining cooperation. These frameworks include legal regimes, for example, those that govern international postal services, banking transactions, and maritime safety. However, the world faces greater difficulty when formulating supranational agreements on issues like climate change, genocide and nuclear weapons. Political scientists, world leaders and ordinary citizens fiercely debate the role of the United Nations and other international organizations in managing global resources.

The role of national governments and international institutions is highly contested in the new millennium and is an essential topic for informed debate. A central task of our time is conducting sustained inquiry and reflecting critically about how local, national and international governance structures can work together to support human development in an increasingly interconnected global society.

Civil society organizations (CSOs)

Increasingly, states and international bodies share the activity of governing with a range of social enterprises, charities, and quasi-governmental and voluntary associations that share an interest in improving people’s lives. These groups and movements include non-government, community-based, philanthropic and faith-based organizations and provide a wide variety of social services that helps to meet the needs of everyday citizens. “Grass-roots” initiatives support many kinds of advocacy and action. For example, CSOs and independent, citizen-based media initiatives are playing important roles in exposing corruption. Groups like these often help to create new institutions and practices that promote collaborative governance. CSOs and public–private partnerships can create powerful networks that strengthen knowledge, abilities and relationships in citizen groups.

The complexity and extent of global political challenges can be discouraging, but young people are growing up in a world in which new modes of innovation and collaboration can resolve long-standing issues of governance and cooperation. Developments include the creation of model sustainable cities, partnerships engineered through information technology in global societies, and international campaigns to combat HIV/AIDS, ban landmines, ensure universal primary education and dramatically reduce extreme poverty.

𝚆 '&#39;.Sequentially Up for debate 
(sub-concepts, thinkers, controversies)

Big ideas:

Corruption, bribery, embezzlement, patronage, fragile states, post-conflict reconstruction, anarchy, dictatorship, autocracy, oligarchy, socialism, democracy, theocracy, federalism, elections, checks and balances, separation of powers, political participation,

“The will of the people is the only legitimate foundation of any government, and to protect its free expression should be our first object.”

_Thomas Jefferson_
transparency, accountability, legitimacy, sovereignty, rule of law, international law, multilateralism, regional blocks, responsibility to protect, war crimes, mismanagement, systemic failure, sustainability, social cohesion, social change, freedom of information, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of association, collective security, treaties, military alliances, “the new governance”, rational choice theory, jurisdiction, welfare state, pressure groups, joined-up governance, capacity building.

Some people worth knowing:

Great political thinkers and philosophers throughout history have contributed valuable ideas on how a society should be governed, including who benefits from resources and who has the power to make those decisions. These key thinkers are just a few people who have shaped humanity’s understanding of governance and cooperation.

- Plato (c. 424–347 bc): Classical Greek philosopher whose discussion of government in The Republic has been a highly influential source of political philosophy.
- Confucius (551–479 bc): Influential Chinese philosopher who promoted principles of good government, virtuous leadership and personal morality.
- Al-Farabi (c. 872–950): A renowned philosopher of the Islamic Golden Age who emphasized the role of Islamic leaders in forming an ideal society.
- John Locke (1632–1704): British moral and political philosopher of the Enlightenment. His explication of the “social contract” argues that the authority of governments is derived from the consent of the governed, who can both create and dissolve political society in the service of protecting their life, liberty and property.
- Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755): French thinker who advocated for the separation of powers in government, that is, the formation of legislative, executive and judicial branches.
- Karl Marx (1818–83): German economist and social historian whose radical socialist theories framed debates about the nature and purpose of government through much of the 20th century. His idea of “class struggle” in capitalist societies argued that workers would revolt against and ultimately triumph over owners, establishing idealistic egalitarian communities in which the state would be unnecessary. In practice, followers of Marx’s philosophy have often developed communistic command economies and single-party governments that often repress dissent and have low tolerance for opposition.
- Gunnar Myrdal (1898–1987) and Friedrich Hayek (1899–1992): European liberal economists who received the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for their analysis of the “interdependence of economic, social and institutional phenomena”. Their work emphasized the free market’s coordination of individual choice and saw a limited role for government in organizing national economies.
- Anna Hazare (1937–): Indian social activist and controversial leader of a national anti-corruption movement that calls for increased transparency in governance, including laws that provide citizens with access to information about the governmental processes that affect their lives and liberties. Other anti-corruption leaders include Leonard McCarthy (South Africa) and Ma Wen (China).

Some inquiries worth pursuing:

- What is the purpose of government?
- How should societies organize their economies and governance? How are 21st-century challenges changing the balance between bureaucracy/hierarchy and markets/networks?
- What does it mean to be a “fragile” or “failed” state? How valid are such descriptions? By what criteria can they be identified and analysed?
- Why can governments and businesses become susceptible to corruption? What are the most effective ways to fight corruption, personally and institutionally?
- What justification exists for international law? What are its limits? How should nation states balance concern for maintaining their sovereignty with the need for international cooperation?

“For the United Nations, the rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards.” Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies
• How can nations and regional/international alliances interact responsibly and effectively with civil society?
• What are the limits of cooperation between government, business and CSOs?
• How can communities work together to preserve or restore trust in government and other public institutions?
• How should societies balance individual freedom with the need for social stability, majority rule with the rights of minorities, and religious law with personal dissent?
• What are some of the cultural and historical constraints to the development of democratic governance? Can they be overcome? Should they be?
• In the face of increasing globalization, how can nation states work together effectively? Under what condition might it be desirable, or necessary, to limit or share national sovereignty?
• How can we act collectively to preserve common goods?
• In the information age, how should governments and industry work together to protect privacy and national security? What are the limits of free speech and individual expression?
• What does it mean to be a “global citizen”? What are the possibilities and problems with the concept of global citizenship?

Where on earth? (useful information, interesting organizations, multiple perspectives)

• Democracy and Rule of Law Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace—Offers articles that examine the global state of democracy and American, European and multilateral efforts to support democracy’s advance (http://www.carnegieendowment.org/programs/).
• Democratic and Accountable Government Program, the Ford Foundation—Supports programs that promote civic and political participation, electoral reform and civil society (http://www.fordfoundation.org/issues/democratic-and-accountable-government).
• Partners for Democratic Change—Represents nearly independent centres worldwide that work to advance civil society and good governance (http://www.partnersglobal.org/network/pdci).
• The East-West Management Institute—Works in eight countries to bring government, civil society, and the private sector together to build governing institutions that strengthen accountability and the rule of law (http://ewmi.org/RuleOfLaw.htm).
• The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law—Promotes legal changes that strengthen civil society and advance free assembly in multiple countries (http://www.icnl.org/).
• Reporters without Borders—Advocates freedom of information in the service of good governance across five continents (http://en.rsf.org/).
• Global Integrity—Advocates transparent and accountable government, working in collaboration with a network of more than 1,300 contributors and global partners (http://www.globalintegrity.org/).
• Transparency International—Fights corruption through a network of more than 100 national chapters and the annual publication of the Corruption Perceptions Index that ranks countries on their perceived levels of corruption (http://www.transparency.org/).

Quick connect (fast wins, easy entries into the discussion)

Students may think of topics like governance and cooperation in “big picture” and purely historical terms (for example, the role of nation states in the first world war or the development of international institutions like the United Nations). While these frameworks are important, students can regard them as remote and lacking connection with their own lives. By exploring how local challenges are interwoven with national/international/global concerns, teachers can engage students in authentic inquiry, action and reflection. Service learning models provide an especially powerful approach for integrating classroom and community-based learning in all IB programmes.

“But when you have bad governance … resources are destroyed: The forests are deforested, there is illegal logging, there is soil erosion. I got pulled deeper and deeper and saw how these issues become linked to governance, to corruption, to dictatorship.”

Wangari Maathai
Here are some ideas for learning engagements and student-initiated action that teachers can integrate into units of inquiry, unit plans, lessons and whole-school activities:

- Pick a policy issue that students care about and help them to frame inquiries into the ways governing institutions at the local, national and international scale are dealing with the challenge.
- Empower students to be agents of change as they grow in their awareness of problems they encounter in their communities and consider potential solutions. Build research and communication skills through their inquiry and presentation.
- Organize debates around public policy issues so that students can explore multiple perspectives.
- Invite local authorities and interest groups to describe their work. Organize panel discussions with representatives from various organizations who are collaborating to address local challenges in a global context. Reflect critically on the challenges and benefits of that collaboration.
- Conduct comparative studies of legal, political and economic systems around the world, analysing their strengths, weaknesses and commonalities.
- Encourage students to seek decision-making roles in the school, such as participating in student government organizations, joining in school and community-based committees and clubs, or consulting on the development of school policies and procedures. Many jurisdictions also conduct “mock government” events that offer simulations of local, national and international governance in practice.

• Observe the International Day of Democracy (15 September) (http://www.un.org/en/events/democracyday/).
• Advocate for and engage in civic education that includes the study of local and national government, and consider the international and global responsibilities of citizens everywhere.

☑ Built-in (disciplinary applications)

In addition to specific courses and traditional academic subjects, the IB Diploma Programme challenges learners to explore many concepts and contexts that touch on issues of cooperation and governance, including, for example, interdisciplinary studies in the sciences and humanities as well as independent inquiry through the world studies extended essay. Middle Years Programme (MYP) students can develop understandings of governance that link many subjects through key concepts like global interactions, communities and systems. In the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the transdisciplinary theme “how we organize ourselves” provides a touchstone for organizing an effective programme of inquiry into governments and government processes. Students can inquire into:

- the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities
- the structure and function of organizations
- societal decision-making
- economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment
- how people create solutions to common problems, supporting human endeavour and enterprise
- the purpose of organizations (including why people join organizations, strategies for problem-solving within organizations and the elements of successful organizations).

Language and literature: Many classical works are focused on governance themes and lend themselves to discussions about what it means to live well in a good society. Some of these works include Perpetual Peace by Kant, The Spirit of the Laws by Montesquieu, On Liberty by John Stuart Mill, Democracy in America by de Tocqueville, and Das Kapital by Marx. Classical and contemporary non-fiction works can prompt shared inquiry and critical reflection on a range of issues and ideas. Children’s literature can provide open windows for all age groups to explore personal and historical perspectives, and the tradition of dystopian literature offers many opportunities to reflect on the relationship between government and society.

Mathematics, science and technology: Analysis of whether or not government programs and policies are effective often requires scientific thinking: forming a
hypothesis, testing the hypothesis through measurable evidence and observation, analysing data and drawing conclusions. Many contemporary governance challenges—such as providing adequate housing and transportation infrastructure—require citizens and leaders to scrutinize statistics and other data in order to make policy decisions. Presenting and interpreting data in graphs, charts and online formats enables students to develop important information literacy skills. Real-world studies offer students rich opportunities to consider the ethical and social implications of scientific inquiry. Another important development to explore is the impact of technology on the interactions between individuals, societies and governments.

**Humanities and the arts:** Courses in social anthropology, history, geography, global politics, world religions and philosophy can help students build sophisticated understandings of human societies and civilizations and how they have been governed. Cooperation and governance issues can be explored using MYP-related concepts like security, processes, power, citizenship and authority. Documentary films and historical fiction are good tools for conveying how the past was shaped by powerful ideas and attitudes towards governance and cooperation. Through simulations, students of all ages can imaginatively enter the lives and times of great leaders and thinkers as well as modern international conflicts.

**Visual arts, music and theatre:** These offer creative insights into the past and its implications for contemporary society. Students can explore the power of art to express ideas, protest personal and community injustice, and inspire social change.

**Business, management and economics:** Economic policy-making is a key responsibility of government, and the study of historical models and contemporary global challenges provides many opportunities to reflect on governance across time and multiple geographical scales. Ethical debates about the roles of government, industry and CSOs can include both theoretical and practical dimensions. Issues of economic growth and development often involve interactions with governments and the processes of governance.

“He who exercises government by means of his virtue may be compared to the north polar star, which keeps its place and all the stars turn towards it.” - Confucius

**Personal, health and social education:** Governments set policies and establish priorities for healthcare at local, national and international levels. The World Health Organization offers numerous resources, including an annual World Health Report, which allows students to compare health-related achievements and setbacks. National environmental regulations and international protocols have important implications for personal health. Beyond governments, this arena provides students with an opportunity to examine the contributions of civil society and charitable organizations that do significant work to improve healthcare and social cohesion in their communities.

**MYP physical and health education and the Diploma Programme (DP) course sports, exercise and health science offer specific opportunities to explore personal and global health issues and to critically appreciate sport as an example of international cooperation.**

**DIY** (additional resources to consider when developing your own inquiry into global challenges)

- The CIA World Fact Book is a reliable resource for profiles of countries around the world, including their governance, histories, and demographics (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/).
- The World Bank compiles data on Global Governance Indicators where students can see how different countries rank in terms of measures like political stability, rule of law, and control of corruption (http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp).
- In the World Bank’s blog on governance and anti-corruption exceptional young leaders share their insights and commitments on shaping the global future (http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/).
- *The Global Journal* brings together key thinkers to exchange views on global governance issues. The site publishes its list of “Top 100 Best NGOs” (http://theglobaljournal.net/article/view/585/).
- As part of its Development Programme, the United Nations “brings people together within nations and around the world, fostering partnerships and sharing ways to promote participation, accountability and effectiveness at all levels” (http://www.undp.org).
Global engagements
(ideas for student action and service learning)

• Sponsor a “community engagement” day in which different non-profit organizations and service providers in the community explain their work.

• Explore opportunities for developing PYP exhibitions, MYP personal projects, DP extended essays and creativity, action, service (CAS) projects, and IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC) reflective projects that include issues of governance and cooperation.

• Use internet technologies to connect students with other schools and cultures to work together on challenges that cross geographical and cultural boundaries. Organizations like ePals (http://www.epals.com/) offer platforms for safely collaborating with classrooms around the world.

• Students can explore the perspectives of citizen media from around the world at Global Voices Online (http://www.globalvoicesonline.org).

• Find opportunities to participate in collaborative exercises that focus on governance and international cooperation. Universities and educational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) offer various programmes (for example, http://www.icons.umd.edu and http://worldsavvy.org/youth-engagement/world-savvy-challenge/).

• Participate in a Model United Nations conference to engage with local, national and international governance challenges (http://www.wfuna.org).

Find out more
(journals, books)


“The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.” Universal Declaration of Human Rights

For more information visit: http://globalengage.ibo.org