

What is Island Time?

Island Time runs from Year 7 to Year 8, for the whole of Tuesday morning. This course is transdisciplinary and inquiry based, and is planned and delivered by teachers from across the curriculum.

In a similar approach to that of the IB Primary Years Programme, units of work are driven by concepts. In each year we focus on the **concepts of Identity, Truth, Wellbeing and Innovation**, integrating skills and areas of knowledge from specific curriculum areas (in particular Humanities, Science, Maths, English, Drama, PE, Technology, ICT).

‘Traditional objectives asked students to “list, “define”, “identify” and “explain” important fact based information. But this model is limiting and antiquated in the information age, where knowledge is expanding exponentially and the ability to process a large amount of information at abstract levels of thinking becomes more critical each year. If we are to develop the thinking abilities of students systematically, then we need to move from a solely topic-centred to an idea-centred model of curriculum design.’

“Concept-Based Curriculum Planning and Instruction” H. Lynn Erickson 2002

Island Time has an important part to play in the delivery of the Personal, Social and Health Education of the Year 7-8 curriculum. In addition, part of the morning is devoted to physical exercise with the PE faculty.

Island Time is core to the development of **cross-curricular skills**. Our school framework organises these as:

- **Communication** - interpreting and creating written, oral and visual communication
- **Capacity to Learn** - organising my learning, managing myself, reflecting on my learning, directing my own learning
- **Creative and Critical Thinking** - generating, analysing, synthesising and evaluating ideas
- **Collaboration** - working with other students effectively and with empathy
- **Conscience** - being engaged, being a leader and being reliable

Whilst these skills are developed across the curriculum, Island Time is place for students to bring them to the forefront of their learning. Skills are explicitly taught where appropriate, and evaluated by teachers and the students themselves.

How is it delivered in Year 7?

There are four units of inquiry, each lasting roughly 8 weeks.

Identity

This unit is part of the students’ induction into Island School. Students examine and express their identity and values, starting with the self, the family, culture and roots, the school and finally society at large. The unit is quite structured and teacher-led, but there are short inquiries within individual sessions.

The main skill is Communication as students interpret and create written texts, spoken texts and images. Evaluation (by the teacher and by the students themselves) focusses on how they have used various forms of communication to express ideas about their identity, with a main task being an extended piece of descriptive prose about their Cultural Identity.

Innovation

This is a much more open-ended unit in which students are introduced to the 'Think, Plan, Do' creative process cycle. After some initial input in which students think about how they are creative and how the creative process works, there are stimulus trips to Hong Kong Park, the Bank of China building, the Maritime Museum and Lamma Island. Students undertake a creative project in which they explore how innovation and creativity affects change and responds to change in how we live within the Hong Kong environment.

The main skill is Creative Thinking. Evaluation (by the teacher and by the students themselves) focusses on how students have developed their ideas through the creative process rather than on the final product itself.

Truth

This is a more structured unit again, in which students are initially introduced to four 'Ways of Knowing'; these foreshadow a key part of the Theory of Knowledge course that all students will complete in Years 12-13. Students think critically about the difference between fact and opinion, and which criteria they can use to decide whether they believe something to be true or not. Students are then led through short mini-inquiries into how this way of thinking can apply to scientific truths, cultural truths and our interpretation of the media.

The main skill is Critical Thinking. Evaluation (by the teacher and by the students themselves) focusses on how they apply this critical thinking to a piece of work completed at the end of the unit. This may be a website, and advertising pitch or a newspaper article.

Wellbeing

After some initial input about Wellbeing and lifestyle choices, students work in groups to undertake a research project. They are explicitly guided through the project cycle (form a research question, plan, develop, make/act/do, review/revise/report) and practise using collaborative dispositions that they have met in Drama lessons to help them work efficiently and empathetically in their groups. This can be a real challenge for students but is essential training for education and professional life!

The main skills are Capacity to Learn (self-directed research) and Collaboration. Evaluation (by the teacher and by the students themselves) focusses on how the group completes the research cycle and how each student contributes to the success of the collaboration within that group.

How does this relate to programmes in later years?

- In Year 8 the Island Time programme will build on these same concepts and skills but with slightly more depth, complexity and breadth. Units will generally be more open-ended in nature.
- In Years 9-11 the Explorations programme further develops these skills and concept-based, open-ended units of learning through the Global Perspectives IGCSE curriculum and the IE award for Information Technology.
- Cross-curricular skills will underpin all curriculum areas, and are again highlighted in the Elements programme in years 9-11. They are central to all curriculum areas of the International Baccalaureate programme in Years 12-13

under the guise of Approaches to Learning, and specifically in the core elements (Theory of Knowledge, Creativity/Action/Service and the Extended Essay).

How is it delivered in Year 8?

There are five units of inquiry, each lasting roughly 6 weeks.

Identity

This unit builds on the unit of the same name in year 7.

Whilst in year 7 this unit focussed on personal and individual identity we now broaden this concept so that students get to reflect on the identity of Hong Kong. In terms of skill area this unit specifically aims to develop oracy. The main outcome is a persuasive speech.

Students study well known speeches from various times, contexts and places. They are given specific tools for appraising and evaluating these speeches. They then decide on a particular aspect of Hong Kong's identity and begin to develop a speech on a particular issue that they are interested in.

Normally student speeches focus on one of the following - Hong Kong the tourist destination, a world financial hub, the relationship between Hong Kong and China PRC or Hong Kong of today versus the Hong Kong of yesteryear.

Innovation

This unit builds on the unit of the same name in year 7.

This is a much more open-ended unit in which students are given another opportunity to go through the 'Think, Plan, Do' creative process cycle. The main skill is Creative Thinking.

The first task requires students to generate quick drawings of models of ideas for buildings based on the engravings of microfauna made by Ernst Haeckel. We also aim to introduce the concept of Biomimicry (Biomimetics) to students. This is a powerful concept that states that it is much more effective and sustainable to generate design ideas by copying from nature.

The main project of this unit is to design a brand new school. Students form groups in which each member has a distinct role and set of responsibilities. They produce a collaborative portfolio which shows evidence from each stage of the design cycle and a final design for their School for 2030.

The student website for this unit can be found [here](#)

Truth

This unit builds on the unit of the same name in year 7.

In this unit students explore five main concepts- justice, ethics, reliability, bias and knowledge. They focus on developing their capacity to learn in order to foster a conceptual understanding of these five themes.

Our outcome for the unit is a research and discussion paper on an issue of controversy. Students collaborate to analyse contentious statements, which will involve researching arguments for and against the issue of controversy. They then present reasoned arguments by using persuasive language in order to reach a justified and well evidenced conclusion.

As well as this all students take part in a mock trial.

Essential Questions for Truth and Lies

The following conceptual questions drive the work of this unit.

- How does tolerance for ambiguity facilitate open mindedness on an issue of controversy?
- How do the ways of knowing complement and contrast viewpoints?
- How do methods of verification promote reliability and increase certainty?
- Can we trust the media?
- Can we know something with absolute certainty?

Wellbeing

This unit builds on the unit of the same name in year 7. Rather than being focussed on personal and individual notions of health and wellbeing it shifts the emphasis to our wider city. Students undertake a number of off-site activities and visit a range of government run health and recreational facilities. Students get to try them out and then systematically evaluate them.

The work of this unit is driven by the following questions.....

- To what extent can Hong Kong be called a happy and healthy city?
- To what extent is the HK government responsible for the health and wellbeing of its citizens?
- How successful is the HK government at promoting and sustaining the health and wellbeing of its citizens?

The main outcome for this unit is website promoting and appraising Hong Kong as a healthy city. These websites are produced by groups of students, each of which has a specific role and set of responsibilities.

The Solo E

This project not only marks the graduation from the junior phase at Island School, but also provides an introduction to the [Island Futures curriculum](#).

The Solo Exploration is an individual project that gives students a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and talents. They can explore their own personal interests and/or promote causes that they care about. This is very much a time for them to take charge of their learning, make decisions help them learn about things they are interested in and to learn in ways that best suit them.

At Island School we believe that students need to be given the chance to identify and pursue their passions, that they deserve to have a chance to dig deeper into areas of knowledge that excite them.

There is a website (link below) that has been created to provide students with all the information they need to successfully complete their Solo Exploration. Please make sure you read the various sections carefully alongside your Son/Daughter and discuss their choice of how to proceed with them.

Website Structure

[‘The Why’](#) section explains why learning in this way is important. It clearly explains the aims of the Solo Exploration and why it is so important.

[‘The What’](#) page explains what it is students actually have to do to complete their Solo Exploration successfully.

The '[Timeline](#)' page shows how the different stages of the project are sequenced and gives you a clear set of deadlines to help with planning. The 'Project Cycle' goes into more detail about how students need to approach each stage of the project.

The '[Assessment](#)' page is so important as it sets out clear guidelines for how students will be assessed. Students have some control over how they are assessed and so it is so important that they spend time reflecting on the assessment criteria and rubrics in this section.

This website is quite full of information and often the language is challenging. This is deliberate – the site acts as a guide for students, parents and teachers. Everyone has access to the same information. At times students will need support so that they are clear about what is expected. Students are encouraged to take the time to ask questions and seek guidance from their Island Time teacher, their parents and their tutor. Good learners ask good questions and good collaborators seek support in order to achieve their best!

The student website for this unit can be found [here](#)

How does this relate to programmes in later years?

- In Years 9,10 and 11 the Explorations programme will build on these same concepts and skills but with slightly more depth, complexity and breadth. Units will generally be even more open-ended in nature. Explorations culminates in a IGCSE Global Perspectives and an IE Award qualification.
- Escape in Years 9, 10 and 11 builds on the physical education and Wellbeing units.
- All of the Futures Elements Courses build on and extend the skill areas of the 5 Cs. They require students to reflect on their progress in these areas by completing a learning blog for each course.
- Some Elements courses build explicitly on the work done in Island Time. Moral Reasoning, Debating, Philosophy at the Movies and Critical Thinking are examples of Elements Courses that demonstrably extend and develop the skills that Island Time focuses on..
- Cross-curricular skills will underpin all curriculum areas, and are central to all curriculum areas of the International Baccalaureate programme in Years 12-13 under the guise of Approaches to Learning, and specifically in the core elements (Theory of Knowledge, Creativity/Action/Service and the Extended Essay).