

# Interpreting a syllabus

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## Approaches to learning and teaching Global Perspectives

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# Working with a syllabus document

Having made the decision to start teaching Global Perspectives, the next stage is to study the syllabus that you want to teach in detail. All qualifications have a syllabus document, and Global Perspectives is no exception. The syllabus document is your starting point. It will give you all the key information you need to start building your course for your own students and context.

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### Teacher Tip

Syllabus documents are accessible on an examination body's website. Use your search engine and type in the syllabus you want and the year that your students will be sitting the examination. This way you'll know that you have the correct syllabus. The last thing you want is to be telling your students the wrong thing. Remember that there is often more than one syllabus for a subject so it's a good idea to know the number/code of the syllabus you want.

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## The purpose of a syllabus

A syllabus is a short guide to the subject. Its purpose is to provide essential information only. An examining body cannot know the range of teachers that will teach a syllabus they design or the range of students that will sit the summative assessment tasks at the end of the course. It can only ensure that no matter where a student or teacher is in the world, they all have the same syllabus and the same information for the same subject at that level. By providing a syllabus, examining bodies also know that teachers and students are getting the same information about the requirements for the summative assessment tasks for that qualification.

## Interpreting a syllabus

### LESSON IDEA ONLINE 4.1: CREATING A 'CAN DO' LIST

Use this lesson idea to introduce your chosen Global Perspectives syllabus to your students.

## Having a long-term plan

Once you have read and understood the syllabus, you need to produce a long-term plan of what you want your students to learn throughout their Global Perspectives course. The syllabus determines some of this. That is, the skills as assessment objectives are defined, as you explored using Lesson idea 4.1.

Your long-term plan should culminate in the summative assessment tasks. It is a bit like a road map that guides you and your Global Perspectives students to the final destination. When they reach their destination, students should be equipped and able to complete the required summative assessment tasks.

The three key questions to think about before you start to teach your Global Perspectives course are:

- How much time do I need?
- Which skills do I need to develop?
- Which topics shall I use?

### How much time do I need?

Each syllabus sets out recommended guided learning hours. For example, Cambridge IGCSE qualifications recommend 130 guided learning hours, which equates to about two hours per week over two years or four hours per week over one year, depending on your school year. This does not include any independent work that students do at school or at home. Guided learning time is time when they are actively engaged in learning and you are facilitating this, either by delivering an activity to develop a specific skill or by monitoring and giving feedback as students take part in a learning activity. Global Perspectives requires the same amount of time as any other subject. Skills take time to develop. Think about how long it took you to learn to drive or to become good at a sport. You might still be learning ...

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### Which skills do I need to develop?

We know which skills Global Perspectives requires students to show competence in, but do you know how well developed these skills already are in the students you will be teaching? If you find out, you might be able to spend longer on the specific skills students are less competent in. You are lucky if you are starting to teach a class that has already studied Global Perspectives before they get to you or has had teachers that have concentrated on skills development as well as teaching content, for example in English Language or Social Science classes.

#### LESSON IDEA ONLINE 4.2: SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Use this lesson idea as a self-assessment activity to get students to consider how well their skills are developed. You can ask them to do the activity at the start of their Global Perspectives course and then return to it at regular intervals to see if there has been progress. There are further Assessment for Learning ideas in Chapter 6 **Assessment for Learning**.

### Which topics shall we use?

In the section entitled, 'Using global topics and issues within these topics', in Chapter 5 **Active learning**, there is one idea for how you might choose the global topics for developing students' skills. You could also ask students to complete a diamond nine activity, as in Lesson idea 4.3.

#### LESSON IDEA ONLINE 4.3: DIAMOND NINE

Use this lesson idea to get students to identify and prioritise the global topics the class is interested in.

## Putting together your long-term plan

If you have tried out the lesson ideas in this chapter, your students know the assessment objectives. You also know where they think their strengths lie and the areas they feel need developing. You will also know this from their previous teachers and if you have taught the students before. Your students have also made you aware of the topics they are interested in. You are now ready to put together your long-term plan.

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Your long-term plan sets out what you want students to learn over the course of study. It might look something like Table 4.1, depending on the global topics within which you have chosen to develop the skills. This long-term plan is based on three terms per year (two lessons per week plus independent learning) over two years. Notice that this long-term plan places more emphasis on the skills of evaluation, reflection and communication (appearing three times) as this teacher felt that these were the weakest skills of their students. However, the other skills have not been ignored and all appear twice in this plan. Your plan will probably look different from this one for the reasons mentioned previously. Remember, you don't have to 'teach' all the global topics. You don't even need as many as this; you might prefer to focus on just two global topics per term to develop your students' skills.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Research: tradition, culture, identity	Communication: digital world	<i>Produce first coursework</i>	Evaluation: humans and other species	Analysis: education for all	Evaluation: migration
Analysis: sustainability	Collaboration: disease and health	Communication: language and communication	Reflection: conflict and peace	Research: demographic change	Communication: fuel and energy
Evaluation: family	Reflection: poverty and inequality	Collaboration: human rights	<i>Produce second coursework</i>	Reflection: fuel and energy	<i>Practise for written examination</i>

**Table 4.1:** An example of a Global Perspectives teaching plan.

## Using the syllabus to design a programme of learning

Now that you have a long-term plan, you can focus on your programme of learning. A programme of learning is another term for a scheme of work or a mid-term plan. The rest of this book will explore how you might put together a programme of learning for Global Perspectives in your school. Other chapters give you further ideas to consider when creating your Global Perspectives course. For example, Chapter 5 **Active learning** gives plenty of ideas for activities to develop students' skills, and Chapter 6 **Assessment for Learning** focuses on Assessment for Learning strategies to help you monitor the progress and achievements of your students.

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The top ten things to include in a programme of learning and chapter references for further guidance are:

- 1 skill focus (Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 9)
- 2 global topic (Chapters 4, 5 and 11)
- 3 learning outcome (Chapters 5 and 9)
- 4 learning objective(s) (Chapters 5 and 9)
- 5 success criteria (Chapter 6)
- 6 teaching and learning activities (all chapters)
- 7 opportunities for support and stretch to enable inclusive education (Chapter 9)
- 8 timing (e.g. ten hours)
- 9 materials and resources (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11)
- 10 Assessment for Learning (Chapter 6).

Producing a programme of learning for Global Perspectives doesn't have to be left up to you, as the teacher. Students can and should be involved in the design of their programme of learning.

### LESSON IDEA ONLINE 4.4: MEDIUM-TERM PLANNING

Use this lesson idea as a starting point for designing a Global Perspectives programme of learning. You can use and adapt this idea at the start of any new topic.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, we have explored how to interpret a syllabus so that you have a long-term and medium-term plan to design lessons from.

Remember the following:

- The syllabus sets out the skills as assessment objectives and requirements for the summative assessment tasks.
- You can choose which global topics you use from the syllabus to develop your students' skills.
- Your students can help with your long-term and medium-term planning.