



Individuals and Societies Course Introduction

Per the International Baccalaureate and Willows Preparatory School's (WPS) mission, Individuals and Societies aims for students to:

- Appreciate human and environmental diversity
- Understand interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies and the environment
- Understand environmental and human systems
- Identify and develop concern for the well-being of human and natural communities and environments
- Act as responsible citizens in local and global communities
- Develop inquiry skills that lead to conceptual understandings of the dynamics among individuals, societies and the environment

Individuals and Societies (I&S) is a subject group that empowers students to explore culturally and socially relevant issues and topics. At WPS, the I&S department focuses on developing fundamental knowledge in a wide range of subject areas traditionally considered the social sciences and humanities. I&S also develops many critical approaches to learning such as research skill, effective and purposeful communication, reflection and perspective-taking. Students begin in the 6th grade with geographical foundations, basic civic and political understandings, qualities of leadership in great empires, and the impact of exploration on local and global landscapes. In 7th grade, students expand their civic understandings by exploring theories of democracy and government systems, philosophies of the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution, the catalysts of civil war, and the impact of American imperialism on global landscapes. 8th graders continue building on 6th and 7th grade foundations by investigating Washington state government and law, theories of governance, the globalized economy and its sustainability, international conflicts (particularly WWI and II) and modern day international diplomacy (United Nations). Throughout all three grades, students frequently engage in simulations, real-world problem-based learning and perspective-taking. Ideally, I&S will develop more responsible and educated citizens who not only approach the world from multiple and diverse vantage points, but who also strive to participate actively, meaningfully and effectively in their societies.