

## CHOOSING AN IA TOPIC BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY

- 1) Ask the students to take out a piece of paper and jot down the first thoughts that enter their minds when you ask the questions below. Do not indicate that this is an IA activity. In fact, give no introduction at all.

### Questions

- o What are your hobbies?
- o What do you like do when you with your friends?
- o What is your favourite TV show about?
- o What makes you happy?
- o If I gave you \$1 million, what would you do with it?
- o What are the last three things you spent money on?
- o What defines a good day for you?
- o What do you want to do after high school?
- o Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
- o What makes you unique?

- 2) In partners, ask the students to pick 5 number of words from their combined answers that have the most math associations. Each pair should write these on the whiteboard. Tell them not to worry if any words are repeated.
- 3) Choose one word from the board. I usually choose something fairly open like money, sports, movies, travel, etc.
- 4) As a class, create a mind map using that word as the center. Reject no ideas. I usually stop after 6-8 main branches and then ask for suggestions for subbranches.
- 5) Choose the three main branches have the most subbranches. Erase the other branches.
- 6) Post a list of the IB syllabus topics you have covered so far in class.
- 7) For each of the three remaining branches, list the syllabus topics that could be related to that branch. Add these to the mind map.
- 8) Choose the one branch that has the most math topics.
- 9) Use one of the subbranches and guide the students come up with an aim. I usually start by asking what they are curious about in relation to the subbranches. Their aim usually starts by

being a yes/no general question. I prompt them to keep amending it until it is deeper than yes/no and specific enough to research.

- 10) Ask the students why they/someone else/society would want to write a paper on this aim. This helps to create a rationale and part of their IA introduction.
- 11) Look back at the list of math concepts for the subbranch on the mind map. Decide as a group which concepts would be the best connections for their aim.
- 12) In partners, they repeat the mind map process above with a different word from the class list. They present their aim to the class and get feedback. They also share which math concept would be the best choice.