

## Science Key Concepts

Key concepts promote the development of a broad curriculum. They represent big ideas that are both relevant within and across disciplines and subjects. Inquiry into key concepts can facilitate connections between and among:

- courses within the sciences subject group (intra-disciplinary learning)
- other subject groups (interdisciplinary learning).

The key concepts contributed by the study of sciences are **change**, **relationships** and **systems**.

### **Change**

Change is a conversion/shift/movement from one state to another. Exploring change allows students to examine forces that shape the world: past, present and future. Inquiry into the concept of change invites students to consider causes, processes and consequences: natural and artificial, intentional and unintentional, positive and negative.

In sciences, change is viewed as the difference in a system's state when observed at different times. This change could be qualitative (such as differences in structure, behaviour, or level) or quantitative (such as a numerical variable or a rate). Change can be irreversible, reversible or self-perpetuating.

### **Relationships**

Relationships allow students to identify and understand the connections and associations between properties, forces, objects, people and ideas, including the human community's connection with the worlds in which we live. Any change in relationship brings consequences—some of which may occur on a small scale, while others may be far reaching, affecting large systems like human societies and the planet as a whole.

Relationships in sciences indicate the connections found among variables through observation or experimentation. These relationships also can be tested through experimentation. Scientists often search for the connections between form and function. Modelling is also used to represent relationships where factors such as scale, volume of data, or time make other methods impractical.

### **Systems**

Systems are sets of interacting or interdependent components. Everything in the known universe is a component of a system and generally also a part of multiple interacting and interdependent systems.

Systems provide structure and order in both natural and human environments. Dynamic and complex in nature, systems rely on a state of equilibrium and are very vulnerable to change. Systems in sciences describe sets of components that function due to their interdependence or complementary nature. Common systems in science are closed systems, where resources are not removed or replaced, and open systems, where necessary resources are renewed regularly. Modelling often uses closed systems to simplify or limit variables.