



DP TOK Handbook

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What Is Theory Of Knowledge (TOK)

Theory of Knowledge is a course centered on the question “How do we know?” Students are taught to seek out knowledge through critical thinking and analysis of the Ways of Knowing of Language, Sense of Perception, Emotion, Reason, Memory, Faith, Intuition and Imagination. By the end of the course, students should be proficient in formulating arguments and analyzing knowledge claims. The central features of the theory of knowledge course are critical analysis questions called Knowledge Issues.

Specifically, the aims of the TOK course are for students to:

1. Make connections between a critical approach to the construction of knowledge, the academic disciplines and the wider world.
2. Develop an awareness of how individuals and communities construct knowledge and how this is critically examined.
3. Develop an interest in the diversity and richness of cultural perspectives and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions.
4. Critically reflect on their own beliefs and assumptions, leading to more thoughtful, responsible and purposeful lives
5. understand that knowledge brings responsibility which leads to commitment and action.

TOK Course Content

Students complete 100 hours over the two-year course. The course is composed of units centered on the following Areas of Knowledge and other main themes; each unit lasts approximately 6 weeks. These units are:

- English
- Language Acquisition
- Individual & Societies
- Natural Science
- Art
- Math

Assessment

In the second year (Grade 12) of the course students are officially assessed for their IB Diploma, based on two pieces of work:

- The TOK Essay on a prescribed title (1200-1600 words). This is supervised by a teacher in the school, and then graded externally by an IB examiner.
- The TOK Group Presentation (approx. 10 minutes per student). This is supervised and assessed by a teacher in the school.

The final grade is then sent to the IB. The final TOK grade and the final Extended Essay grade are entered into the Diploma Points Matrix (see below at bottom of page) to award a possible maximum of 3 extra points to be added to a student's Diploma score.

Candidates not submitting satisfactory work in either area will fail the Diploma.

The assessment model in theory of knowledge (TOK) has two components, both of which should be completed within the 100 hours designated for the course. Both the essay and the presentation are assessed as follows, the essay contributes 67% of the final mark and the presentation contributes 33% of the final mark

PART I

The essay on a prescribed title (10 marks)

One essay on a title chosen from a list of six titles prescribed by the IB for each examination session. The prescribed titles will be shared with students in September prior to submission for the May session. The maximum length for the essay is 1,600 words. The IB externally assesses all essays.

The titles ask generic questions about knowledge and are cross-disciplinary in nature. They may be answered with reference to any part or parts of the TOK course, to specific disciplines, or with reference to opinions gained about knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. The titles are not meant to be treated only in the abstract, or on the basis of external authorities. In all cases, essays should express the conclusions reached by students through a sustained consideration of knowledge questions. Claims and counterclaims should be formulated and main ideas should be illustrated with varied and effective examples that show the approach consciously taken by the student. Essays should demonstrate the student's ability to link knowledge questions to AOKs and WOKs.

The chosen title must be used exactly as given; it must not be altered in any way. Students who modify the titles are likely to receive lower scores, since the knowledge questions that are explored in the essay must be connected to the titles in their prescribed formulation. If the title has been modified but it is still clear which prescribed title for the current session it refers to, the essay will be marked against that prescribed title. Any lack of relevance in the student's response to the prescribed title arising from this modification will be reflected in the score awarded. If it is clear that the title bears no literal resemblance to any title for the current session, the essay will be awarded a score of zero.

The role of the teacher during essay writing In relation to the student's essay on a prescribed title, the teacher has three principal responsibilities:

- to encourage and support the student in the writing of the essay
- to provide the student with advice on and guidance about the skills needed
- to ensure that the essay is the student's own work.

These responsibilities should be met through the following interactions.

1. The student should discuss the prescribed titles with the teacher, although the final choice remains with the student who should be encouraged wherever possible to develop his or her own ideas.
2. After choosing the title and unpacking/developing ideas in relation to it, the student may present his or her work (an exploration) to the teacher in some written form. For example, this might resemble a set of notes and ideas, with tentative connections drawn between them, spread over a large piece of paper. Discussion with the teacher should subsequently allow the student to create a plan in which the structure of the essay can be laid out by paragraph.
3. After this, the student is permitted (and should be encouraged) to present to the teacher one full draft of the essay. The teacher is permitted to provide written comments of a global nature, but is not permitted to mark or edit this draft.
4. While the student may seek further advice, for instance, on the appropriateness of a particular example, or on the degree of clarity if writing in a second or third language, no further written advice on drafts is permitted. It is the student's responsibility to correct mistakes and make improvements. The procedure for uploading the TOK essay can be found in the Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme.

Academic honesty and Authenticity. Teachers must ensure to the best of their ability that essays are the student's own work. In cases where there is concern, the authenticity of the essay can be checked through a discussion with the student and scrutiny.

Acknowledgments and References:

Students are expected to acknowledge fully and in detail the work, thoughts or ideas of another person if incorporated in work submitted for assessment, and to ensure that their own work is never given to another student, either in the form of hard copy or by electronic means, knowing that it might be submitted for assessment as the work of that other student. The IB does not prescribe which style(s) of referencing or in-text citation should be used by students; this is left to the discretion of appropriate faculty/staff in the school. Regardless of

the reference style adopted by the school for a given subject, it is expected that the minimum information given includes name of author(s), date of publication, title of source, and page numbers as applicable.

PART 2

PRESENTATION

One presentation to the class by an individual or a group (a maximum of three persons in a group). Approximately 10 minutes per student is allowed for the presentation. One written presentation planning document for each student.

General instructions:

Students must make one or more individual and/or small group presentations to the class during the course. Presentations must be delivered in a language accessible to all members of the class (if the school has been notified to submit presentation recordings, those presentations must be given in the language for which the students have been, or will be, registered). **The maximum group size is three.** If a student makes more than one presentation, the teacher should choose the best one (or the best group presentation in which the student participated) for the purposes of assessment.

Students are not permitted to offer presentations on the same specific subject matter more than once. This refers to either the same knowledge question, or the same real-life situation. It is advised that the presentation should take place towards the end of the course, as otherwise students may not have had the chance to develop skills such as formulating knowledge questions which are key to this task.

The TOK presentation requires students to identify and explore a knowledge question raised by a substantive real-life situation that is of interest to them. The selected real-life situation may arise from a local domain of personal, school, or community relevance, or from a wider one of national, international or global scope. Whatever situation is chosen, it must lend itself naturally to a question about knowledge.

The student is required to extract and explore a knowledge question from a substantive real life situation. For this reason, it is wise that students avoid real-life situations that need a great deal of explanation from outside sources before the extracted knowledge question can be understood in context. The diagram indicates that a successful presentation will have several dimensions. The two levels in the diagram represent the students' experiences in

the TOK course (lower level) and in the world beyond it (upper level). The connections between the levels demonstrate the relevance of TOK to life beyond the TOK classroom. At the “real world” level, there is the real-life situation from which a knowledge question must be extracted. This knowledge question, residing in the “TOK world”, must be developed using ideas and concepts from the TOK course, and in this progression it is likely that other related knowledge questions will be identified and will play a part in taking the argument forward. The product of this reflection can be applied back (during and/or after the development) to the real-life situation at the “real-world” level. In addition, the presentation should ideally aim to show how the process of application extends beyond the original situation to other real-life situations, thus demonstrating why the presentation is important and relevant in a wider sense.

- **Presentations may take many forms, such as lectures, interviews or debates.**
- **Students may use multimedia, costumes, or props to support their presentations.**

However, under no circumstances should the presentation be simply an essay read aloud to the class. While pre-recorded inserts within a presentation are permissible, the presentation itself must be a live experience and not a recording of the presentation. If students incorporate the thoughts and ideas of others into the presentation, this must be acknowledged. Before the presentation, the individual or group must give the teacher a copy of the presentation planning document.

Essays that exceed the word limit will be penalized; examiners are instructed to stop reading after 1600 words and base their assessment on the first 1600 words. A 1 point penalty will be applied to the essay. Students are required to indicate the number of words when the essay is uploaded during the submission process.

The role of the teacher during the presentation In relation to the presentation, the teacher has three principal responsibilities: to encourage and support the student(s) in the preparation of the presentation to provide guidance on presentation skills to assess the presentation using the presentation assessment instrument.

These responsibilities should be met through the following interactions. The student(s) should bring to an initial meeting with the teacher ideas for the selection of a real-life situation and the formulation of a knowledge question. The teacher should advise, but the final decisions belong with the student(s). The eventual success of this process will depend

on a consideration of how the presentation will develop, so a second planning meeting is permitted, if required. Often a variety of appropriate knowledge questions can be identified in the kind of real-life situations most students will want to discuss. Teachers should help them concentrate their efforts on a clearly formulated one. A final meeting between student(s) and teacher can take place several days before the presentation, in which the final structure of the presentation can be discussed. The presentation is intended as a positive learning experience for the audience, and therefore it is important that the quality of the product is monitored at this stage.

Presentation Duration:

Approximately 10 minutes per presenter should be allowed, up to a maximum of approximately 30 minutes per group. Presentations should be scheduled to allow time for class discussion afterwards. Interaction and audience participation are allowed during the presentation, not just in follow-up discussion, but there must be an identifiable substantial input from the presenter(s) that is assessable.

Presentation planning document (TK/PPD):

Each student must complete and submit a presentation planning and marking document (TK/PPD). The procedure is as follows. The student will complete the student sections of the TK/PPD form. The student will provide a hard copy to the teacher for reference during the presentation. The student will subsequently give the presentation. The teacher will authenticate each student's form and add comments on the presentation.

The section to be completed by the student requires responses to the following. Describe your real-life situation. State your central knowledge question. Explain the connection between your real-life situation and your knowledge question. Outline how you intend to develop your presentation, with respect to perspectives, subsidiary knowledge questions and arguments. Show how your conclusions have significance for your real-life situation and beyond.

This should be presented in skeleton or bullet point form, typed in standard 12 font and not exceed 500 words. It is acceptable to include diagrams, as long as they are clearly related to the text. It is not permitted to exceed the two sides of the TK/PPD form. Participants in a group presentation must be given the same marks. In a group presentation, not every student needs to speak for the same amount of time, but it is the presenters' responsibility to

ensure that all members of the group participate actively and make comparable contributions.

Details of Submission :

TOK prompts are published for DP 2 students:

- September 2020

Final draft submission in School:

- 2021 January

Final Submission to IBIS:

- 15th March

Grading of TOK with Extended Essay Metric

		Theory of knowledge					
		Excellent A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Mediocre D	Elementary E	Not submitted
Extended essay	Excellent A	3	3	2	2	1 + Failing condition*	N
	Good B	3	2	1	1	Failing condition*	N
	Satisfactory C	2	1	1	0	Failing condition*	N
	Mediocre D	2	1	0	0	Failing condition*	N
	Elementary E	1 + Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	Failing condition*	N
	Not submitted	N	N	N	N	N	N

TOK Essay & Presentation Assessment Instruments

Level 5 – Excellent (9-10)

Level 4 – Very Good (7-8)

Level 3 – Satisfactory (5-6)

Level 2 – Basic (3-4)

Level 1 – Elementary (1-2)

Recommendations to Students:

Students are strongly encouraged to explore their own IB areas of knowledge – their subjects, environment and experiences and engage in deeper reflection of the way of knowing. Furthermore, one of the profiles of an IB learner is being „Open-Minded“. Students are required to explore the various perspectives, cultures, values and traditions embodied in being open-minded. A TOK student is aware of current affairs and can engage in thoughtful and balanced exploration of the issues faced in society.

DO's for the TOK

- Document source material in a formal and appropriate manner.
- Use direct quotations appropriately.
- Understand the concept of plagiarism and academic malpractice.
- Understand the consequences of cheating regarding both school-based work and external examinations and assessments.
- Acknowledge explicitly and appropriately help provided by another person.

DON'Ts for the TOK

- Copy the work/assessment of other students.
- Give another student his/her work to copy.
- Do an essay for another student.
- Present material writing by another student as his/her own.
- Purchase and submit pieces written by someone else.