

International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

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Course Description:

“The TOK course, a flagship element in the Diploma Programme, encourages critical thinking about knowledge itself, to try to help young people make sense of what they encounter. Its core content is questions like these: What counts as knowledge? How does it grow? What are its limits? Who owns knowledge? What is the value of knowledge? What are the implications of having, or not having, knowledge?

What makes TOK unique, and distinctively different from standard academic disciplines, is its process. At the center of the course is the student as **knower**....In TOK [students] have the opportunity to step back from this relentless acquisition of new knowledge, in order to consider knowledge issues. These include the questions already mentioned, viewed from the perspective of the student, but often begin from more basic ones, like: What do I claim to know [about X]? Am I justified in doing so [how?]? Such questions may initially seem abstract or theoretical, but TOK teachers bring them into closer focus by taking into account their students’ interests, circumstances and outlooks in planning the course.” – TOK Diploma Programme Guide (2008)

International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

The traditional TOK diagram

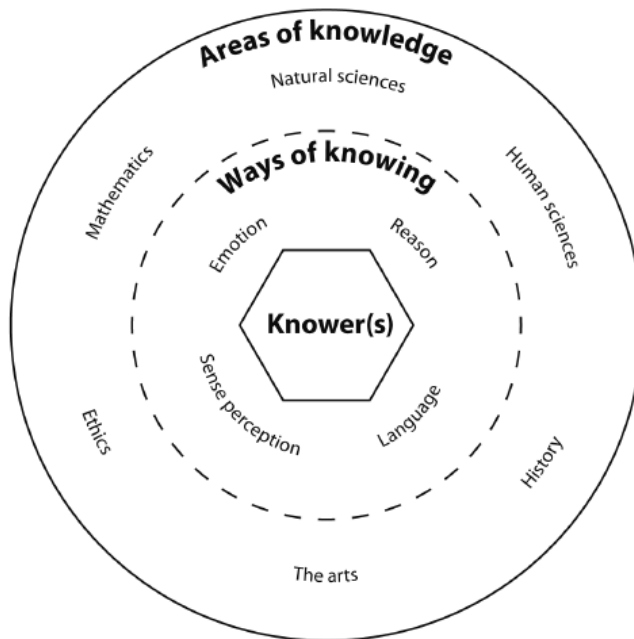


Figure 1

Aims:

- develop a fascination with the richness of knowledge as a human endeavor, and an understanding of the empowerment that follows from reflecting upon it.
- develop an awareness of how knowledge is constructed, critically examined, evaluated and renewed, by communities and individuals.
- encourage students to reflect on their experiences as learners, in everyday life and in the Diploma Programme, and to make connections between academic disciplines and between thoughts, feelings and actions.
- encourage an interest in the diversity of ways of thinking and ways of living of individuals and communities, and an awareness of personal and ideological assumptions, including participants' own.
- encourage consideration of the responsibilities originating from the relationship between knowledge, the community and the individual as citizen of the world.

International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

Objectives:

1. analyze critically knowledge claims, their underlying assumptions and their implications.
2. generate questions, explanations, conjectures, hypotheses, alternative ideas and possible solutions in response to knowledge issues concerning areas of knowledge, ways of knowing and students' own experience as learners.
3. demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives on knowledge issues.
4. draw links and make effective comparisons between different approaches to knowledge issues that derive from areas of knowledge, ways of knowing, theoretical positions and cultural values.
5. demonstrate an ability to give a personal, self-aware response to a knowledge issue.
6. formulate and communicate ideas clearly with due regard for accuracy and academic honesty.

Assessment

Assessments for TOK will include those prescribed by the IB programme in addition to those designed by the instructor.

Each unit of study will include a major oral assessment and a major written assessment. Each unit also will include several minor activities and assessments. All assignments are designed to meet the goals of the IB Programme and TOK and to prepare students for successful completion of the IB assessments.

The IB assessment model in theory of knowledge TOK comprises two components, both of which should be completed within the 100 hours designated for the course.

Part 1 External assessment (40 points)

Essay on a prescribed title (1,200–1,600 words)

International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

One essay on a title chosen from a list of ten titles prescribed for each examination session.

Part 2 Internal assessment (20 points)

The presentation (approximately 10 minutes per student)

One presentation to the class.

One written presentation planning document and presentation marking form, including:

- the knowledge issue that is the focus of the presentation
- a summary in note form of the knowledge issues to be treated during the presentation
- achievement levels for each of the four assessment criteria from both student and teacher.

The presentation should be an integral part of the TOK course .

GRADING/ASSESSMENT

- Participation – 10%

This grade is based on the extent to which you participate in class discussions and share your thoughts and ideas. For excused absences, you will need to write a ½ page response to the topic that was covered on the day that you were absent. Please see me if you have questions.

- Notebook – 30%

Journal entries will be made every week. It is your responsibility to check the website on days that you are absent so that you can complete the journal entry assignment for that day. Entries will be uploaded in the ToK class Blog.

International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

- Homework / In Class work – 30%

This is also to be uploaded in the ToK class blog.

- Papers & Presentations – 30%

A paper or presentation will be assigned each quarter. These are opportunities to practice using the TOK scoring guides and familiarizing yourself with what is required on the TOK assessments.

Grade Scale: At the end of the grading period, I will total points, calculate percentages, and assign grades as follows:

97-100% A+

96-94% A

90-93% A-

89-87% B+

86-84% B

83-80% B-

79-77% C+

76-74% C

73-70% C-

69-67% D+

66-64% D

63-60% D-

59%- Below F

Absence and Tardy Policy: Students are urged to be here daily. Poor attendance makes the work seem harder, less enjoyable, and puts unnecessary hardship on the students. Regular attendance helps you keep up, both in the work itself and in understanding course context. It is nearly impossible to be successful in this course without being in class. Read the Student/Parent Handbook for more details.