**How to Structure your TOK Presentation**

Here are some general guidelines about how to structure your presentation. Please remember that this is just a guide and that your actual presentation may be quite different depending on your topic, format or personal presentation style. The timings are based on a 10 minute presentation per person.

You can present your Oral Presentation either individually or in a group. At PASB, we limit the size of the group to just **2** people as any larger it becomes very difficult for the teacher to mark.

Your presentation will not take you that long to research and plan once *you* are *clear* what it is that you are required to do, and how to do it.

You are ***free*** to do your Oral Presentation on any topic you like – just keep in mind what the aim of the Theory of Knowledge course is, and how the objective of your presentation relates to it.

What is really of importance is your ***critical analysis*** and addressing the two fundamental questions:

1. What it is I claim to know?
2. How valid are the methods used to establish what it is I claim to know?

As long as you are assessing and evaluating the success, controversy and failure of the *methods* used to try and explain 'How we know what we claim to know?' – you are free to use any of the methods listed below, or even invent your own:

1. Critical questions on a whiteboard;
2. Worksheet with critical questions;
3. Newspaper Article with critical questions;
4. Power Point presentation with critical questions;
5. Watch a section of a film/DVD followed with a critical analysis;
6. Perform a social experiment followed with a critical analysis;
7. Perform a role play to highlight a critical analysis;
8. Perform a good piece of music and then a bad piece to investigate what supposedly gives it its quality;
9. In pairs deliver and highlight the opposing views of debate.

If you are a pair – I advise that you break your presentation up into points – with one person speaking first, then the other, and alternating through your presentation so that your deliver it quite like a game of tennis. Always try and speak for equal amounts of time – as this will help the marker.

**Remember** – Always have you presentation planned, with the points you want to say on a piece of paper in front of you. **Do not** write an essay to read out in class, or read out points that you've already placed on a Power Point Presentation, as this waste time and is boring – tells us what we need to know and then lead us straight into the ***analysis***.

**Research:**

Obviously you will need to know a certain amount on the topic – but don't do too much – sometimes reading one newspaper article can be enough – as the focus is on your analysis and the critical questions:

1. What is claimed?
2. What methods were used to reach that conclusion?
3. How valid are those methods?
4. Do these methods work in any/or other Areas of Knowledge?
5. What still puzzles you?
6. What methods/evidence would you need to accept their claim?

**PRESENTATION FORMAT**

Each presentation should have two clear stages:

Introduction (1-2 mins) An introduction, this is where you will briefly describing your real-life situation and introduce the ‘knowledge issue’ or TOK question that you have extracted from it – this will usually involve asking a very ‘high level’ question about knowledge and explaining why this is a significant or important question to ask.

Development (8-9 mins) The development, a detailed exploration of the knowledge issue / TOK question that you have extracted from the real-life situation, this will usually involve you looking at different ways in which your question might be answered and the implications that these have. In addition, although it is not as important here as it is in the essay, you might want to consider what people would say to argue against you and how you might respond – all of this must be clearly linked back to your original knowledge issue / TOK question

**Introduction:**

briefly state what the presentation is about, give an overview of the real life situation you have chosen to look at but do not go into great detail – you should aim to have just enough so that people understand what’s going on;

it is usually a good idea to have a clear title that is a question about a knowledge issue – e.g. ‘How can we ***know*** that …’ or ‘What role does ***emotion*** play in ….’ or ‘How is the concept of ***proof*** different in the ***human and natural sciences***?’;

* clearly state why your issue is ***significant***;
* you might briefly introduce the knowledge issues / perspectives that you will be exploring in the presentation;
* remember to keep all of this really brief because overly long intros can lead to some really boring presentations
* **Development:** You have two main choices when structuring your presentation, neither method is better than the other and both can allow you to access the top marks:

1. ***Argumentative*** – you can structure your presentation as an argument between two sides (obviously this will be more effective if you are working in a pair) and in this case one person may begin by outlining a perspective or knowledge issue and the second might then interrupt and argue back or offer an alternative view, argument or interpretation to which the first person might then respond … and so on. If you choose this structure you have to be careful to ensure that it doesn’t just descend into a yes / no debate but that each step in the argument reveals new ideas and issues.
2. ***Step by Step*** – alternatively you might like to assign each member of the team one particular perspective or knowledge issue to be responsible for and they can then explore this issue by themselves completely before moving on to the next member of the team and their issue. This means they will be responsible for identifying and responding to any flaws, limitations or alternative views and interpretations of their perspective / knowledge issue

 Regardless of the structure that you choose you will need to do the following:

1. Explore a number of perspectives or knowledge issues;
   1. **Counter-examples** – clear illustrations of where assumptions made in your presentation work in one Area of Knowledge but completely collapse, or are not relevant in another. You need to evaluate your argument.
   2. **Cross-cultural examples** – try and find examples which support the assumptions in your presentation, or challenge them and so become your counter-examples, from as International a background as is possible. The results of an experiment, a historical event, a word or action, may all be interpreted differently by different ethnic cultures, religions and socio-economic political societies.
   3. **Personal examples** – include examples that are from your own learning experience – if you've read a book, heard a song, seen a film, have a friend or relative whose views challenge the assumptions of your presentation – then quote and reference them.
2. Explore each knowledge issue / perspective in detail – this will involve going beyond simply explaining the perspective / issue itself and you will also need to go on to consider any problems, issues, flaws, shortfalls or implications that are raised when considering that particular perspective or knowledge issue; you should also attempt to respond to or evaluate the seriousness of these problems or issues;
3. As you are doing this make sure that you explicitly point out any similarities or differences that exist between the perspectives and knowledge issues that you are exploring;
4. Make sure you avoid falling into simple stereotypes such as ‘All Catholics think x,’ or ‘All art is based just on emotion,’ or ‘Historians always z;’

**EXAMPLE**

You may choose a presentation on whether experimenting on animals is justified in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. You could firstly look at the Ways of Knowing:

1. **Perception** – see what images are presented by antivivisectionist pressure groups and the scientific laboratories doing this kind of thing.
2. **Language** – look at the style of language used by antivivisectionist pressure groups and the scientists – is it "torture/murder" or an "experiment"? How does this effect the presentation of the topic being investigated?
3. **Emotion** – how do the images or the language employed in the arguments influence your emotions, and in turn, what role does your emotions play supporting or opposing to such actions?

Look at two or three Areas of Knowledge – say in this case it could be the Natural Sciences and Ethics to get examples to explore justification and objections to experimenting on animals.

1. **Reason** – what is the use of logic in arguments for and against experimentation on animals in both the Natural Sciences and Ethics? Explain the arguments and then critically assess them – try to find **supportive examples** and **counter-examples**.
2. **Other Areas of Knowledge** – you could look at History, Social Science or religion to see if there are any international examples of societies who treat animals differently, or if our behaviour has changed because of knowledge gained from another Area of Knowledge?

**Conclusion:** you should offer a clear, probably balanced, answer to the question; if you have not done this elsewhere, you might consider the significance of the issue;  if you have not done this elsewhere, you might consider the implications that might be drawn from the various perspectives / knowledge issues covered.

**The Style of Your Presentation:**

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**Tips**

1. **Familiarize yourself with the assessment criteria.** Notice, for example that whatever your topic, the focus must be on knowledge issues and that you should choose a contemporary issue (or at least one that is contemporary to you: a historical event that you're studying in History class qualifies).

2. **Choose a concrete topic that interests you and find the TOK in it.** TOK can be found almost anywhere, so use the opportunity to do something that you will enjoy doing. Do not just choose, say, the death penalty just because you have a book on it. Your presentation will come across much better if you choose something which means something to you personally: your own school, recent events in the news, cartoons, books and films are often fertile ground for presentation topics. Some of the most effective presentations start with an everyday story and go on to draw out the TOK aspects.

3. **You should be exploring an issue; this means that you should present different points of view, even if they contradict each other and even if you disagree with them.** You can try to reconcile different points of view or explain precisely why they are incompatible. You do not have to choose one point of view as "correct," but you should avoid the rather vacuous "so there are different points of view all of which are equally valid" approach. Do not be afraid to give your own opinion; you can point out that there are problems with your opinion, but be honest and say what you really think!

4. **Try to cover the facts quickly and get on to the abstract TOK *principles*.** If you have chosen a topic where there are important facts that the audience needs to know, then you should get through these quickly--there are no marks for dissemination of information! The focus of the presentation must be analysis, not description. If you can't summarize the facts in a couple of minutes then you should distribute to the audience a summary to be read beforehand.

5. **Once you have drawn out the abstract TOK principles you should try to see what the implications of these principles are, and perhaps use these implications to reflect on the validity of the principles**. For example, if you are considering the argument for the death penalty that states that murderers lose the right to life, the underlying principle seems to be "an eye for an eye." But what if you were to ask, "What do we do with a thief? Or a rapist? Or a kidnapper?" a different underlying principle might have to be used, possibly leading to a reformulation of the original principle.

6. **Consider carefully how you communicate the structure of your presentation.** The structure may be clear in your mind, but the audience may not find it so easy to follow. Having one or two overheads with the main points in bullet form (using a large font for clarity) can keep both you and your audience on track.

7. **Try to state explicitly the problems of knowledge that you are looking at.** This will help you retain clarity and make it easier for an examiner to give you high marks in criterion A (Knowledge Issues). If you use an overhead, list the problems there.

8. **If appropriate use a film clip, slides, photos, newspaper cutting or any other prop.** Your presentation will probably be far more interesting if you can use something other than your voice! But make sure that the props serve a specific purpose, and that they don't replace the analysis that will earn you high marks in criterion B (Quality of Analysis).

9. **In your conclusion try to summarize (briefly--only a few sentences) what you have said, and try to end with a forward-looking view.** This might be a summary of the main principles you have identified or some issues which have arisen and which have not been answered. Do not just reiterate your arguments. The end should "feel" like a conclusion and not like "well, that's it."