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***St. Nicholas***

# **Diploma Programme Theory of Knowledge Handbook**

at Alphaville

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## The Nature of TOK

The TOK course offers students a chance to reflect on the nature, scope, and limitations of knowledge and the process of knowing. It is a core element of the DP to which schools are required to devote at least 100 hours of class time. The structure of the TOK course is flexible and can commence from various entry points. Rather than merely accumulating new facts, TOK encourages a reflective approach toward existing knowledge. It prompts students to explore the methodologies employed in various fields, identifying both commonalities and disparities and reflecting on how knowledge is acquired across disciplines and areas of knowledge.

The course is an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in dynamic dialogues that transcend disciplinary boundaries to help students reflect on the knowledge they have acquired from their academic studies and their lives outside the classroom. Students are encouraged to examine the evidence for claims and consider, for example, how we distinguish fact from opinion, or how we evaluate the credibility of claims that we are exposed to in the media. They explore different methods and tools of inquiry and try to establish what it is about them that makes them effective, as well as considering their limitations.

The TOK course encompasses a rich array of concepts that play pivotal roles in understanding the nature of knowledge. These 12 concepts—evidence, certainty, truth, interpretation, power, justification, explanation, objectivity, perspective, culture, values, and responsibility—serve as foundational pillars for exploring the intricate dynamics of knowledge. These concepts can be threaded throughout the TOK course through different activities such as :

- using them explicitly within the wording of knowledge questions.
- explicitly identifying key concepts in TOK unit plans
- encouraging students to make links to concepts being covered in other DP subjects
- encouraging students to make use of tools such as concept maps or mind maps to help them see connections and relationships.

By examining the relationship between knowledge and these concepts, students can deepen their comprehension and extend their learning into diverse contexts.

The TOK course actively embraces the exploration of tensions, limitations, and challenges relating to knowledge and knowing. Nonetheless, it is equally aimed at fostering discussions that inspire students to recognize and value the diversity of human knowledge. These discussions are intended to encourage students to appreciate the positive contributions of various forms of knowledge. It is important to reflect on the benefits of such contemplation on knowledge and knowing. For instance, it has the potential to refine our thinking, heighten awareness of our assumptions, and combat prejudice while fostering intercultural understanding.

The aims of the TOK course are:

- to encourage students to reflect on the central question, “How do we know that?”, and to recognize the value of asking that question
- to expose students to ambiguity, uncertainty, and questions with multiple plausible answers
- to equip students to effectively navigate and make sense of the world, and help prepare them to encounter novel and complex situations
- to encourage students to be more aware of their perspectives and to reflect critically on their own beliefs and assumptions
- to engage students with multiple perspectives, foster open-mindedness, and develop intercultural understanding
- to encourage students to make connections between academic disciplines by exploring underlying concepts and by identifying similarities and differences in the methods of inquiry used in different areas of knowledge
- to prompt students to consider the importance of values, responsibilities, and ethical concerns relating to the production, acquisition, application, and communication of knowledge.

## **TOK and International-mindedness**

The IB employs the term "international-mindedness" to refer to a mindset, demeanour, and conduct marked by receptiveness to the global community and an acknowledgment of our profound interconnectedness with others. In the TOK course, significant focus is placed on fostering international-mindedness. For example, it encourages students to consider the diversity and richness of different perspectives, as well as exploring the interdependent influence of knowledge and culture. The course encourages students to be curious and to think deeply and carefully about complicated issues. It encourages students to avoid

shallow and polarised thinking and to avoid making quick judgments. It highlights that sometimes there are no simple answers, and “that tensions between conflicting points of view have to be lived with, argued about and frequently left unresolved” (Walker 2004: 135).

Through their explorations in TOK, students are prompted to explore and articulate their perspectives on knowledge, fostering open dialogue and the exchange of ideas with peers. Through this process, they broaden their understanding by engaging with diverse beliefs, values, and experiences, and considering alternative approaches to inquiry. Moreover, TOK challenges students to challenge their convictions, promoting intellectual humility and a deeper sense of responsibility in applying their knowledge. By contemplating the possibility of error and appreciating differing perspectives, students gain insight into the underlying assumptions and values shaping their thoughts and actions. Ultimately, this reflective process encourages students to refine their self-awareness and their comprehension of the world around them.

## Knowledge Questions

The TOK curriculum revolves around the exploration of knowledge questions, which are essential for fostering meaningful discussions in TOK classes. These questions ensure that students focus on inquiries about knowledge itself and the methodologies of knowing, guiding them away from narrow, subject-specific queries or isolated real-life scenarios and into the broader realm of TOK. Knowledge questions delve into various aspects of knowledge—how it's produced, acquired, shared, and utilized; what defines it and what doesn't; who possesses it and who doesn't; and who determines the answers to these inquiries.

They are contestable, as there are often multiple plausible answers. Dealing with these open contestable questions is a core aspect of TOK, though some students may initially find the absence of a definitive "right" answer disorienting. In TOK discussions, it is perfectly conceivable that answers to a question may differ—what matters is that the analysis is thorough, accurate, and effectively supported by examples and evidence.

Knowledge questions serve as the primary tool for teaching and learning in TOK. Both assessment tasks—the TOK exhibition and TOK essay—focus on exploring these questions, as both the Internal Assessment (IA) prompts and prescribed essay titles take the form of

knowledge questions. Therefore, it's crucial for students to actively engage in the exploration and discussion of knowledge questions throughout the TOK course.

Providing guidance and suggested knowledge questions aids educators and students in examining the three sections of the TOK curriculum: the core theme (knowledge and the knower), optional themes, and areas of knowledge. These questions delve into the nature of knowledge, such as "What constitutes good evidence for a claim?", "Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?", or "What ethical constraints should govern the pursuit of knowledge?" Supporting materials, like the following video, further enhance the [understanding of knowledge questions](#).

## TOK Curriculum

The TOK curriculum comprises three intricately interconnected components:

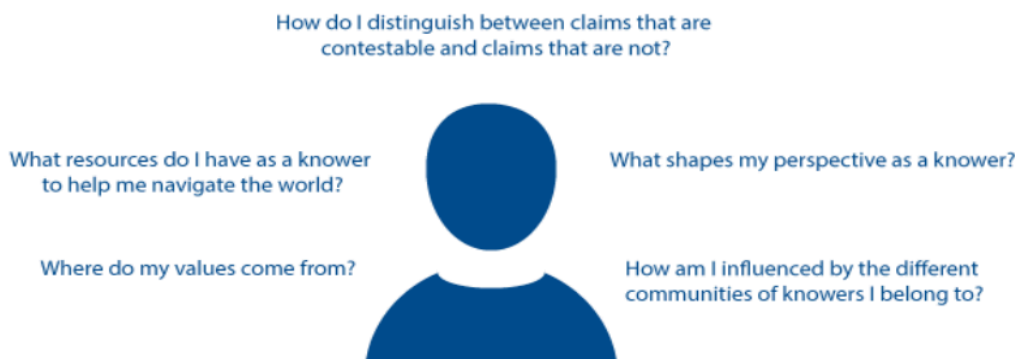
- the core theme -knowledge and the knower
- optional themes
- areas of knowledge

The core theme prompts students to introspect on the multifaceted influences shaping their understanding of the world, while also challenging them to evaluate claims and navigate uncertainty critically. This theme not only fosters a deep appreciation for the complexities of knowledge construction but also cultivates essential skills such as critical thinking and ethical discernment. Meanwhile, the optional themes are chosen for their contemporary relevance and potential to ignite engaging discussions around key issues like the role of technology, language, politics, religion, and indigenous knowledge in shaping our perceptions. Additionally, exploring five fundamental areas of knowledge—History, the Human Sciences, the Natural Sciences, the Arts, and Mathematics—provides students with a diverse array of lenses through which to examine the nature of knowledge production and the criteria for assessing its validity. Through these interconnected components, the TOK curriculum offers students a holistic framework for inquiry, reflection, and engagement with the complexities of knowledge in an ever-evolving world.

### The core theme - knowledge and knower

The core focus of the theme, "knowledge and the knower," invites students to reflect on the factors influencing their perspective as knowers, the origins of their values, and their process of understanding and navigating the world. It extends beyond individual perspectives to encompass the impact of various communities of knowers and the ongoing

construction, examination, and renewal of knowledge by both communities and individuals. This prompts consideration of how interactions with others and with the environment shape one's knowledge. The theme also prompts critical evaluation of claims, urging students to discern between contestable and non-contestable claims. It emphasizes the necessity of questioning assertions rather than blindly accepting them while recognizing the uncertainty in many decision-making scenarios. Designed to align with the [IB learner profile](#), the theme encourages students to evaluate the capabilities and limitations of their cognitive tools and to become more mindful of their biases and assumptions. Additionally, it invites exploration of concepts such as open-mindedness and ethical considerations surrounding the utilization and control of knowledge.



Discussions within this theme could center around misinformation and disinformation, deliberate deception, and the challenge of discerning trustworthiness. This may involve reflecting on students' perceptions of trustworthy sources of knowledge, such as books, websites, personal experiences, and authority figures, and exploring the reasons behind these perceptions. Moreover, the impact of technological advancements, particularly regarding the spread of "fake news," could be examined. Another area of interest could be understanding how individuals shape their worldview, considering culture as a lens through which reality is interpreted, as well as the effects of filters, image manipulation, and propaganda. For instance, students might explore the tipping point at which filters distort reality more than they reveal it, and the role of hidden assumptions in shaping our understanding as knowers.

Teachers have numerous strategies for approaching and structuring the core theme. One approach is using it to initiate and conclude the curriculum, while also revisiting it at

relevant points throughout the optional themes and areas of knowledge. Regardless of the chosen approach, the primary focus must always remain on knowledge. Additionally, educators must ensure that their exploration of the theme encompasses the four compulsory elements integral to every aspect of the TOK curriculum: scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics. While suggested knowledge questions for each element are provided on [pages 14 and 15 of the Theory of Knowledge Guide 2020](#), they should be viewed as prompts rather than strict instructions.

## Optional Themes

The optional themes offer the opportunity for a deeper exploration of two specific themes that hold particular interest for both the TOK teacher and students.

Teachers must select two optional themes from the following five options.

- Knowledge and technology
- Knowledge and language
- Knowledge and politics
- Knowledge and religion
- Knowledge and indigenous societies

These five themes have been selected because of their contemporary real-world relevance and their rich potential to stimulate interesting and engaging TOK discussions around key areas, such as the justification of, and evidence for, claims. These optional themes are intended to strongly connect with and expand upon the core theme—Knowledge and the knower. While the core theme centers on students and their specific communities of knowers, the optional themes widen the scope to encompass five significant factors influencing the world today, profoundly shaping perspectives and identities. These themes raise pertinent issues that students are likely to encounter both within and beyond their educational journey.

The following chart provides guidance on each of the five optional themes, emphasizing their flexibility in approach. Teachers are encouraged to explore a wide range of concepts and present compelling examples within each theme. However, the focus must remain on knowledge within the selected theme, with attention to the four compulsory elements: scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics. Additionally, suggested knowledge questions in each section could be used to explore these four required elements in each optional theme.



Optional Themes	Knowledge questions for scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics.
<p><b>Knowledge and technology:</b> The theme focuses on the profound effects of technology on knowledge and knowers, exploring both its benefits and challenges. It examines how technology shapes the creation, sharing, and fundamental nature of knowledge itself. Students engage with issues such as the influence of artificial intelligence on knowledge acquisition and whether machines can exhibit cognitive or learning abilities. Moreover, ethical considerations surrounding emerging technologies, like biometric data usage or privacy breaches, invite critical examination. It's essential that discussions center on knowledge questions rather than solely ethical dilemmas, such as deliberating on the assumptions guiding moral decisions. Social networks also offer rich terrain for exploration, raising questions about their influence on knowledge dissemination and the formation of "echo chambers" that reinforce existing perspectives. Looking beyond contemporary examples, historical technological advancements like mass printing or navigation tools offer valuable insights into how technology shapes our understanding of the world.</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 17 and 18</a></p>
<p><b>Knowledge and language:</b> The theme underscores the fundamental role language plays in our lives, serving as the primary channel through which knowledge is conveyed and understood. Beyond mere communication, language shapes our perceptions and experiences of the world, with some arguing that it structures our understanding, influencing what we know. This theme invites students to contemplate the profound influence of language on thought and behaviour, drawing from their own experiences of language learning. They may reflect on the nature of linguistic knowledge compared to other forms of knowledge,</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 19 and 20</a></p>

<p>and consider how language shapes what and how we know. Additionally, students are prompted to examine how language facilitates the sharing and preservation of knowledge across generations, as well as its role in subjecting claims to public scrutiny. Discussions within this theme may also explore the dynamics of language and power, examining how language sustains authority and reinforces societal divisions based on class, ethnicity, and gender. Moreover, students can delve into non-human communication, including the impact of technological advancements on language use and the qualities of "machine language," as well as considerations of what constitutes language in non-human contexts.</p>	
<p><b>Knowledge and politics:</b> The theme explores the connection between knowledge and political dynamics, emphasizing how the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are connected with power and politics. It serves as a platform for discussing contemporary issues like "fake news" and "post-truth politics" while encouraging reflection on the origins and consequences of political beliefs. Students are prompted to analyse how group dynamics influence decision-making processes, and the theme delves into concepts such as "epistemic injustice" and the politics of knowledge control. Additionally, it examines the impact of technology on politics, including the influence of data analytics and social media, and invites discourse on persuasion, manipulation, and propaganda, highlighting the role of various actors in shaping political narratives.</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 21 and 22</a></p>
<p><b>Knowledge and religion:</b> The theme discusses the significant impact of religion on individuals' worldview and the generation of specific claims about knowledge. It emphasizes the need for careful, critical, and respectful consideration of the relationship between knowledge and religion, acknowledging the sensitivity of the topic due to deeply held convictions. It highlights religion as a rich ground for TOK discussions, exploring the complexity of</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 22 and 23</a></p>

<p>religious beliefs, practices, and values, as well as issues related to evidence and morality. Students are encouraged to examine diverse perspectives within and across religions, including debates on the role of evidence in religious knowledge and the relationship between religion and ethics.</p>	
<p><b>Knowledge and indigenous societies:</b> The theme discusses the growing global recognition of the historical and ongoing injustices faced by indigenous peoples, emphasizing the importance of protecting their traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. It explores the optional theme of knowledge within indigenous societies, focusing on the deep connection between knowledge and culture. Students are encouraged to critically examine the concept of "indigenous societies," considering its historical context and power dynamics. They should also recognize the diversity within indigenous communities and engage with specific examples rather than generalizations. The theme allows for discussions on the holistic nature of knowledge in indigenous societies, their close relationship with the natural world, and the embodiment of knowledge in cultural practices. Additionally, it invites exploration of the impact of colonialism and globalization on indigenous knowledge systems, including challenges such as the devaluation of certain types of knowledge.</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 24 and 25</a></p>

## Areas of knowledge

Students are required to study all five of the following areas of knowledge:

- History
- the Human Sciences
- the Natural Sciences
- the Arts
- Mathematics

Each of the five areas of knowledge is characterised by established methods for knowledge production and criteria for factual accuracy and the quality of explanations. They are expected to explore all five areas and are encouraged to consider and utilise examples from distinct academic disciplines that fall within the various areas of knowledge during

their discussions and assignments. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of how knowledge is structured and generated across various fields of study, fostering critical thinking and interdisciplinary perspectives.

TOK discussions should focus on exploring and comparing different areas of knowledge to deepen understanding and foster critical thinking skills. It emphasises the use of the "knowledge framework" to support comparisons across areas, highlighting four elements that provide a vocabulary for effective comparison. It suggests examining perspectives within each area to understand how knowledge evolves, noting both gradual and sudden changes. Additionally, it underscores the evaluative nature of comparing areas of knowledge, which involves critically appraising similarities and differences rather than just describing them. The text concludes by mentioning additional guidance available for making effective connections across areas of knowledge in TOK discussions.

The following chart contains guidance and examples of knowledge questions for each of these five compulsory areas of knowledge. These are suggestions only and should not be taken as prescriptive or exhaustive. However, teachers must ensure that the focus remains clearly on knowledge in that area and that they engage with the four compulsory elements required in every part of the syllabus: scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics.

Areas of knowledge	Knowledge questions for scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics.
<p><b>History:</b> Studying history involves exploring the past and reflecting on the nature of historical facts while contemplating the challenges of certainty in interpreting events. History, as an area of knowledge, offers unique complexities due to the absence of direct observation and limitations in methods of investigation. It prompts discussions about the reliability of historical evidence, the interpretive nature of the historical analysis, and the influence of historical context on interpretations. Through examining historical significance and considering diverse perspectives, students can investigate why certain aspects of</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 28 to 29</a></p>

<p>history are recorded while others are overlooked, and how history can be used to promote specific narratives or perspectives.</p>	
<p><b>The human sciences:</b> The human sciences encompass a variety of disciplines focused on the study of human behaviour and existence, such as psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, and geography. This diversity provides fertile ground for TOK discussions, including debates on differing approaches within disciplines like psychology. Topics for discussion may include contrasting the interpretation of "science" between human and natural sciences, examining the methods used for data collection and hypothesis testing, and scrutinising the reliability of questionnaires and polls in the human sciences. Additionally, students can explore how social, political, cultural, and financial factors influence research agendas and raise questions about the purpose and context of knowledge pursuit in the human sciences.</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 30 and 31</a></p>
<p><b>The natural sciences:</b> The natural sciences are characterised by their reliance on evidence, rationality, and the pursuit of deeper understanding through observation and experimentation. Discussions surrounding the natural sciences often focus on distinguishing between scientific and non-scientific methods, examining the reliability of scientific knowledge, and considering the evolution of scientific paradigms and technological advancements. Students may explore the role of consensus within the scientific community, including the significance of peer review and the transparency of scientific inquiry to public scrutiny. Additionally, topics such as the influence of funding on scientific research priorities and the determination of research directions by governments and private entities provide rich material for TOK discussions on the natural</p>	<p><a href="#">pages 31-33</a></p>

<p>sciences.</p>	
<p><b>The arts:</b> The arts in TOK encompasses a wide array of disciplines including visual arts, theatre, dance, music, film, and literature, each characterised by distinct forms and methods, thus offering a rich ground for TOK discussions. These discussions often revolve around the interpretation of artistic works, considering factors such as the role of the artist's intention and audience response. Moreover, students explore the social function of the arts, examining how they illuminate aspects of the human condition and serve as vehicles for social criticism and change. Ethical considerations also emerge, with debates over the boundaries of acceptable artistic expression and the ethical responsibilities of artists and audiences. Additionally, discussions focus on the relationship between arts and culture, exploring how art reflects cultural traditions while challenging established norms and values, including through examples of "outsider art."</p>	<p><a href="#">Pages 33-34</a></p>
<p><b>Mathematics:</b> Mathematics is a source of material for Theory of Knowledge (TOK) discussions due to its perceived certainty based on universally accepted definitions and assumptions. It highlights various aspects for discussion, including the status of mathematics as a field of knowledge, the incorporation of mathematical language in other disciplines, the role of creativity and imagination in mathematics, the relationship between mathematics and the real world, and the significance of proof in establishing truth within mathematical contexts compared to everyday usage. These discussions prompt considerations of the relevance of elegance and beauty in mathematical value, the abstract nature of mathematics versus its real-world applications, and the distinction in using "proof" between mathematics and other domains of knowledge.</p>	<p><a href="#">Pages 35 -36</a></p>

## TOK Assessment

The Theory of Knowledge (TOK) course incorporates both internal and external assessments to evaluate students' understanding and application of TOK concepts. The internal assessment component, known as the Theory of Knowledge exhibition, carries a weightage of 10 marks, accounting for one-third (33%) of the overall assessment. In this exhibition, students are tasked with creating a display that elucidates how TOK principles manifest in various aspects of the world around us. This component is evaluated internally by the teacher and undergoes external moderation by the IB at the culmination of the course. The external assessment component comprises the TOK essay, which also carries a weightage of 10 marks, constituting two-thirds (67%) of the overall assessment. Students are required to craft an essay in response to one of the six prescribed titles issued by the IB for each examination session. Marked externally by IB examiners, this essay evaluates students' ability to critically engage with TOK concepts and effectively communicate their insights within a structured academic framework. Together, these assessments provide a comprehensive evaluation of students' proficiency in TOK, encompassing both their theoretical understanding and practical application of TOK principles.

### The TOK exhibition

The TOK exhibition is a crucial internal assessment component within the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, providing students with an opportunity to explore how Theory of Knowledge (TOK) concepts manifest in the world. Students are required to create an exhibition based on one of the TOK themes, selecting a prompt from the provided list, and connecting three objects to it. These objects should be accompanied by written commentaries, explaining their real-world context, justification for inclusion, and their link to the chosen prompt. Each student must work individually, and while multiple students in the same class can choose the same prompt, they must use different objects. The exhibition is designed to be completed in the first year of the DP, with schools encouraged to establish clear internal deadlines to support students in completing their assessments.

### The TOK exhibition process

It is recommended that a total of approximately eight hours of teaching time should be allocated to the TOK exhibition task.

The TOK exhibition process consists of three key steps.	
<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Students start their exhibition by picking an Internal Assessment prompt and three objects or images that illustrate how this question is evident in the real world. They have to choose one IA prompt to base their exhibition on, and all three objects must relate to this prompt. It's recommended that students align their exhibition with one of the TOK themes, whether it's the core theme or an optional one. This approach can simplify the task for students and help them focus on selecting suitable objects. Teachers should dedicate time to explain the task requirements and ensure students understand the assessment criteria within the allocated teaching time.</p>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p>Students are required to create a single file for their TOK exhibition, which should contain the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A title indicating the chosen IA prompt.</li> <li>● Images of the three selected objects.</li> <li>● Typed commentaries on each object, including identification of the object, its real-world context, justification for its inclusion in the exhibition, and links to the IA prompt (with a maximum of 950 words).</li> <li>● Proper citations and references for sources used.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers are allowed to provide feedback on one draft of the exhibition, offering advice for improvement without directly editing the draft. Once completed, the file is submitted to the TOK teacher for evaluation, and samples of student work are sent to the IB for moderation.</p>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p>Teachers are required to provide all students with an opportunity for their completed exhibitions to be showcased and exhibited to an audience. As this does not form part of the formal assessment task, teachers have a great deal of flexibility as to how they choose to hold these exhibitions—as in the following examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Holding an exhibition within a regular TOK class.</li> <li>● Organising exhibitions between two classes of TOK students from the same or different schools.</li> <li>● Hosting an exhibition for younger students in the school.</li> <li>● Arranging a TOK exhibition for parents and other members of the school community.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up a "virtual exhibition" using an online virtual gallery space.</li> <li>• Hosting a combined event celebrating the PYP exhibition, MYP personal project, and the TOK exhibition.</li> </ul>
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### Internal Assessment Prompts

IA prompts consist of 35 knowledge questions, and students are tasked with selecting one of these prompts to serve as the foundation for their exhibition. It is essential that all three objects presented in the exhibition directly relate to the chosen prompt. These prompts can be found on [pages 40 and 41 of the Theory of Knowledge guide](#). The chosen IA prompt must be used exactly as provided, without any alterations. If a modification to the IA prompt is made but it remains clear which prompt the student is referring to, the TOK exhibition will be assessed based on the original IA prompt. However, any lack of relevance resulting from such modifications will impact the final score. If it becomes evident that the TOK Exhibition is not based on any of the listed IA prompts, it will receive a score of zero according to the TOK Exhibition assessment criteria.

### **TOK essay**

The TOK essay tasks students with crafting a formal, extended piece of writing in response to one of six titles provided by the IB for each examination session. These titles are framed as knowledge questions and are centered around different areas of knowledge. It's an external assessment component, with each student's essay being evaluated by IB examiners. The essay must adhere to specific formatting guidelines, including using standard 12-point font and double spacing. While not primarily a research paper, it's expected that students will utilise specific sources, provided they are duly acknowledged and properly cited. The IB releases the prescribed titles six months before the submission deadline, although students aren't expected to spend the entire six months working on their essays. Teachers are encouraged to allocate around 10 hours of teaching time for students to work on their essays. Students must use the chosen title exactly as provided; any modifications may affect the assessment score. The maximum word count for the essay is 1,600 words, including quotations but excluding acknowledgments, references, and certain visual aids. If the word limit is exceeded, examiners will only assess the first 1,600 words. Teachers play a vital role in guiding and supporting students throughout the planning and writing process, including ensuring authenticity. Three formal recorded interactions between the student and teacher are required, documented on the [TOK essay](#)

[Planning and Progress Form](#), which is submitted to the IB as evidence of support and authenticity measures.

Three required teacher-student interactions for the TOK essay	
1. Discuss the list of prescribed titles with the student.	The student is encouraged to engage in discussions with the teacher regarding the prescribed essay titles. However, the ultimate decision on the choice of title rests with the student. It is imperative for the student to independently develop their thinking and ideas in the process.
2. Discuss the student's initial exploration of their selected title (for example, an essay plan).	Following the selection of a title and the development of initial ideas, students are required to consult with the teacher regarding their early work and explorations. This consultation typically occurs through the sharing of written materials, such as notes and ideas. These initial materials serve as the foundation for subsequent discussions with the teacher, potentially leading to the refinement of these ideas into a more structured essay plan.
3. Comment on one draft of the student's essay.	Following this step, the student submits a complete draft of the essay to the teacher for evaluation. The teacher then offers constructive feedback either orally or in writing, focusing on areas for improvement. This advice may take the form of written comments of a global nature, but teachers are not permitted to mark or edit this draft. While the student can request additional guidance from the teacher, such as clarifying specific examples or enhancing the coherence of a section, no further written feedback on drafts is allowed. Subsequently, the version submitted to the teacher thereafter must constitute the one intended for submission.

## TOK assessment instruments

Both the TOK exhibition and TOK essay are evaluated using a global impression marking method, emphasising holistic judgement rather than an analytical breakdown of separate criteria. Five levels of performance are outlined as holistic descriptors, not as strict checklists, with markers aiming to select the descriptor that best reflects the student's achievement level. Each level allows for two marks, with markers awarding the higher mark for work closely aligned with the descriptor and the lower mark for work demonstrating qualities to a lesser extent. When work falls between descriptors, evaluators should revisit the driving question and choose the level that best fits the overall impression, awarding the appropriate mark within that level.

The TOK exhibition serves as a platform for students to explore the intersection of knowledge questions and real-world phenomena, guided by a central inquiry: "Does the exhibition effectively demonstrate how TOK is manifested in our surroundings?" If a student presents only two objects with accompanying commentaries, a maximum of 6 marks should be awarded, while presenting only one object warrants a maximum of 3 marks.

Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?		Possible Characteristics
Excellent 9-10	The exhibition clearly identifies three objects and their specific real-world contexts. Links between each of the three objects and the selected IA prompt are clearly made and well-explained. There is a strong justification for the particular contribution that each object makes to the exhibition. All, or nearly all, of the points, are well-supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.	Convincing Lucid Precise
Good 7-8	The exhibition identifies three objects and their real-world contexts. Links between each of the three objects and the selected IA prompt are explained, although this explanation may lack precision and clarity in parts. There is a justification of the	Focused Relevant Coherent

	contribution that each individual object makes to the exhibition. Many of the points are supported by appropriate evidence and references to the selected IA prompt.	
Satisfactory 5-6	The exhibition identifies three objects, although the real-world contexts of these objects may be vaguely or imprecisely stated. There is some explanation of the links between the three objects and the selected IA prompt. There is some justification for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. Some of the points are supported by evidence and references to the selected IA prompt.	Adequate Competent Acceptable
Basic 3-4	The exhibition identifies three objects, although the real-world contexts of the objects may be implied rather than explicitly stated. Basic links between the objects and the selected IA prompt are made, but the explanation of these links is unconvincing and/or unfocused. There is a superficial justification for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. Reasons for the inclusion of the objects are offered, but these are not supported by appropriate evidence and/or lack relevance to the selected IA prompt. There may be significant repetition across the justifications of the different objects.	Simplistic Limited Underdeveloped
Rudimentary 1-2	The exhibition presents three objects, but the real-world contexts of these objects are not stated, or the images presented may be highly generic images of types of object rather than of specific real-world objects. Links between the objects and the selected IA prompt are made, but these are minimal, tenuous, or it is not clear what the student is trying to convey. There is very little justification offered for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. The commentary on the	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent

	objects is highly descriptive or consists only of unsupported assertions.	
0	The exhibition does not reach the standard described by the other levels or does not use one of the IA prompts provided.	

**Taken from: The Theory of Knowledge Guide 2020 page 47.**

The TOK essay presents students with a structured opportunity to undertake a formal, extended piece of writing addressing a given title within the realm of areas of knowledge. At its core, the evaluation of this task is guided by the following question: Does the student deliver a lucid, logically sound, and discerning examination of the essay title?

The assessment framework below delineates five distinct levels of achievement in addressing this central question. These levels are intended to offer comprehensive descriptions of performance rather than serving as a mere checklist of attributes.

Does the student deliver a lucid, logically sound, and discerning examination of the essay title?		Possible Characteristics
Excellent 9-10	The discussion has a sustained focus on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge. Arguments are clear, coherent, and effectively supported by specific examples. The implications of arguments are considered. There is clear awareness and evaluation of different points of view.	Insightful Convincing Accomplished Lucid
Good 7-8	The discussion is focused on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge. Arguments are clear, coherent, and supported by examples. There is awareness and some evaluation of different points of view.	Pertinent Relevant Analytical Organized
Satisfactory 5-6	The discussion is focused on the title and is developed with some links to areas of knowledge. Arguments are offered and are supported by examples. There is some	Acceptable Mainstream Adequate

	awareness of different points of view.	Competent
Basic 3-4	The discussion is connected to the title and makes superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge. The discussion is largely descriptive. Limited arguments are offered but they are unclear and are not supported by effective examples.	Underdeveloped Basic Superficial Limited
Rudimentary 1-2	The discussion is weakly connected to the title. While there may be links to the areas of knowledge, any relevant points are descriptive or consist only of unsupported assertions.	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent Formless
0	The discussion does not reach the standard described by the other levels or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles for the correct examination session.	

Taken from: *The Theory of Knowledge Guide 2020* page 48.

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[\*International Baccalaureate Organization. \(2022\). Theory of knowledge guide.\*](#)

[\*International Baccalaureate Organization. \(2022\). Theory of knowledge teacher support material.\*](#)