



# IB THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE HANDBOOK

*Knowledge comes from learning, wisdom comes from living.*

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## What is TOK?

Theory of knowledge is a course at the core of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program with extended essay and Creativity- Activity-Service.

**T**OK course plays a special role in the DP by providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature, scope and limitations of knowledge and the process of knowing.

TOK enables students to practice thinking skills such as creative, critical and transferring. It's in the core of IBDP. You need to be open for criticism, test your ideas and investigate any knowledge claim with a deep analysis in order to present them as facts. You're expected to show this understanding by using concepts from the course.

It is a course that instills critical thinking and competence to test knowledge and eventually be able to know better. There are many questions in this course, however main question that is centered in the course is **“how do we know?”** It lets us to test and evaluate knowledge claims from school and other sources.

### Is it an ordinary subject?

It's not an ordinary subject. It's an activity-based opportunity to discuss on the nature of knowledge and knowing. We don't teach a body of information in Theory of Knowledge courses. It's usually in the form of question and argumentation and providing different perspectives to already said opinions. It's not about a particular knowledge, it's rather about knowing itself., TOK is concerned **with evaluation, communication, confirmation, application, recording, transferring, organization, discovery, production, interpretation, development, sharing of knowledge.** In this way, TOK makes students question the knowledge claims that they learn in and out of the program.

### What are the expected outcomes?

Expected outcomes are to think critically, identify knowledge, ask “how do we know;” develop relevant, clear, coherent arguments, use effective examples and evidences, evaluate different viewpoints, consider the implications of knowledge claims. Most importantly, ask knowledge questions that are enabling us to reflect on knowledge.

## What is a knowledge question?

KQ is a question about how we acquire, share or produce knowledge. A KQ is:

- about knowledge and knowing, not a technical- specific info;
- contestable- open ended; there should be a number of plausible.
- draws on TOK concepts.

A KQ: What is the relationship between knowledge and culture?

## What are the assessment components?

There isn't any summative exam. 1. Instead, by preparing an exhibition of three objects 2. and writing an essay on one of the 6 prescribed titles, 3 points can be gained in parallel with the extended essay. The aim of the assessment is as follows:

- demonstrate TOK thinking through the critical examination of knowledge questions
- identify and explore links between knowledge questions and the world around us
- identify and explore links between knowledge questions and areas of knowledge
- develop relevant, clear and coherent arguments
- use examples and evidence effectively to support a discussion
- demonstrate awareness and evaluation of different points of view
- consider the implications of arguments and conclusions.

**Approximate**  
**22-30** A

Both components are awarded on a 10 point scale. The essay is multiplied by two for final 30 points TOK grade. Grade boundaries are announced periodically but the marks are approximately predictable:

**16-21** B  
**10-15** C  
**4-9** D  
**0-3** E

## What is TOK Exhibition?

TOK exhibition is an exhibition of three objects from the students personal experiences. The TOK exhibition assesses the ability of the student to show how TOK manifests in the World around us. It's marked by the teacher and is externally moderated by the IB.

The candidate creates an exhibition of three objects that connect to one of the 35 "IA prompts" Students must select just one IA prompt(Question) on which to base their exhibition, and all three objects must be linked to the same IA prompt.

Then the candidate writes a commentary on each object that identifies each object and its specific real-world context, justifies its inclusion in the exhibition and links to the IA prompt (maximum 950 words) The marking is done through a global impression characterized by asking *“Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?”*

It’s completed at the end of the first year.

## What is TOK Essay?

The TOK essay is a 1.600 text that is externally marked by IB examiners. TOK essay engages students in a more formal and sustained piece of writing in response to a title focused on the areas of knowledge. The essays are written on one of the six prescribed titles issued by the IB for each examination session. It’s focused on areas of knowledge. And assessment process is underpinned with this single driving question: *Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?*

Essay is an investigation into knowledge questions about the prescribed title of the candidates choice. It is not a research paper, in contrast to Extended Essay. Knowledge questions are open ended, comparative, about knowledge or knowing, expressed in TOK vocabulary and they lend themselves to thoughtful inquiry.

The essay assesses a candidates’ ability to reflect on knowledge questions and their TOK thinking skills through the discussion of one of the six prescribed titles. 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 effective examples. Essays should demonstrate the student’s ability to link knowledge questions to AOKs.

TOK essay is written in the second year of the program.

### AOKs and the knowledge framework

**AOKs are depots of knowledge and knowledge framework is a classification to investigate them.**

## What are AOKs?

Areas of knowledge are the eight academic fields that knowledge summed up. These are the depots, the branches of knowledge that we contribute to. The essay is primarily focused on AOKs. The students are expected to provide arguments from at least two

AOKs. There are five AOKs in TOK curriculum to be undertaken throughout the programme. They're examined through knowledge framework.



Knowledge is organized into areas of knowledge (AOKs).  
Areas of knowledge are structures within which much human knowledge is organized.  
In these areas there are often socially established methods for producing knowledge, as well as norms for what counts as a fact or a good explanation.  
They're explored by knowledge framework

## What is knowledge framework?

It's a framework, a tool to explore and unpack AOKs and it proves to be useful when it comes to vocabulary and comparison of the areas. It also makes you stay in the TOK world due to the frames that it draws. It makes you discuss about "how do we know" on an AOK, with its focus and remarks.

**Scope**

**Scope:** This element focuses on exploring the nature and scope of the different themes and areas of knowledge. It explores how each theme/area of knowledge fits within the totality of human knowledge.

**Perspectives**

**Perspectives:** This element focuses on the importance and influence of perspectives and context. This includes reflection on the students' own perspectives and what informs them.

**Methods & Tools**

**Methods & Tools:** This element focuses on exploring the methods, tools and practices that we use to produce knowledge.

**Ethics**

**Ethics:** This element focuses on exploring ethics and the ethical considerations that have an impact on inquiry in the different themes and areas of knowledge.

## What are TOK concepts?

TOK concepts are the 12 concepts that reflects what TOK is about. Instead of particular subject specific info, we focus on the knowledge and knowing issue in general. They're evidence, certainty, truth, interpretation, power, justification, explanation, objectivity, perspective, culture, value, responsibility.

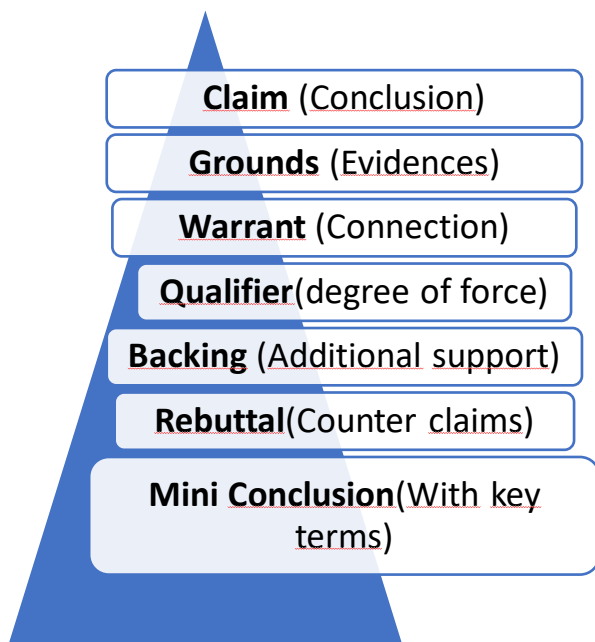


## Materials from the course

Definitions/Terms  
 Intension/Extension  
 Use/mention  
 Signifier/signified  
 Abstract/concrete  
 General/specific  
 Contrary/contradictory

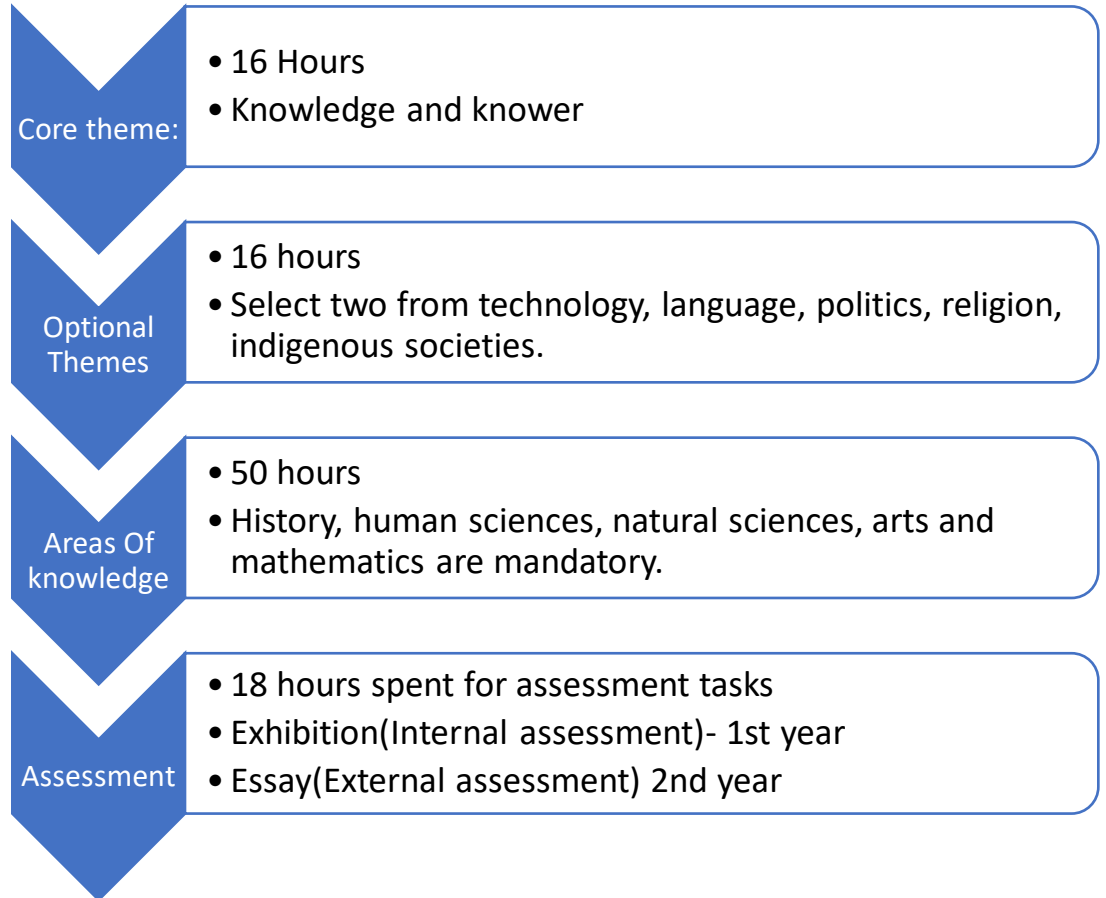
Direct or experimental evidence  
 Anecdotal or circumstantial evidence  
 Argumentative evidence  
 Testimonial evidence

Credibility  
 Accuracy  
 Reasonableness  
 Supports



## Curriculum

TOK is thought for minimum 100 hours spread to two years of IBDP experience.



## References

International Baccalaureate Organization, Diploma Programme Theory of knowledge guide, 2019.

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