

IB THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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Theory of Knowledge (TOK)

The purpose of the TOK course is to develop students' critical approach to the acquisition of knowledge. They will already have acquired a vast amount of knowledge by the time they start the course but TOK provides an opportunity to stand back from the mere acquisition of data and to ask more fundamental questions such as 'how do I know that?', 'how has that knowledge come about?', and even 'is it possible to know anything for certain?'

The aims and objectives of the course are, thus, to develop students' ability to reflect upon, critically examine, and evaluate claims to knowledge in a variety of disciplines and to encourage them to make connections between disparate areas of their studies and their everyday life. They will emerge from the TOK course able to analyse, to generate hypotheses, make interesting links between different fields, and to communicate their ideas clearly.

TOK is thus the glue that holds the IB Diploma programme together.

The course will be taught for 3 hours across the two-week timetable and will cover the following elements:

Knowledge issues, knowers and knowing

- Knowledge issues (e.g. different ways of knowing)
- Nature of knowing (e.g. difference between knowledge, belief, faith)
- Knowledge communities
- Knowers and sources of knowledge (e.g. role of personal experience; do we construct or recognize reality?)
- Justification of knowledge claims

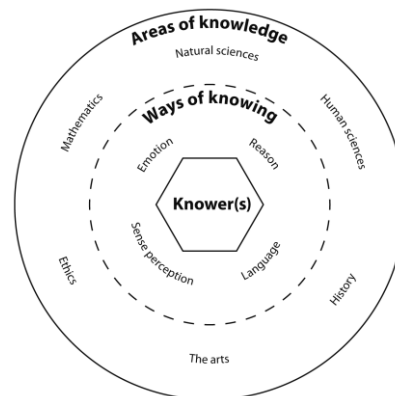
Ways of knowing

- Sense perception
- Language
- Reason
- Emotion

Areas of knowledge

- Mathematics
- Natural sciences
- Human sciences
- History
- The arts
- Ethics

The course can be represented alternatively in the following diagram.



Assessment in TOK consists of two elements:

Part 1 External assessment (40 points)

This consists of one essay (1200-1600 words in length) on a topic prescribed by the IBO.

Part 2 Internal assessment (20 points)

This consists of one presentation to the class and one accompanying written presentation planning document.

These marks are then totaled to provide an overall mark which is then converted to a grade (A-E). In terms of IB Diploma points the mark from the TOK course is then combined with that from the Extended Essay, according to the diploma points matrix, to produce the final result for the required parts of the Diploma Programme (ranging from 0-3 Diploma points).

Resources:

All students will use the following textbook:

Richard van de Lagemaat, *Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma* (CUP: Cambridge, 2005)

In addition, the school library has large numbers of books in the fields of Philosophy, Ethics, Politics and the various areas of knowledge.