



**ANKARA TURK TELEKOM
SOCIAL SCIENCES HIGH SCHOOL**

TOK

(THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE)

HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS



The TOK course provides students with an opportunity to explore and reflect on the nature 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.

In TOK, students reflect on the knowledge, beliefs and opinions that they have built up from their years of academic studies and their lives outside the classroom. The course is intended to be challenging and thought-provoking—as well as empowering—for students.

The TOK curriculum is made up of three deeply interconnected parts.

- **The core theme—Knowledge and the knower:** This theme encourages students to reflect on themselves as knowers and thinkers, and to consider the different communities of knowers to which we belong.

- **Optional themes:** This element provides an opportunity to take a more in-depth look at two themes of particular interest to teachers and students. The given themes all have a significant impact on the world today and play a key role in shaping people’s perspectives and identities. Teachers select two optional themes from a choice of five: knowledge and technology; knowledge and language; knowledge and politics; knowledge and religion; and knowledge and indigenous societies.

- **Areas of knowledge:** The areas of knowledge (AOK) are specific branches of knowledge, each of which can be seen to have a distinct nature and sometimes use different methods of gaining knowledge. In TOK, students explore five compulsory areas of knowledge: history; the human sciences; the natural sciences; mathematics; and the arts.

There are two assessment tasks in the TOK course.

- **The TOK exhibition** assesses the ability of the student to show how TOK manifests in the world around us. The exhibition is an internal assessment component; it is marked by the teacher and is externally moderated by the IB.

- **The 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 essay is an external assessment component; it is marked by IB examiners. The essay must be a maximum of 1,600 words and must be on one of the six prescribed titles issued by the IB for each examination session.

The TOK course places a great deal of emphasis on elements that are central to the development of 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 about, and to think deeply and carefully about, complicated issues. It encourages students to avoid shallow and polarized thinking, and to avoid making quick judgments. Through their explorations in TOK, students are encouraged to discover and articulate their own views on knowledge. They are encouraged to share their ideas with others, and to listen to and learn from what others think. TOK also challenges students to be intellectual risk-takers and to question what they hold to be true. In this way, it encourages intellectual humility and encourages students to gain and apply their knowledge with greater awareness and responsibility.

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 own 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

Course Outline

Course elements	Minimum teaching hours
Core theme: Knowledge and the knower This theme provides an opportunity for students to reflect on themselves as knowers and thinkers, and on the different communities of knowers to which we belong.	32
Optional themes: Students are required to study two optional themes from the following five options. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Knowledge and technology •Knowledge and language •Knowledge and politics •Knowledge and religion •Knowledge and indigenous societies 	
Areas of knowledge: Students are required to study the following five areas of knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •History •The human sciences •The natural sciences •The arts •Mathematics 	50
Assessment: Students are required to complete two assessment tasks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •TOK exhibition (internally assessed) •TOK essay on a prescribed title (externally assessed) 	18
Total minimum teaching hours	100

TOK Assessment

Assessment component	Weighting
Internal assessment Theory of knowledge exhibition (10 marks) For this component, students are required to create an exhibition that explores how TOK manifests in the world around us. This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.	1/3 (33%)
External assessment TOK essay on a prescribed title (10 marks) For this component, students are required to write an essay in response to one of the six prescribed titles that are issued by the IB for each examination session. As an external assessment component, it is marked by IB examiners.	2/3 (67%)

The TOK exhibition

The TOK exhibition is an internal assessment component—it is marked by the teacher and is externally moderated by the IB. Internal assessment is an integral part of all DP courses. For this task, students are required to create an exhibition of three objects that connect to one of the 35 “IA prompts” provided in the “IA prompts” section of this guide. Students must select just one IA prompt on which to base their exhibition, and all three objects must be linked to the same IA prompt.

Students are required to create an exhibition comprising three objects, or images of objects, and an accompanying written commentary on each object. To enable their exhibition to be marked by their TOK teacher and for samples of student work to be submitted to the IB for moderation, students are required to produce a single file containing:

- a title clearly indicating their selected IA prompt
- images of their three objects
- a typed 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)
- appropriate citations and references.

The TOK exhibition task has been explicitly designed to be completed during the first year of the DP. The maximum overall word count for the TOK exhibition is 950 words. This word count includes the written commentaries on each of the three objects. It does not include:

- any text contained on/within the objects themselves
- acknowledgments, references (whether given in footnotes, endnotes or in-text) or bibliography.

If an exhibition exceeds the word limit, then examiners are instructed to stop reading after 950 words and to base their assessment on only the first 950 words. Extended footnotes or appendices are not appropriate to a TOK exhibition.

TOK essay on a prescribed title

The TOK essay is an external assessment component. Each student's essay is submitted to the IB to be marked by IB examiners. The IB releases a set of six prescribed titles for each examination session.

The chosen title must be used exactly as given; it must not be altered in any way.

- If the title has been modified but it is still clear which prescribed title for the current session it refers to, the essay will be marked against that prescribed title. Any lack of relevance in the student's response to the prescribed title arising from this modification will be reflected in the score awarded.
- If it is clear that the title bears no resemblance to any title for the current session, the essay will be awarded a score of zero, in accordance with the TOK essay assessment instrument.

The maximum length of the essay is 1,600 words. Extended footnotes or appendices are not appropriate for the TOK essay. The word count includes:

- the main part of the essay
- any quotations.

The word count does not include:

- any acknowledgments
- the references (whether given in footnotes, end notes or in-text) and bibliography
- any maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations or tables.

If an essay exceeds the word limit, then examiners are instructed to stop reading after 1,600 words and to base their assessment on just the first 1,600 words. Students are required to indicate the number of words when the essay is uploaded during the submission process.

TOK exhibition assessment instrument

Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?					
Excellent 9-10	Good 7-8	Satisfactory 5-6	Basic 3-4	Rudimentary 1-2	0
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-	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	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	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	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	The exhibition does not reach the standard described by the other levels or does not use one of the IA prompts provided.

explained. There is a strong justification of the particular contribution that each individual 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.	precision and clarity in parts. There is a justification of the 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.	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.	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.	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 objects is highly descriptive or consists only of unsupported assertions	
Possible characteristics					
Convincing Lucid Precise	Focused Relevant Coherent	Adequate Competent Acceptable	Simplistic Limited Underdeveloped	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent	

TOK essay assessment instrument

Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?					
Excellent 9-10	Good 7-8	Satisfactory 5-6	Basic 3-4	Rudimentary 1-2	0
The discussion has a sustained focus on the title and is linked effectively to	The discussion is focused on the title and is linked effectively to	The discussion is focused on the title and is developed with some links to areas of knowledge.	The discussion is connected to the title and makes superficial or limited links to	The discussion is weakly connected to the title. While there may be links to the areas of	The discussion does not reach the standard described by the other levels or is not

<p>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.</p>	<p>areas of knowledge. Arguments are clear, coherent and supported by examples. There is awareness and some evaluation of different points of view.</p>	<p>Arguments are offered and are supported by examples. There is some awareness of different points of view.</p>	<p>areas of knowledge. The discussion is largely descriptive. Limited arguments are offered but they are unclear and are not supported by effective examples.</p>	<p>knowledge, any relevant points are descriptive or consist only of unsupported assertions.</p>	<p>a response to one of the prescribed titles for the correct examination session.</p>
Possible characteristics					
<p>Insightful Convincing Accomplished Lucid</p>	<p>Pertinent Relevant Analytical Organized</p>	<p>Acceptable Mainstream Adequate Competent</p>	<p>Underdeveloped Basic Superficial Limited</p>	<p>Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent Formless</p>	