



Theory of Knowledge.

TOK is one of the core elements and a compulsory course for all IBDP students.

1. **Knowing about knowing:**

TOK is a course about critical thinking and inquiring into the process of knowing, rather than about learning a specific body of knowledge. It is a core element, which all Diploma Programme students undertake and to which all schools are required to devote at least 100 hours of class time. TOK and the Diploma Programme subjects should support each other in the sense that they reference each other and share some common goals. The TOK course examines how we know what we claim to know. It does this by encouraging students to analyse **knowledge claims** and explore **knowledge questions**. A knowledge claim is the assertion that “I/we know X” or “I/we know how to Y”, or a statement about knowledge; a knowledge question is an open question about knowledge. A distinction between **shared knowledge** and **personal knowledge** is also made. This distinction is intended to help students explore the nature of knowledge.

2. **The ways of knowing:**

While there are arguably many ways of knowing, the TOK course identifies eight specific ways of knowing (WOKs). They are **language, sense perception, emotion, reason, imagination, faith, intuition, and memory**. Students must explore a range of ways of knowing, studying four of these eight in depth.

3. **The WOKs have two roles in TOK:**

They underlie the methodology of the areas of knowledge
They provide a basis for personal knowledge.

Discussion of WOKs will naturally occur in a TOK course when exploring how areas of knowledge operate. Since they rarely function in isolation, the TOK course explores how WOKs work, and how they work together, both in the context of different areas of knowledge and in relation to the individual knower.

4. **The areas of knowledge:**

Areas of knowledge are specific branches of knowledge, each of which can be seen to have a distinct nature and different methods of gaining knowledge. TOK distinguishes between eight areas of knowledge. They are **mathematics, the natural sciences, the human sciences, the arts, history, ethics, religious knowledge systems, and indigenous knowledge systems**. Students must explore a range of areas of knowledge, and so at least six of the eight are studied.

The **knowledge framework** is a device for exploring the areas of knowledge. It identifies the key characteristics of each area of knowledge by depicting each area as a complex system of five interacting components. This enables students to effectively compare and contrast different areas of knowledge and allows the possibility of a deeper exploration of the relationship between areas of knowledge and ways of knowing.



5. Assessment:

There are two assessment tasks in the TOK course: an essay and a presentation. The essay is externally assessed by the IB, and must be on any one of the six prescribed titles issued by the IB for each examination session. The maximum word limit for the essay is 1,600 words.

The presentation can be done individually or in a group, with a maximum group size of three. Approximately 10 minutes per presenter should be allowed, up to a maximum of approximately 30 minutes per group. Before the presentation each student must complete and submit a presentation-planning document (TK/PPD) available in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*. The TK/PPD is internally assessed alongside the presentation itself, and the form is used for external moderation.