

I. TOK



American Academy



WHAT IS TOK ?

The TOK course “at a glance”

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 course centers on the **exploration of knowledge questions**, which are a key tool for both teachers and students. These are contestable questions about knowledge itself, such as: *“What counts as good evidence for a claim?”*, *“Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?”*, or *“What constraints should there be on the pursuit of knowledge?”*. While these questions may initially seem slightly intimidating, they become much more accessible when considered with reference to specific examples within the TOK course.

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. The two optional themes selected currently at American Academy Casablanca from a choice of five are: *knowledge and language* and *knowledge and politics*.
- + **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.

To help teachers and students explore these three parts of the TOK curriculum, guidance and suggested knowledge questions are provided. These suggested knowledge questions are organized into a framework of four elements: scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics. This «knowledge framework» encourages a deep exploration of each theme and AOK. Having these common elements run throughout the different parts of the curriculum also helps to unify the course and helps students to make effective connections and comparisons across the different themes and areas of knowledge.

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 **can be structured in a variety of ways** and can start from a variety of different entry points. Teachers are encouraged to exercise flexibility, creativity and innovation in the design and delivery of their TOK course, and to provide a diverse range of examples that meet the specific needs and interests of their own students.

Assessment

There are two assessment tasks in the TOK course: an essay and an exhibition. Both the essay and the exhibition are assessed using global impression marking. The emphasis in the TOK exhibition is on demonstrating how knowledge issues manifest in the world. It is thus distinguished from the TOK essay, where students are required to show their TOK thinking skills in the discussion of a prescribed title in which two Areas of Knowledge are explored.

Real-life examples play an important role in the essay by illustrating the main ideas or taking forward the argument. Real-life examples should come from the student’s academic experience or from life beyond the classroom, as hypothetical examples are usually unconvincing. Anecdotal examples may be relevant but cannot on their own support the analysis in an essay.

AIMS

The aims of the TOK course are for students to:

- + 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.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Having completed the TOK course, students should be able to:

- + 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.

Assessment Outline

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT	MARKS AVAILABLE
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.	10 marks (67% of final mark)
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.	10 marks (33% of final mark)

Assessment details

THE TOK EXHIBITION

The TOK exhibition explores how TOK manifests in the world around us. For this reason it is strongly recommended that students base their exhibition on one of the TOK themes (either the core theme or one of the optional themes).

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. It enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests.

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.

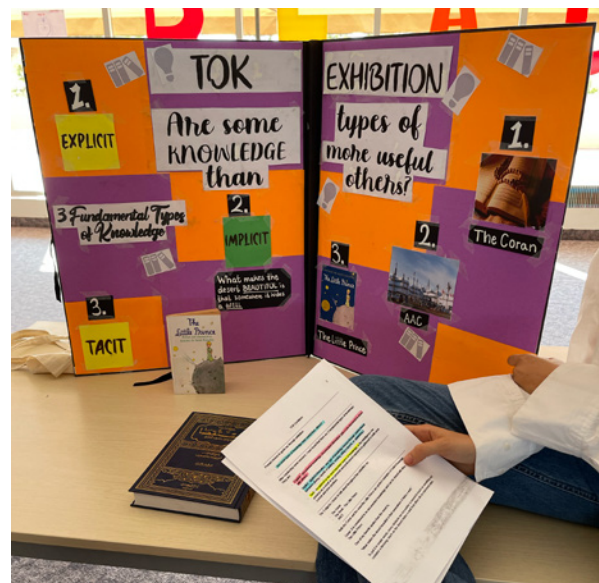
Each student must create an individual exhibition. Group work may not be undertaken by students. Multiple students in the same TOK class are permitted to create exhibitions on the same IA prompt.

However, students in the same class are not permitted to use any of the same objects. The TOK exhibition task has been explicitly designed to be completed during the first year of the DP. To support DP students, it is important that schools have a clear overall schedule of internal deadlines for the completion of the internal assessment tasks for the different subjects. Within this schedule, teachers are strongly encouraged to complete the TOK exhibition in the first year of the programme.

TOK ESSAY ON A PRESCRIBED TITLE

The TOK essay engages students in a formal, sustained piece of writing in response to one of the six titles that are prescribed by the IB for each examination session. These titles take the form of knowledge questions that are focused on the areas of knowledge.

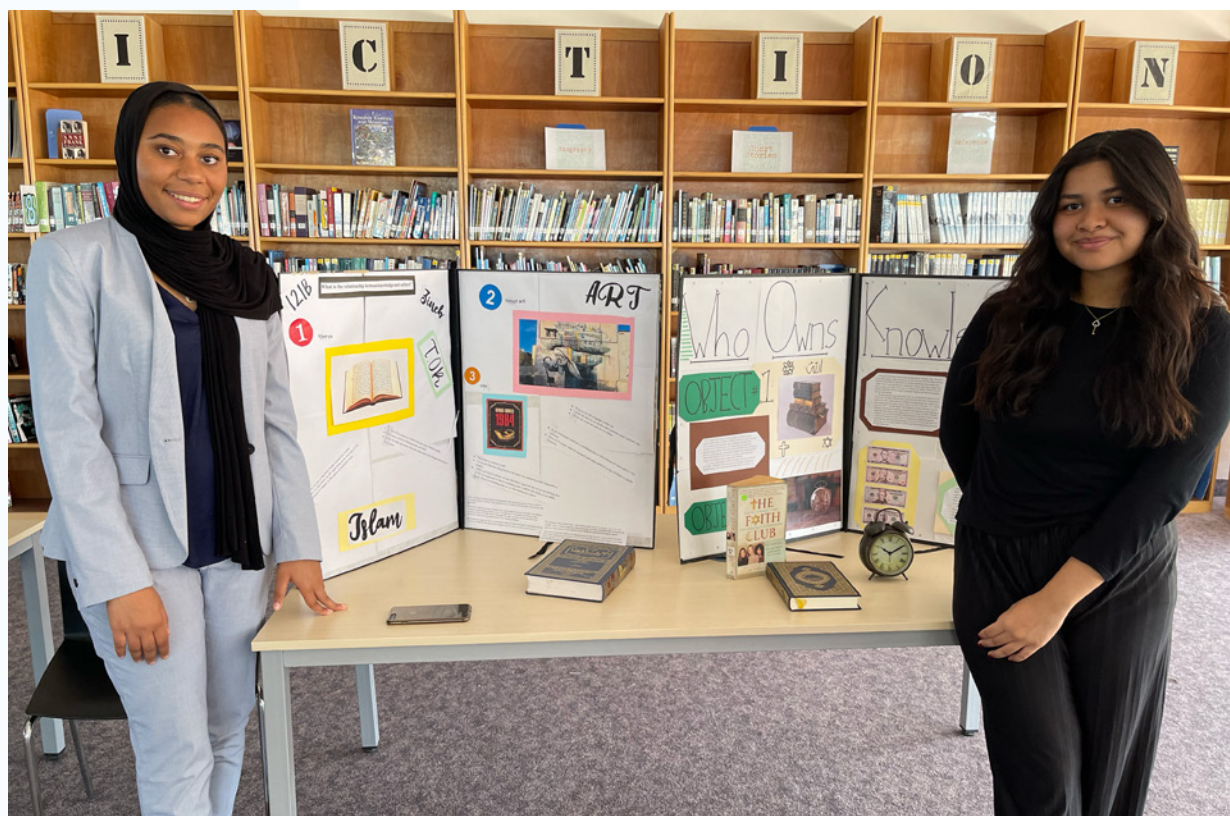
The TOK essay is an external assessment component. Each student’s essay is submitted to the IB to be marked by IB examiners. The TOK Essay must be written in **standard 12 type size and be double spaced**. It is not primarily a research paper, but it is expected that specific sources will be used, and these must be acknowledged.



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
<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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 objects is highly descriptive or consists only of unsupported assertions.</p>	<p>The exhibition does not reach the standard described by the other levels or does not use one of the IA prompts provided.</p>
POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS					
<p>Convincing Lucid Precise</p>	<p>Focused Relevant Coherent</p>	<p>Adequate Competent Acceptable</p>	<p>Simplistic Limited Underdeveloped</p>	<p>Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent</p>	

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
<p>The discussion has a sustained focus on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are clear, coherent and effectively supported by specific examples. The implications of arguments are considered.</p> <p>There is clear awareness and evaluation of different points of view.</p>	<p>The discussion is focused on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are clear, coherent and supported by examples.</p> <p>There is awareness and some evaluation of different points of view.</p>	<p>The discussion is focused on the title and is developed with some links to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are offered and are supported by examples.</p> <p>There is some awareness of different points of view.</p>	<p>The essay is connected to the title and makes superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>The discussion is largely descriptive. Limited arguments are offered but they are unclear and are not supported by effective examples.</p>	<p>The discussion is weakly connected to the title.</p> <p>While there may be links to the areas of knowledge, any relevant points are descriptive or consist only of unsupported assertions.</p>	<p>The essay does not reach the standard described by the other levels or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles for the correct assessment session.</p>
POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS					
<i>Insightful</i> <i>Convincing</i> <i>Accomplished</i> <i>Lucid</i>	<i>Pertinent</i> <i>Relevant</i> <i>Analytical</i> <i>Organized</i>	<i>Acceptable</i> <i>Mainstream</i> <i>Adequate</i> <i>Competent</i>	<i>Underdeveloped</i> <i>Basic</i> <i>Superficial</i> <i>Limited</i>	<i>Ineffective</i> <i>Descriptive</i> <i>Incoherent</i> <i>Formless</i>	



CURRENT TOK COURSE OUTLINE 2024/2025

		TOK THEMES/AOKs/CONCEPTS	EXHIBITION	ESSAY
YEAR 1	1 st Term	CORE THEME Knowledge and the Knower Optional themes: Knowledge and politics		
	2 nd Term	Optional themes: Knowledge and politics Areas of knowledge: History		
	3 rd Term	Areas of knowledge: History Optional themes: Knowledge and language		
	4 th Term	Areas of knowledge: The Natural Sciences	Students select one IA prompt and three objects Students produce and hand in draft of a single file containing their TOK exhibition Teacher feedback on draft of exhibition file TOK EXHIBITION	
YEAR 2	1 st Term	Areas of knowledge: The Human Sciences Areas of knowledge: Mathematics		Show and discuss TOK knowledge questions Understand TOK Essay structure
	2 nd Term	Areas of knowledge: Mathematics Areas of knowledge: The Arts		Meetings with teacher Discuss and choose TOK knowledge question Understand TOK Essay structure Work on Essay steps Students hand in first draft essay
	3 rd Term	Areas of knowledge: The Arts [After TOK Essay submission] Optional themes: Knowledge and politics		Teacher's feedback on first draft TOK essay - Students hand in final version and TK/PPF
	4 th Term	Optional themes: Knowledge and religion Optional themes: Knowledge and indigenous societies Logical fallacies		





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