

IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK)
Year 1 (Juniors)
Summer Assignment (2026-2027)
Ms. Sambol

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(Please email me over the summer with any questions or concerns)

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) explores questions about knowledge and the process of knowing. TOK emphasizes comparisons and connections between areas of knowledge and encourages students to become more aware of their own perspectives and the perspectives of others.

The following assignment is a course requirement and is due the third day of class, August 5. After the third day of class, only half credit will be awarded (for up to one week).

Students are required to read the book *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell. This book will be instrumental in our discussions about knowledge throughout the year. [The link to the book is here](#). Students must complete a dialectical journal while reading the book. In addition, students will craft a written response (see below). The dialectical journal must be handwritten. 25 entries are required. The entries should be spaced out over the book. **All work must be handwritten.**

Part 1

TOK Dialectical Journal (50 points)

1. The dialectical journal is like a dialogue or conversation with the text and with yourself. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas as you read. Please complete the following:
2. Draw a line down the middle of the paper, or fold the paper in half, making two columns.
3. The left column is used for notes and direct quotations from the reading and should reference the page number and/or chapter. **(**Also, please number the entries)**
4. The right column is used for commenting on notes or quotations in the left column. The comments should be at least four to five sentences and should include a mixture of the following:
 - ✓ Your thoughts toward the author's words
 - ✓ Words or passages that seem important and why
 - ✓ Connections among passages or sections of the work

Example from *Outliers*—

Quotation/Notes	Response
1. (Chapter 2) "And what happens when a player gets chosen for a rep squad? He gets better coaching, and his teammates are better, and he plays fifty or seventy-five games a season instead of twenty games a season like those left behind in the "house" league, and he practices twice as much as, or even three times more than, he would have otherwise. In the beginning, his advantage isn't so much that he is inherently better but only that he is a little older." (p. 25)	Gladwell challenges widely-accepted understandings of human behavior. He claims that persons with privilege (including access) are more able to become "outliers" (the most successful people). He utilizes the example of a young person who makes a rep squad and thereby derives benefits from gametime, practice, etc. Ultimately, Gladwell places great emphasis on the value of time put in on improving one's craft. Though his argument that practice is important seems convincing, questions certainly are left unresolved regarding the extent to which his practice (10,000 hours) theory holds up in reality.

Dialectical Journal Rubric

Critical Reader (detailed, elaborate responses)

90-100%:

- You include the minimum number of entries or more.
- You include responses to text from throughout the book
- Your quotes or notes are relevant, important, thought provoking, and representative of the themes of the text.
- You can “read between the lines” of the text (inference).
- You create new meaning through connections with your own experiences or other texts.
- You carry on a dialogue with the writer. You question, agree, disagree, appreciate, and object.
- Sentences are grammatically correct with correct spelling and punctuation.

Connected Reader (detailed responses)

80-89%:

- A solid effort is evident.
- You include an adequate number of legible entries.
- Your quotes are relevant and connect to the themes of the text.
- Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis.
- You construct a thoughtful interpretation of the text and quotes are from a range of parts of the book.
- You show some ability to make meaning of what you read.
- You create some new meaning through connections with your own experiences and the text.
- You explain the general significance.
- You raise interesting questions.
- You explain why you agree or disagree with the text.

Thoughtful Reader (somewhat detailed responses)

75-79:

- You include an insufficient number of entries from throughout the text.
- Sentences are mostly correct with a few careless spelling and grammatical errors.
- You selected quotes that may be interesting to you, but don’t really connect to all parts of the text.
- Your response is somewhat interesting but can be confusing.
- You may agree or disagree, but often don’t support your views.

Literal Reader (simple, factual responses)

70-74%:

- You include insufficient entries that do not come from throughout the text.
- Entries exhibit limited insight or none at all.
- You show some, but very few personal connections to the text
- You are sometimes confused by unclear or difficult sections of the text but don’t expand on what they may mean.

Limited Reader (perfunctory responses)

Below 70%:

- You include very few entries.
- Entries don’t reflect the entire book.
- Very little effort is evident.
- You do not show from the quotes or responses that you completed the book.
- You find the text confusing, but make no attempt to figure it out.
- You create little or no meaning from the text.
- You make an occasional connection to the text, and the ideas lack development.
- Sentences contain numerous grammatical and spelling errors.

Part 2

TOK *Outliers* Written Response / Reflection (50 points)

Write a 2-3-page Reflection (500-750 words) on the book, using the rubric posted below.

Rubric for *Outliers* Response

42-50 Points (Maximum) –The paper discusses all criteria expressed in the assignment description. The writer clearly focuses their thesis and expresses an opinion on the work in a mature fashion. Details from the work or from research are used as support for the author’s thesis and creative and analytical insights to the work are masterfully articulated.

35-41 Points (Mid-Range) -The paper discusses all criteria expressed in the assignment description. The writer has a thesis and expresses an opinion on the work. Details from the work or from research are used as support for the author’s thesis and creative although they may not be as thorough and accurate as a maximum score paper. Portions of support or analysis may be weak or superficial.

0-34 Points (Low) -The paper discusses some of the criteria expressed in the assignment description. The writer may lack a clear thesis or not express an opinion on the work in a mature fashion. Details from the work or from research are not used or are used improperly as support for the author’s thesis.