

Theory of Knowledge

Structure

A2.1.2

Theory of knowledge (TOK)

A diploma candidate must follow a theory of knowledge (TOK) course. The IB recommends that TOK is an independent course of at least 100 teaching hours evenly distributed over the two-year period of study, and the course must meet the TOK assessment requirements that include giving a presentation and submitting an essay on one of the six prescribed titles for the examination session.

(IBO, Handbook of Procedures for the Diploma Programme 2014)

Grade 11:

Teachers: Edward Roberts, Esme Kirkland, Steve Rowe, Sean Lenihan

DUE TO COVID 19: Classes will be online twice per week for 1 hour of contact each. Teachers will determine the timing so as to not conflict with other student requirements—likely 1:30-2:30.

For Grade 11, classes will be held twice a week, either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday for the year.

Once or twice per month an additional class may be held to support the Extended Essay and/or CAS; the EE coordinator and/or the CAS coordinator will prepare the lesson for these additional days to support research, reflection and writing skills. The TOK teacher will decide when these additional classes will be scheduled.

Each class will be between 60-75 minutes in length. There will be 2 sections in block 6 and 3 sections in block 0.

It is the intention that there will be some flexibility for the students to accommodate extra-curricular involvement and that they will work with the teachers to ensure that the student is not missing any of the curricular time.

Over the past few years, each TOK class has provided between 65 and 70 days of instruction over the year in Grade 11, or at least 65 hours of the recommended 100.

Grade 12:

Teachers: Edward Roberts, Jennifer Witcher and Haymen Leong

DUE TO COVID-19: TOK 12 will still be delivered in conjunction with IB English Lit 12.

For grade 12, TOK is integrated with English Literature A on year long basis. It has been timetabled in semester 2 with IELS-12 timetabled in semester 1, but the reality is that the bulk of the classroom time is given over to the English Literature course.

Approximately 30-35 hours of instruction need to be delivered in the grade 12 year, which is between 25 and 30 classes.

Content

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.

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.

(IBO, Theory of Knowledge Guide, 2020, p.5)

For **Grade 11**, the intent is to introduce and explore the Core Theme of Knowledge and the Knower, to effectively engage with two Optional Themes and four of the Areas of Knowledge.

Below is a suggested outline made by Sean Lenihan.

Core Theme: Knowledge and the Knower	September 8 to October 2	7 x 1 hour classes
Optional Theme: Knowledge and Politics	October 5 to October 30	8 x 1 hour classes
Area of Knowledge: History	November 2 to December 4	10 x 1 hour classes
Optional Theme: Knowledge and Religion	December 7 to January 15	8 x 1 hour classes
Area of Knowledge: Human Sciences	January 18 to February 19	10 x 1 hour classes

Area of Knowledge: Natural Sciences	February 22 to April 9	10 x 1 hour classes
Area of Knowledge: The Arts	April 12 to May 14	10 x 1 hour classes
Core Theme: Knowledge and the Knower	May 17 to May 28	4 x 1 hour classes
The Exhibition	May 31 to June 25	8 x 1 hour classes
		75 hours

I am open to changing which Optional Themes are done and even which 4 AoKs we do this year. I think the timing needs to remain as indicated above.

This leaves for the Grade 12 teachers in 2021-22 to complete at a minimum:

Core Theme: Knowledge and the Knower (5 hours)

Area of Knowledge: Mathematics (10 hours)

The Essay (10 hours)

For Grade 12 in 2020-21, the intent is to provide review of the key TOK concepts, to explore an additional AOK and to complete the assessment tasks. The main focus for the grade 12 course is the completion of the Essay.

In 2019-20, the TOK 11 teachers engaged with the AoKs of: History, the Arts, Ethics, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

For 2020-21, the agreed AoK for exploration was Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

As a final note, there may be some students who still need to complete, or repeat, the Presentation. This should be worked out with the grade 11 teacher from the previous year and should be addressed as quickly as possible in September.