

Hammond High Magnet School

IB Theory of Knowledge: SL/HL

Instructor: Caleb Clark

2020-2021

Diploma Programme - Theory of Knowledge

The Diploma Programme aims to develop students who have excellent breadth and depth of knowledge – students who flourish physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically. Within all IB courses, there is a daily focus on “Approaches to Learning” (ATLs) and Global Contexts. An IB education aims to be informative, not definitive; it invites conversation and regular review by the student. The IB has always championed a stance of critical engagement with challenging ideas, one that values the progressive thinking of the past while remaining open to future innovation. It reflects the IB’s commitment to creating a collaborative, global community united by a mission to make a better world through education.

IB Mission Statement:

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

IB Policies: All of the Hammond High Magnet School IB policies can be found on our website for your reference. Those policies include: IB Academic Honesty Policy, HHMS Academic Honesty Policy, Louisiana University IB Credits, & The History of the IB. Please take the time to read through these policies, as they are important to the integrity of your IB education.

Course Description:

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 centres 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

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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.

Nature of the Course

The TOK course plays a special role in the DP by providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the nature, scope and limitations of knowledge and the process of knowing. In this way, the main focus of TOK is not on students acquiring new knowledge but on helping students to reflect on, and put into perspective, what they already know.

TOK underpins and helps to unite the subjects that students encounter in the rest of their DP studies. It engages students in explicit reflection on how knowledge is arrived at in different disciplines and areas of knowledge, on what these areas have in common and the differences between them. It is intended that through this holistic approach, discussions in one area will help to enrich and deepen discussions in other areas.

The course is an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in interesting conversations that cross the boundaries of individual disciplines and that help students to reflect on the knowledge they have acquired from both their academic studies and their lives outside the classroom. Students are encouraged to examine the evidence for claims and to consider, for example, how we distinguish fact from opinion, or how we evaluate the credibility of claims that we are exposed to in the media. They explore different methods and tools of inquiry and try to establish what it is about them that makes them effective, as well as considering their limitations.

The following 12 **concepts** have particular prominence within, and thread throughout, the TOK course: **evidence, certainty, truth, interpretation, power, justification, explanation, objectivity, perspective, culture, values and responsibility**. Exploration of the relationship between knowledge and these concepts can help students to deepen their understanding, as well as facilitating the transfer of their learning to new and different contexts.

The TOK course embraces the exploration of tensions, limitations and challenges relating to knowledge and knowing. However, it is also intended that TOK discussions will encourage students to appreciate and be inspired by the richness of human knowledge—and to consider the positive value of different kinds of knowledge. Consideration should be given to the benefits of this kind of reflection on knowledge and knowing; for example, in terms of its potential to help us think more subtly, to be more aware of our assumptions, or to overcome prejudice and promote intercultural understanding.

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INSTRUCTION:

Aims and objectives

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.

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.

€ Materials Needed

- o Chromebook
- o Headphones
- o Pens (blue or black ink only)
- o Paper
- o Three ring binder
- o Highlighter

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€ Resources

There is no required textbook for Theory of Knowledge. Much of the material will be explored through research and student discovery.

ASSESSMENT:

€ Skills Assessment:

- o A variety of assessments will be used over the duration of the course. Students should expect to be assessed both formally (tests, papers, quizzes, etc.) and informally (practice exercises, in-class work, etc.) in order to track their progress towards meeting the skills taught in the course. All students are required to participate in all activities and assessments in class even if no formal grade is given.

€ Reflections:

- o Once a week students will be asked to record a reflection through a discussion board in Google Classroom. These need to be a record of our conversations over the course of two years. They will be a tremendous help when it comes time for both the TOK Presentation and TOK Essay.
- o Reflection topics could include: Vocabulary Terms/Ideas from the weeks notes, Knowledge Questions, Personal Connections & "Take Aways" from the daily discussions.

Grading Policy/Rubrics - Hammond High Magnet School Grading Scale for IB & AP (%)

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F <59

IB ASSESSMENT - The assessment model in theory of knowledge (TOK) comprises two components, both of which should be completed within the 100 hours designated for the course.

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%) of the TOK Score for IB will be from this assessment.

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%) of the TOK Score for IB will be from this assessment.

€ Explanation of TOK IB Assessments

Part 1 - The TOK Exhibition

General

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).

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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.

IA prompts - The IA prompts are a set of 35 high-level knowledge questions. Students must select one of the following IA prompts on which to base their exhibition, and all three objects must be linked to the same prompt. These IA prompts apply for all examination sessions for the life of this guide—they do not change from session to session. Students are required to create an exhibition of three objects that connect to one of the following IA prompts.

1. What counts as knowledge?
2. Are some types of knowledge more useful than others?
3. What features of knowledge have an impact on its reliability?
4. On what grounds might we doubt a claim?
5. What counts as good evidence for a claim? TOK assessment details 40 Theory of knowledge guide
6. How does the way that we organize or classify knowledge affect what we know?
7. What are the implications of having, or not having, knowledge?
8. To what extent is certainty attainable?

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9. Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?
10. What challenges are raised by the dissemination and/or communication of knowledge?
11. Can new knowledge change established values or beliefs?
12. Is bias inevitable in the production of knowledge?
13. How can we know that current knowledge is an improvement upon past knowledge?
14. Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?
15. What constraints are there on the pursuit of knowledge?
16. Should some knowledge not be sought on ethical grounds?
17. Why do we seek knowledge?
18. Are some things unknowable?
19. What counts as a good justification for a claim?
20. What is the relationship between personal experience and knowledge?
21. What is the relationship between knowledge and culture?
22. What role do experts play in influencing our consumption or acquisition of knowledge?
23. How important are material tools in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
24. How might the context in which knowledge is presented influence whether it is accepted or rejected?
25. How can we distinguish between knowledge, belief and opinion?
26. Does our knowledge depend on our interactions with other knowers?
27. Does all knowledge impose ethical obligations on those who know it?
28. To what extent is objectivity possible in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
29. Who owns knowledge?
30. What role does imagination play in producing knowledge about the world?
31. How can we judge when evidence is adequate?
32. What makes a good explanation?
33. How is current knowledge shaped by its historical development?
34. In what ways do our values affect our acquisition of knowledge?
35. In what ways do values affect the production of knowledge?

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

- If the IA prompt has been modified but it is still clear which IA prompt the student is referring to, the TOK exhibition should be marked as using the original IA prompt. Any lack of relevance in the student's response arising from this modification will be reflected in the score awarded.
- If it is clear that the TOK Exhibition is not based on one of the IA prompts listed, the TOK exhibition should be awarded a score of zero, in accordance with the TOK Exhibition assessment instrument.

Part 2 The TOK Essay

General

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.

Essay Titles

The IB releases a set of six prescribed titles for each examination session. These titles are published on the programme resource centre (TOK>Assessment>Session-specific material) six months before the submission deadline.

Word Count

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, endnotes or in-text) and bibliography
- any maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations or tables.

€ Make-Up Work Policy

- € You are expected to follow a class calendar. If absent, you are STILL responsible for whatever assignments were collected or assigned the day you return. **If you are absent for an exam or an essay, be prepared to make them up the day you return to class during that class period.** Remember—it is your responsibility to contact the teacher regarding make-up work. All missing work is kept in an out-box in the classroom, and class notes need to be copied from a classmate. If you are going on a school related trip, it is your responsibility to get the assignments before you leave for the trip.

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€ **Please note:** Students who miss class and have not checked out through the **front office** **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED** to make up any work due that day or assigned that day- including tests and quizzes.

€ **Late Work / Assignments**

€ The IB/PDP Policy at HHMS is that **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**. Due dates for assignments in this class will be clearly communicated on our Calendar for every unit. They will also be posted in Google Classroom and on OnCourse. I advise keeping a hard copy of a calendar and marking all assignments for all classes in it.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

€ **Students:**

- o **Attendance:** In order to learn and be successful in class, students must regularly attend both physically and mentally. Students with numerous absences may encounter difficulty mastering some of the concepts taught in class. It is essential that students are present and on time to every class.
- o **Classroom Policy/Procedures:** Students in the IB Programme at HHMS are expected to behave in accordance to the IB Learner Profile. They must adhere to a high level of respect and common courtesy. Students are expected to come to class prepared with all materials and to participate. They are expected to be on time and presentable. Should a student have difficulty maintaining the expected level of maturity, a guardian will be contacted.
- o **Honor Code:**

According to *Harbrace Handbook, 15th edition*:

"Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased. It includes, but is not limited to the following:

1. Copying verbatim all or part of another's written work;
2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator."

CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

€ As plagiarism is a form of stealing and academic fraud, committing such an act carries both a grade penalty and disciplinary action depending on the severity of the incident. A minimal consequence would be a zero on the assignment and a referral to the office.

€ **Teacher:**

o **Communication Strategy:**

- o The best way to reach me is by email at caleb.clark@tangischools.org I will check it daily and will respond quickly.
- o Parents & Students, sign up for my Remind 101 account to receive text updates about the class. **Remind is a service that allows me to send text message reminders to students and parents about the course. Please sign up by texting @cclarktok1 to 81010. The response functionality is turned on FOR NOW. Should this response functionality be abused it will be turned off.**

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o Google Classroom Webpage for TOK

- o It is imperative that students access the class website on a regular basis. Due dates for many assignments will be posted on the website along with supplemental documents. Students missing class should access the website as soon as possible for updates on assignments and class activities.
- o Students may join using the code cir2pg4
- o I will invite parents to join using the email that is in OnCourse. Once invited you will have the option to receive daily or weekly email summaries from Google Classroom.

TOK Pacing Guide

TOK Year 1 - 90 days, 75 minute classes, 112.5 hours

Unit	Theme	Concepts	AOK's	Time
Unit 1 "Knowledge & Knowers" - Part 1	Core Theme - Knowledge & Knower	Truth	Intro to all 5 AOK's	1st 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 1 "Knowledge & Knowers" Part 2	Core Theme - Knowledge & Knower	Truth	Intro to Knowledge Framework & Ethical Knowledge	2nd 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 2 "Culture & Identity" - Part 1	Knowledge & Language	Culture & Values	History	3rd 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 2 "Culture & Identity" - Part 2	Knowledge & Language	Culture & Values	Art	4th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 3 "Evidence & Proof" - Part 1	Knowledge & Politics	Evidence & Certainty	Math	5th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 3 "Evidence & Proof" Part 2 *Practice TOK Essay & Exhibition for end of year Assessment	Knowledge & Politics	Evidence & Certainty		6th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours

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TOK Year 2 - 90 days, 75 minute classes, 112.5 hours

Unit	Theme	Concepts	AOK's	Time
Unit 4 "Paradigms & Perspectives" - Part 1	Knowledge & Technology	Objectivity & Perspective	Natural Sciences	1st 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 4 "Paradigms & Perspectives" - Part 2	Knowledge & Technology	Objectivity & Perspective	Human Sciences	2nd 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 5 "Values & Responsibility" - Part 1	Knowledge & Indigenous Societies	Responsibility & Power		3rd 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 5 "Values & Responsibility" - Part 2	Knowledge & Religion	Responsibility & Power		4th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 6 "TOK Essay & Exhibition" - Part 1	Review of 5 themes	Interpretation, Explanation, & Justification	Review of 5 AOK's	5th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours
Unit 6 "TOK Essay & Exhibition" - Part 2	Review of 5 themes	Interpretation, Explanation, & Justification	Review of 5 AOK's	6th 6 weeks - roughly 18.75 hours



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