

# Theory of Knowledge

## Assessment

40 marks

20 marks

### The Essay

You have separate information on this.

### The Presentation

Approximately 10 minutes per student.

Each student will be assessed on...

- their presentation to the class
- a written self-evaluation report, including:
  - ☞ a concise description of the presentation
  - ☞ answers to the questions provided on the form.

### Presentation topics

The topic must be relevant to TOK, and be one that can meet the assessment criteria.

The topic must be agreed with your ToK teacher.

You must concentrate on "Knowledge Issues".

### Presentation format

Presentations may take many forms, eg:

- ☞ lectures,
- ☞ skits,
- ☞ simulations,
- ☞ games,
- ☞ dramatized readings,
- ☞ interviews,
- ☞ debates.

They can use:

- ☞ videos,
- ☞ overhead projections,
- ☞ posters,
- ☞ questionnaires,
- ☞ cassettes of songs,
- ☞ interviews,
- ☞ costumes or props.

**Presentations cannot be an essay read aloud to the class.**

### Self-Evaluation Report

You will complete a form like the one on page 7 of this booklet for your self-evaluation.

You must include a brief description of your presentation and answer the following questions:

- ☞ In what ways did the topic address problems of knowledge, such as reaching truth or gaining evidence?
- ☞ What was the main objective of the presentation? Explain briefly.
- ☞ What methods were used to present the topic and why were these methods selected?
- ☞ Was the presentation well-organized, thought-provoking and engaging?
- ☞ If a group presentation, what was your personal contribution?
- ☞ What were the strong and weak points of the presentation? If you were to do it again, what, if anything, would you do differently to improve it?

### Miscellaneous Points:

- ☞ Topics cannot be repeated. You can't do the same as someone else.
- ☞ There will be time for discussion afterwards - so make it interesting. Make people think!
- ☞ Students **may** make related individual presentations or interactive group presentations, but these must be long enough to allow each student to present work that applies to **ALL FOUR assessment criteria**. In a group presentation all students are expected make a contribution and to participate actively. It must be absolutely clear who has done what.

## Assessment Descriptors

Your ToK teacher will assess your Presentation on **four** criteria. In your folder you have the descriptors. The sections below try to show what we are looking for...

### Criterion A Knowledge Issue(s)

**Maximum 5 points**

- The general questions are:
  - ☞ whether the problem(s) of knowledge appropriate to the topic were recognized and understood, and
  - ☞ whether your ideas were developed in a relevant and imaginative way.
- The phrase 'problems of knowledge' refers to:
  - ☞ possible uncertainties,
  - ☞ biases, and
  - ☞ limitations,both in terms of knowledge and the methods of verification/justification used in different AoKs.
- Maximum points can be awarded if:
  - ☞ you have an excellent recognition and understanding of the problem(s) of knowledge appropriate to the given topic,
  - ☞ the development of your ideas is consistently relevant to ToK,
  - ☞ your presentation is highly imaginative, and
  - ☞ it reflects original thinking.

### Criterion B Quality of Analysis

**Maximum 5 points**

- The general question is:
  - ☞ whether the analysis of the topic and the treatment of divergent points of view shows critical reflection and insight in addressing the problem(s) of knowledge.
- Maximum points can be awarded if:
  - ☞ you demonstrate an excellent level of critical reflection and insight into the analysis of the topic and the treatment of divergent points of view,
  - ☞ the presentation thoroughly engages with the issues (taking into account time constraints),
  - ☞ relevant personal viewpoints, values and biases are explicitly recognized, and those of others are fully acknowledged,
  - ☞ arguments are logically valid, main points are evaluated and cogently justified, and
  - ☞ there is a meticulous and thoughtful account of their implications.

### Criterion C Knowledge at Work

**Maximum 5 points**

- The general question is:
  - ☞ to what extent does the presentation demonstrate the application of ToK thinking skills to a contemporary issue?
- The phrase 'ToK thinking skills' refers to the ability to:
  - ☞ identify problems of knowledge,
  - ☞ analyse and evaluate claims and counter-claims,
  - ☞ draw interdisciplinary links, and
  - ☞ be aware of differing underlying values.
- Maximum marks will be awarded if the presentation:
  - ☞ demonstrates an excellent application of ToK thinking skills to a contemporary issue;
  - ☞ explicitly and successfully relates abstract elements of the ToK programme to a concrete, contemporary issue.

### Criterion D Clarity

**Maximum 5 points**

- The basic question is:
  - ☞ whether the presentation is clear and logically coherent.
- This criterion does **not** assess linguistic skills. It assesses the extent to which the main ideas are clearly and coherently conveyed.
- Maximum marks will be awarded if the presentation demonstrates an excellent level of clarity and logical coherence.

## Examples of Presentations:

The following examples are intended to give you an idea of the type of topics which would be appropriate, and to show ways in which contemporary issues can be linked with knowledge issues, providing a prompt for reflective thinking.

### ☞ **What is the relationship between the natural sciences and social responsibility?**

- ✓ Choose a single recent scientific and/or technological development as a focus.
- ✓ Consider its ethical implications.
- ✓ Who bears the moral responsibility for directing or limiting development of such knowledge?
- ✓ On what basis can that responsibility be justified?

### ☞ **How do the human sciences help us to understand many of the misunderstandings and frictions which frequently arise between groups of people?**

- ✓ Identify a contemporary problem involving the interaction of groups (for example, ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, or religious groups).
- ✓ Consider the knowledge given by psychology, anthropology and economics.
- ✓ In what ways can these disciplines illuminate the causes and the characteristics of the problem?
- ✓ In what ways might they also be relevant to possible solutions?
- ✓ Are there other disciplines which would increase our understanding of the particular issue?

### ☞ **Does history tell us the truth?**

- ✓ Choose any single historical incident.
- ✓ Use it to explore the nature and complexities of historical truth.
- ✓ In what ways is this exploration of the past relevant to an understanding of the present?
- ✓ Is there any contemporary incident which it illuminates?

### ☞ **How do we know whether we are acting in a 'good' or 'moral' way?**

- ✓ Select any ethical issue.
- ✓ Examine it from two or more possible ethical viewpoints.
- ✓ The purpose is to seek the differing grounds on which claims to justifying moral behaviour may be made, not to prove that one way is the 'right' way.

### ☞ **Select one new development in knowledge.**

- ✓ Consider its effect on the discipline within which it has developed.
- ✓ Consider its challenge to ethics or other Areas of Knowledge.
- ✓ In science and technology, for example, you might focus on the human genome project, cloning, nuclear power, or the IT revolution.
- ✓ In the arts, you might focus on computer-generated art or electronic music.

### ☞ **On what bases do spiritual beliefs rest?**

- ✓ Choose an example of a particular belief (for example, about the creation of the world or the nature of a life after death).
- ✓ Consider it from the point of view of atheism, and at least two major religions.
- ✓ Present in each case the justifications which persuade the believers.
- ✓ Your goal is not to establish any religion as right or wrong, but to explore belief and justification.
- ✓ To what extent can spiritual belief be classified as 'knowledge'?
- ✓ Would denying a belief the status of knowledge decrease its value or significance?

### ☞ **Can purposely misleading the public be justified, as sometimes occurs in politics or advertising?**

- ✓ Consider cases of intentional misinformation, or cases of the use of fallacious arguments, in these and other Areas of Knowledge such as science, the arts, or history.

📖 **Identify an issue of global significance.**

- ✓ For example, AIDS, genocide, refugees, abuses of human rights, desertification, pollution and global warming, and uneven distribution of world resources.
- ✓ The issue must introduce a conflict of concepts and values.
- ✓ Examine the facts, language, statistics, and images used by at least two sides in the conflict in their representation of the issue.
- ✓ In the process, identify assumptions, justifications, values and emotions which diverge.
- ✓ To what extent can you find the truth of the issue?

📖 **Identify an issue of interest in an area that you know well.**

- ✓ For example, genetically modified food in Germany, native land claims in Canada, construction of hydroelectric dams in Chile, the destruction of the Amazon forest in Brazil, or drug policy in The Netherlands.
- ✓ The issue must introduce a conflict of concepts and values.
- ✓ Examine the facts, language, statistics, and images used by at least two sides in the conflict in their representation of the issue.
- ✓ In the process, identify assumptions, justifications, values, and emotions which diverge.
- ✓ To what extent can you find valid arguments?

## Further Ideas

Some more ideas for topics are listed below. If you choose one of these, we recommend that you use the information in the previous box to give ideas on **how** to tackle it.

- Labelling of genetically-modified food
- Cosmetic surgery - ethics, aesthetics and cultural diversity
- Carbon pricing (environmental economics)
- Islamic education
- Criticism by "the West" of China on human rights issues
- Creationist biology teaching
- Political correctness and the teaching of literature (banning books that are not "PC")
- Ethnicity of heroes & villains in Hollywood movies
- How the lack of certainty in science is used for political inaction (e.g. AIDS, greenhouse effect)
- Human cloning - what is possible? what is ethical?
- Fertility treatments - what is possible? what is ethical?
- Perceptions of risk - why do people think that air travel is more dangerous than car use?
- Non-Western aesthetic systems, e.g. in art or music
- Do genetic differences between the sexes undermine the argument for equality?
- Could genes influence criminal (e.g. violent) behaviour? Does this undermine the validity of the legal system (guilt, punishment, etc.)?
- Restrictions on civil rights as a result of "the war on terrorism"
- Terrorism - can it be defined?
- Shari'a law
- Iraq
- Euthanasia
- Vivisection
- Globalisation
- Business ethics
- Child labour

**Whatever the topic - you must concentrate  
on Knowledge Issues.**

## Resources

Firstly, use your **ToK folder**. This includes:

- The ToK diagram – remember the interconnecting structure of ToK. (Don't forget the *Linking Questions*)
  - The numerous handouts that you've been given;
  - Your notes (you should have a lot);
  - Recommended resources for each unit.
- This should give you a good foundation for **Knowledge Issues**.

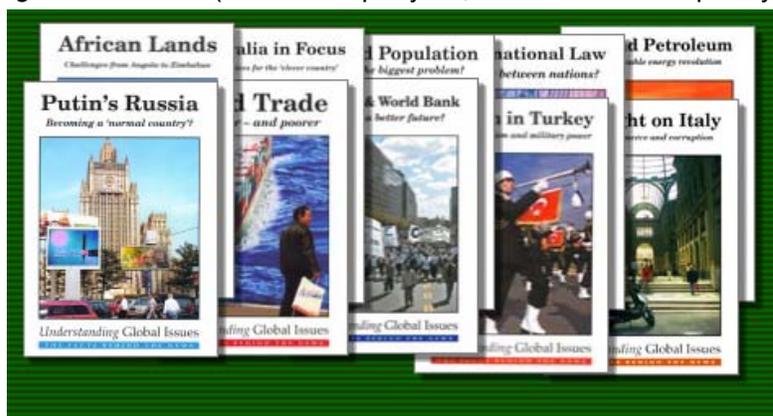
Belief  
 Certainty  
 Culture  
 Evidence  
 Explanation  
 Interpretation  
 Intuition  
 Technology  
 Truth  
 Values

For **Contemporary Issues**:

- You **might** be tempted to use the Web. This **can** be a good resource, but you must also be aware that there is a lot of rubbish on the Web. You should discuss Web resources that you plan to use with your ToK teacher before the Presentation.
- Newspapers, television, radio and magazines are good sources. Some have useful archives on the Web as well. For example <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/>
- Three magazines that we get in the Library are particularly recommended:
  - ☞ *New Internationalist* (a monthly magazine, with a different contemporary issue each month);



- ☞ *Understanding Global Issues* (~10 issues per year, each on a contemporary problem)



- ☞ *The World Today* (from the Royal Institute of International Affairs, giving clear thinking on a range of contemporary issues)



Note that the three are **very** different. *New Internationalist* is often 'political', but does give a different angle. *Understanding Global Issues* is a good source of 'facts'. *The World Today* gives the opinions of 'experts'.

## Resources (continued)

- The notice-board in the Library often has useful ideas. The Library staff have also kept a lot of press cuttings. Ask for these at the Issue Desk.
- Obviously, the Library staff are also **excellent** sources of information.

**Remember, that you must explain which resources you used in planning your Presentation.**

Finally, we hope that the **World Views** unit will give you ideas too.

**Good Luck!**

November 2005



## International Baccalaureate Form TK/SER

### Theory of knowledge candidate self-evaluation report

SUBMIT TO: Tok teacher SCHOOL DEADLINE: .....SESSION:.....

SCHOOL NUMBER: 

0	0						
---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

SCHOOL NAME: .....

*Type or write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.*

CANDIDATE NAME: .....

CANDIDATE SESSION NUMBER: 

0	0						
---	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

TITLE OF PRESENTATION: .....

DURATION OF PRESENTATION (APPROX): 

minutes
---------

Write a concise description of your presentation, including brief answers to the following questions. (Alternatively, a single word processed page may be attached to this form.)

- *In what ways did the topic address problems of knowledge, such as reaching truth or gaining evidence?*
- *What was the main objective of the presentation? Explain briefly.*
- *What methods were used to present the topic and why were these methods selected?*
- *Was the presentation well-organized, thought-provoking and engaging?*
- *If a group presentation, what was your personal contribution?*
- *What were the strong and weak points of the presentation? If you were to do it again for a different audience, what, if anything, would you do differently?*

---

---

---