

# TOK 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.

Further guidance on the TOK exhibition task, including marked and annotated examples of student work, can be found in the *Theory of knowledge teacher support material*.

## The TOK exhibition process

It is recommended that a total of approximately **eight hours** of teaching time should be allocated to the TOK exhibition task.

The TOK exhibition process consists of three key steps.

## Summary of the TOK exhibition process

Step 1	<p>Students begin their exhibition by selecting one IA prompt and three objects, or images of objects, that show how this question manifests in the world around us.</p> <p>Students must select <b>one</b> IA prompt as the basis for their exhibition. All three objects must be linked to the same prompt.</p> <p>To help them approach this task effectively, students are encouraged to root their exhibition in one of the TOK themes—either the core theme or one of the optional</p>
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	<p>themes. This can help to provide an accessible starting point for students and can provide a focus to help students narrow down their choice of potential objects.</p> <p>Within the teaching time allocated to undertaking this task, teachers should ensure that they include time to explain the requirements of the task and ensure that students are familiar with the assessment instrument.</p>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p><b>Students should produce a single file containing their TOK exhibition.</b> This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a title clearly indicating their selected IA prompt</li> <li>• images of their three objects</li> <li>• a typed commentary on each object that identifies each object and its specific real-world context, justifies each object's inclusion in the exhibition and links to the IA prompt (maximum 950 words)</li> <li>• appropriate citations and references.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers are permitted to provide feedback on one draft of this work. They should provide oral or written advice on how the work could be improved, but should not edit the draft.</p> <p>Once complete, this file is submitted to the TOK teacher to be marked. Samples of student work are then submitted to the IB for moderation.</p>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p>Teachers are required to provide all students with an opportunity for their completed exhibitions to be showcased and exhibited to an audience. As this does not form part of the formal assessment task, teachers have a great deal of flexibility as to how they choose to hold these exhibitions—as in the following examples.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A class of TOK students could hold an exhibition within one of their regular TOK classes.</li> <li>• Two classes of TOK students in the same school, or different schools, could host exhibitions for each other.</li> <li>• A class of TOK students could host an exhibition for younger students in the school.</li> <li>• A school could host a TOK exhibition for parents and other members of the school community.</li> <li>• Students could display their TOK exhibitions in a “virtual exhibition” (by using an online virtual gallery space)</li> <li>• A school could host a combined event celebrating the PYP exhibition, MYP personal project and the TOK exhibition.</li> </ul>

## 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?

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?
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?

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.

## Objects

An extremely wide variety of different types of objects are suitable for use in a TOK exhibition. Students are encouraged to choose objects that are of personal interest and that they have come across in their academic studies and/or their lives beyond the classroom.

It is **strongly recommended** that students base their exhibition on one of the themes (the core theme or one of the optional themes). This can be an extremely useful way to help students narrow down their choice of objects and give a focus to their exhibition.

### Digital or physical objects

The objects may be **digital rather than physical** objects. For example, students could include a photograph of an object, such as a historical treaty, where it would not be practical/possible for them to exhibit the physical object. Students may also use digital objects such as a tweet by a political leader. However, they must be specific objects that have a specific real-world context—objects that exist in a particular time and place (including virtual spaces). They may be objects that the student has created themselves, but they must be pre-existing objects rather than objects created specifically for the purposes of the exhibition.

### Context of an object

The specific **real-world context of each object is extremely important** to the task. It is, therefore, important that students identify specific objects to discuss **rather than using generic objects and generic images from the internet**. For example, a discussion and photograph of a student's baby brother is an example of an object that has a specific real-world context, whereas a generic image of "a baby" from an internet image search is not.

Examples of the diverse kinds of objects students could select include the following.

- A tweet from the President of the United States
- An image of the painting *Guernica* by Pablo Picasso
- The student's own extended essay (EE)
- A basketball used by the student during their physical education lessons
- The graphic novel *The Colour of Earth* by Kim Dong Hwa
- A painting that the student created in their DP visual arts course
- A refillable water bottle provided to each student in a school as part of a sustainability initiative
- A news article from the popular website *Buzzfeed*
- A photograph of the student playing in an orchestra

Further guidance on the role of objects in the exhibition and examples of student exhibitions can be found in the *Theory of knowledge teacher support material*.

### Images of objects

The image of each object used in the exhibition must be **appropriately referenced**. If an object is the student's own original work (for example, a painting that they created in a visual arts class) then this should be identified and acknowledged to ensure that teachers and moderators are clear about the origins of the object.

### Word count

The maximum overall word count for the TOK exhibition is **950 words**. This word count includes the written commentaries on each of the three objects. It **does not** include:

- **any text contained on/within the objects themselves**
- **acknowledgments, references (whether given in footnotes, endnotes or in-text) or bibliography.**

If an exhibition exceeds the word limit, then examiners are instructed to **stop reading after 950 words** and to base their assessment on only the first 950 words. **Extended footnotes or appendices are not appropriate to a TOK exhibition.**

### Guidance and authenticity

The work submitted for internal assessment must be the student's **own work**. However, it is not the intention that students should be left to work on the internal assessment component without any support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed work.

It is recommended that a total of approximately **8 hours of teaching time** should be allocated to the exhibition task. This should include:

- time for the teacher to explain the requirements of the task and ensure that students are familiar with the assessment instrument
- in-class time for students to ask questions and seek clarifications
- time for the teacher to review and monitor students' progress, and to check authenticity.

Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. Teachers should read and give advice to students on one draft of the work. They should provide oral or written advice on how the work could be improved, but they may not edit the draft. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must explain clearly to students that the internally assessed work must be entirely their own.

All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed misconduct. Each student must confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work it cannot be retracted. The requirement to confirm the authenticity of work applies to the work of all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to the IB for the purpose of moderation.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work, and scrutiny of one or more of the following.

- The student's initial proposal
- The first draft of the written work
- The references provided
- The style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student
- The analysis of the work by a web-based plagiarism detection service

## 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.

### 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.

It is not intended that students will spend six months working on their essays—teachers should select a window within that six-month period for students to work on their essays that fits with the other commitments in their school calendars. It is suggested that 10 hours of teaching time should be dedicated to working on the TOK Essay.

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

- If the title has been modified but it is still clear which prescribed title for the current session it refers to, the essay will be marked against that prescribed title. Any lack of relevance in the student's response to the prescribed title arising from this modification will be reflected in the score awarded.

- If it is clear that the title bears no resemblance to any title for the current session, the essay will be awarded a score of zero, in accordance with the TOK essay assessment instrument.

## 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.

If an essay exceeds the word limit, then examiners are instructed to **stop reading after 1,600 words** and to base their assessment on just the first 1,600 words. Students are required to indicate the number of words when the essay is uploaded during the submission process.

## Guidance and authenticity

The TOK essay must be the **student's own work**. However, the teacher plays an important role in supporting the student during the planning and writing of their essay. Teachers are expected to **explain the requirements** of the task and ensure that students are **familiar with the assessment instrument, provide clarifications in response to students' questions, monitor students' progress, and check the authenticity** of the student work.

For the TOK essay, **three formal recorded interactions** between the student and teacher are required. These three interactions must be recorded on the **TOK essay Planning and Progress Form (TK/PPF)**. This form is not referred to by examiners when determining the mark awarded for the essay. However, it is submitted to the IB as important evidence that steps have been taken to help **ensure the authenticity of the student's work**; it also plays an important role in terms of helping to ensure that all **students receive an appropriate level of support** when completing their essays. The procedure for uploading the TOK Essay and forms can be found in the Diploma Programme *Assessment procedures* resource on the [programme resource centre](#).

Three required teacher–student interactions for the TOK essay		
1. <b>Discuss the list of prescribed titles</b> with the student.	2. <b>Discuss the student's initial exploration</b> of their selected title (for example, an <b>essay plan</b> ).	3. <b>Comment on one draft</b> of the student's essay.
The student should discuss the prescribed titles with the teacher. The <b>final choice of title remains with the student</b> , who should develop their own thinking and ideas.	After choosing the title and developing their initial ideas in relation to it, the student must <b>discuss their initial work/ explorations</b> with the teacher by sharing them in <b>written form</b> . For example, this could take the form of <b>a set of notes and ideas</b> that could then be turned into a more formal essay plan following the discussion with the teacher.	After this, the student is <b>permitted to present</b> one full draft of the essay to the teacher. The teacher should provide <b>oral or written advice</b> on how the work could be improved. This advice may take the form of <b>written comments of a global nature</b> , but teachers are not permitted to mark or edit this draft. While the student may seek <b>further advice</b> from the teacher, for example, on the appropriateness of a particular example or on the clarity of a section of writing, <b>no further written advice</b> on drafts is

Three required teacher–student interactions for the TOK essay		
		permitted. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

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All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed misconduct. Each student must confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work it cannot be retracted.

Examples of ways that authenticity may be checked are through discussions with the student about the content of their work, scrutiny of the style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student, scrutiny of the references cited, or the analysis of the work by a web-based plagiarism detection service.