

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) at Alto Middle Years Program / IB Diploma Program

Introduction

Theory of Knowledge is an essential part of the IB diploma learning journey for students at Alto. Students engage in this course to develop their critical thinking as preparation for the academic rigour of the diploma and university. The course requires students to take a step back and reflect on and question the nature and construction of knowledge claims in different areas of knowledge, including the natural sciences, the arts, history, mathematics, the human sciences, ethics, and indigenous knowledge systems. Students scrutinize ways of knowing, discuss the scope, methodologies, and historical development of each area of knowledge, and construct and answer knowledge questions arising from real-world knowledge issues.

IB Diploma Program

All students complete the TOK course during their junior and senior year at Alto.

Grade 11 - TOK

Major Unit	Topics / Content
Area of Knowledge Ethics <i>Moral philosophy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of ethics/moral philosophy as an area of knowledge. • Links to personal/shared knowledge; role of reason, intuition and emotion as ways of knowing. • Example Knowledge Question: How are conflicts between ethical systems of knowledge resolved?
Area of Knowledge History <i>History</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of history as an area of knowledge. • Links to personal/shared knowledge; role of memory and language as ways of knowing. • Example Knowledge Question: To what extent does the context of the historian influence their construction of historical knowledge?
Area of Knowledge The natural sciences: <i>biology, chemistry, physics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of the natural sciences as an area of knowledge. • Links to personal/shared knowledge; role of reason and sense perception as ways of knowing. • Example Knowledge Question: How can it be that scientific knowledge changes over time?
Area of Knowledge Mathematics <i>Pure mathematics, applied mathematics</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of mathematics as an area of knowledge. • Links to personal/shared knowledge; role of reason and imagination as ways of knowing. • Example Knowledge Question: Is mathematical knowledge invented by man or discovered in nature?
Theory of Knowledge Essay 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual 1600 word essays reflecting on IB prescribed essay prompts.
Area of Knowledge The arts: <i>literary arts, performing arts, visual arts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of the arts as an area of knowledge. • Links to personal/shared knowledge; role of imagination, faith, sense perception and emotion as ways of knowing. • Example Knowledge Question: How far do the arts constitute a system of knowledge?

Theory of Knowledge Presentation 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group presentations analyzing knowledge issues arising in the real world.
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Grade 12 - TOK

Major Unit	Topics / Content
Knowledge Issues Interdisciplinary Socratic Seminars Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of student-led discussion-based seminars on interdisciplinary knowledge issues arising in the real-world. • Discussion focused on real-world examples and links to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the knowledge framework, scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of areas of knowledge. ○ links to personal/shared knowledge; ways of knowing. • Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge issue: George Washington High School mural debate ○ Areas of Knowledge: History and the arts ○ Knowledge Question: How far is society's understanding of an artist's depictions of the past dependent on knowledge and consciousness in the present?
Theory of Knowledge Presentation 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual or group presentations analyzing knowledge issues arising in the real world.
Knowledge Issues Interdisciplinary Socratic Seminars Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of student-led discussion-based seminars on interdisciplinary knowledge issues arising in the real-world. • Discussion focused on real-world examples and links to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the knowledge framework, scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of areas of knowledge. ○ links to personal/shared knowledge; ways of knowing. • Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge Issue: CRISPR ○ Areas of Knowledge: The natural sciences and ethics ○ Knowledge Question: Is moral knowledge is not fixed, to what extent is it useful in the field of bioengineering?
Theory of Knowledge Essay 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual 1600 word essays reflecting on IB prescribed essay prompts.
Knowledge Issues Interdisciplinary Socratic Seminars Part 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of student-led discussion-based seminars on interdisciplinary knowledge issues arising in the real-world. • Discussion focused on real-world examples and links to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the knowledge framework, scope, application, concepts, language, methodologies, historical development of areas of knowledge. ○ links to personal/shared knowledge; ways of knowing. • Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Knowledge Issue: Shakespeare ○ Areas of Knowledge: Mathematics and the arts ○ Knowledge Question: How significant is mathematical knowledge in the creation of artistic works?

IB diploma TOK syllabus [here](#)

Detailed scope and sequences for each grade might vary. Also teachers are encouraged to incorporate current events into the curriculum and adapt their statement of inquiry based on classroom discussions.