

## High School - Theory of Knowledge (TOK) IB Diploma Programme

### 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 rigor of the diploma and university. The TOK curriculum is made up of three deeply interconnected parts.

- The core theme— knowledge and the knower
- Optional themes— knowledge and technology; knowledge and language; knowledge and politics; knowledge and religion; and knowledge and indigenous societies
- Areas of knowledge— history; the human sciences; the natural sciences; mathematics; and the arts.

The TOK course is organized according to 12 concepts in epistemology: evidence, certainty, truth, interpretation, power, justification, explanation, objectivity, perspective, culture, values, and responsibility. Students explore knowledge questions through essay writing, Socratic discussions and presentations, and an exhibition.

### IB Diploma Programme

All students complete the TOK course during their junior and senior year. Read more [here](#).

### Grade 11 - TOK

Major Unit	Topics / Content
Core Theme   Knowledge and the Knower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students reflect on themselves as knowers and thinkers and consider the different communities of knowers to which we belong. Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods, and tools, and ethics are explored.</li> <li>• Sample Knowledge Question: Are intuition, evidence, reasoning, consensus, and authority all equally convincing methods of justification?</li> </ul>
Area of Knowledge   The natural sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics in the Natural Sciences are explored.</li> <li>• Sample Knowledge Question: How can it be that scientific knowledge changes over time?</li> </ul>
Optional Theme   Knowledge and Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This element provides an opportunity to take a more in-depth look at a theme of particular interest to teachers and students. Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods, and tools, and ethics are explored.</li> <li>• Sample Knowledge Question: To what extent do the classification systems we use in the pursuit of knowledge affect the conclusions that we reach?</li> </ul>
Practice exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students practice their curatorial skills through engagement with knowledge questions and identification of real-world objects that promote discussion and inquiry into knowledge.</li> <li>• Sample Knowledge Question: How can we know that current knowledge is an improvement upon past knowledge?</li> </ul>

Area of Knowledge   Human Sciences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics in the Human Sciences are explored.</li> <li>Sample Knowledge Question: To what extent are the methods used in the human sciences limited by the ethical considerations involved in studying human beings?</li> </ul>
Optional Theme   Knowledge and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This element provides an opportunity to take a more in-depth look at a theme of particular interest to teachers and students. Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods, and tools, and ethics are explored.</li> <li>Sample Knowledge Question: What is the difference between “data”, “information” and “knowledge”?</li> </ul>
Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students create an exhibition that explores how TOK manifests in the world around us. They use a prescribed knowledge question as a stimulus and curate three real-life objects to explore the knowledge question.</li> <li>Sample knowledge question: What role do experts play in influencing our consumption or acquisition of knowledge?</li> </ul>

## Grade 12 - TOK

Major Unit	Topics / Content
Area of Knowledge   History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics in History are explored.</li> <li>Sample Knowledge Question: If it is difficult to establish proof in history, does that mean that all versions are equally acceptable?</li> </ul>
Practice Theory of Knowledge Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual 800-word essay on a prescribed title, exploring a knowledge question in reference to two areas of knowledge.</li> <li>Sample essay title: “Given that every theory has its limitations, we need to retain a multiplicity of theories to understand the world.” Discuss this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.</li> </ul>
Area of Knowledge   Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics in the Arts are explored.</li> <li>Sample Knowledge Question: How important is the study of literature in our individual ethical development?</li> </ul>
Area of Knowledge   Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge scope, perspectives, methods and tools, and ethics in mathematics are explored.</li> <li>Sample Knowledge Question: Does mathematics only yield knowledge about the real world when it is combined with other areas of knowledge?</li> </ul>
Theory of Knowledge Essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual 1600 word essay on a prescribed title, exploring a knowledge question in reference to two areas of knowledge.</li> <li>Sample essay title: “Present knowledge is wholly dependent on past knowledge.” Discuss this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.</li> </ul>

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