

# IB Theory of Knowledge

The course in the Theory of Knowledge is taken by all IB Diploma students in addition to their six chosen subjects.

The Theory of Knowledge (or 'ToK') course is at the heart of the IB Diploma, linking the different skills and ways of thinking used in all the subject areas and enabling students to take a critical approach to knowledge rather than remaining in a state of unthinking acceptance. While ToK teaches students to think critically, it offers much more than a traditional course in 'critical thinking'. It challenges them to explore the world around them in a variety of ways while encouraging wide-ranging discussion, self-awareness, focussed research, healthy scepticism and an appreciation of the value of knowledge in both a local and a global context.

The course also provides the students with valuable transferrable skills, such as the ability to present and justify an argument in writing. In this way it supports and enhances the learning that takes place in the other IB Diploma subjects.

## Content

For many students, their first encounter with ToK can be an alarming experience. There is no comforting syllabus, no set pattern of study, – in fact, no security at all! Instead, they are asked to consider, not just what they know, but how and why they have arrived at that point, and where they think they might move on to. The student perspective is central to the course as they learn to make connections across five different areas of knowledge and consider the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to knowledge. These skills will take them forward successfully into University and beyond; many of our past students have found that ToK has provided the most useful basis for their studies at in further education. It also highlights the need for a clear understanding of a wide range of knowledge in order to have a balanced view of the world. The teachers providing the programme are all experts in different areas of knowledge. They offer support, direction, guidance and encouragement so that each student hopefully merges from the process able to formulate and communicate ideas and opinions both orally and in writing and ready to tackle the exciting prospect of being an active citizen of the global village.

## Assessment

The course is assessed in two ways. There is an internally assessed exhibition where the student produces a 900 word commentary in response to a question about knowledge. This comprises 35% of the final ToK grade. The remaining 65% of the assessment is an externally marked essay of 1200-1600 words on a prescribed title chosen from six questions which are set each year by the IB.

The ToK grade obtained (from A to E), is put alongside the grade obtained from the Extended Essay and these together are used to calculate whether the student is awarded, 3, 2, 1 or 0 core points for the IB Diploma. These core points are added to the points (from 7 to 1) awarded for each of the six chosen subjects to give the final IB Diploma score out of 45.



Exhibition



Externally marked essay

