

TOK Presentation Guide

Overview:

Students must participate in three small group presentations during the course. The TOK presentation requires students to identify and explore the knowledge issues raised by a substantive real-life situation that is of interest to them. Students can select the situation they will tackle from a more limited domain of personal, school, or community relevance, or from a wider one of national, international, or global scope.

It is important that the situation that is selected is sufficiently circumscribed, so as to allow an effective treatment of knowledge issues. For this reason, it is wise to avoid topics so unfamiliar to the class that a great deal of explanation is needed before the underlying knowledge issues can be appreciated and explored.

Presentations may take many forms, such as lectures, skits, simulations, games, dramatized readings, interviews, or debates. Students may use supporting material such as videos, PowerPoint presentations, overhead projections, posters, questionnaires, recordings of songs, or interviews, costumes, or props. Under no circumstances, however, should the presentation be simply an essay read aloud to the class. Each topic will be treated only once in a particular TOK course.

Presentation Format:

- (1) An introduction, briefly describing the real-life situation and linking it to one or more relevant knowledge issue.
- (2) A treatment of the knowledge issue(s) that explores their nature and responses to them, and shows how these relate to the chosen situation.

A good presentation will demonstrate the presenter's personal involvement in the topic and show both why the topic is important and how it relates to other areas.

Approximately 10 minutes per presenter will be allowed, up to a maximum in most cases of 30 minutes per group. Interaction and audience participation are allowed during the presentation, not just in follow-up discussions, but there must be an identifiable substantial input from the presenter(s) that is assessable.

Presentation Planning Document:

Before the presentation, the individual or group must submit a copy of the "presentation planning document".

The "presentation planning document" must be completed and submitted individually and compiled into a final group document. This document will summarize the thinking behind the topic, state the specific knowledge issues to be addressed, and present an outline of the intended treatment of them, in a maximum of one typed page or equivalent.

It should provide clear evidence of an inquiry in keeping with the aims and objectives of TOK, and meeting the requirements of the assessment criteria for the presentation. It must not be an essay, but should be in skeleton or bullet point form.

PPD Format:

In your individually prepared PPD, please describe your planning for the presentation. Your description must include:

- The knowledge issue that will be the focus of your presentation.
- A summary in note form (e.g., a bulleted list) of the way you plan to deal with knowledge issues during your presentation.

Examples of Presentation Topics:

It should be noted that these are merely examples, meant only to illustrate the kinds of topics appropriate for TOK presentations. In particular, they are included to provide a concrete sense of what is meant by “real-life situation/contemporary problem” and to show how a knowledge issue can be identified in it and then treated from different perspectives. As well as guiding the selection of appropriate topics, the examples also illustrate ways that topics may be treated in the presentation, in accordance with the assessment criteria.

(A) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: Global Warming

- Knowledge issues: “Can we be certain that global warming is taking place?” or, “Does language (or the use of statistics, graphs, photographs) affect our view of whether or not the planet is undergoing global warming?”
- Format: Students analyze and critically evaluate video and newspaper clips involving the views of experts, politicians and activists who defend or dispute the notion that the planet is suffering from global warming. Each member of the group draws attention to different aspects of the evidence—the nature of the words used, statistics and graphs, photographs.
- Knower’s (student’s) point of view: As a group, students suggest that the evidence in favor of global warming seems compelling, but underline that in some cases it is difficult to separate some protagonists’ positions and how they are formulated from the interest groups they represent.

(B) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: Intensive Agriculture

- Knowledge issue: “How can we know whether intensive farming methods are always harmful?”
- Format: Inputs by students representing the views of farmers in different circumstances from different parts of the world, cross-examined by a presenter and members of the audience.
- Knower’s (student’s) point of view: It may be easy to take a view on (to think we know) what is right in our own situation. Looked at globally the question is much more complicated.

(C) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: Reliability of Media Reporting of Science

- Knowledge issues: “What constitutes responsible journalism? How can we know whether scientific conclusions are justified?”

- Format: Summary and analysis of a newspaper article reporting on a new scientific study showing that a diet that contains no fat can lead to more weight gain than a similar diet that contains some fat (the original stimulus). Discussion of the quality of the newspaper article (what information ought it to contain, so that we can make a good judgment about the reliability of the claims made?) and of the scientific study it describes (how can we tell whether the evidence cited in the scientific study justifies its conclusions?).
- Knower's (student's) point of view: It is easy to tell that some newspapers are more concerned with entertainment than with truth. How easy is it to tell how much credibility to give to more serious stories?

(D) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: What Makes a Work of Art?

- Knowledge issues: "What is it that distinguishes an ordinary bag of rubbish from a major work of art that just looks like a bag of rubbish? Can anything be art—and, if so, what makes it into art?"
- Format: Skit of a TV talk show discussion about an incident when an artwork in an exhibition, consisting of a plastic bag full of rubbish, was mistakenly thrown out by a cleaner. Students role-play the host of the show, the artist of the work in question, a visual arts critic and a gallery owner, all of whom offer other examples of contentious contemporary art and their ideas about what distinguishes these artworks from non-art.
- Knower's (student's) point of view: Why are people prepared to dismiss contemporary art without understanding much about it, while often blindly believing scientific claims, however outlandish and improbable?

(E) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: Demonstrations in China against the issue of a new history textbook in Japan

- Knowledge issues: Who should decide, and on what grounds, what history should be taught in schools? What part does the notion of historical truth play here?
- Format: Arguments for and against the Chinese attempt to tell the Japanese what they should teach about the actions of the Japanese army in China during the second world war. Should other countries be able to have a say in what the Chinese teach their children? What, in general terms, should determine a history curriculum?
- Knower's (student's) point of view: Is history too important to be left to historians?

(F) Real-life situation/contemp. problem: What evidence is there about how dinosaurs looked and behaved?

- Knowledge issues: Are the methods of paleontology more like a science such as physics, or more like history?
- Format: Showing and discussion of a clip from the TV documentary *Walking with Dinosaurs* on how dinosaurs lived, showing a detailed scene from the life of a particular dinosaur, with a commentary presented as if this were a real scene.
- Knower's (student's) point of view: How far is it legitimate for TV programmes to go, to make their subject matter entertaining?

Presentation Assessment:

Presentations are individually scored according to an achievement level for each of the four (4) assessment criteria. In a group presentation, not every student need speak for the same amount of time, but all students are expected to make a contribution and to participate actively.

(1) Identification of Knowledge Issue:

- Did the presentation identify a relevant knowledge issue involved, implicit or embedded in a real-life situation?

Level	Descriptor
5	The presentation identified a knowledge issue that was clearly relevant to the real-life situation under consideration.
3-4	The presentation identified a knowledge issue that was in some ways relevant to the real-life situation under consideration.
1-2	The presentation referred to a knowledge issue but it was irrelevant to the real-life situation under consideration.
0	Level 1 was not achieved.

(2) Treatment of Knowledge Issue:

- Did the presentation show a good understanding of knowledge issues, in the context of the real-life situation?

Level	Descriptor
5	The presentation showed a good understanding of knowledge issues.
3-4	The presentation showed an adequate understanding of knowledge issues.
1-2	The presentation showed some understanding of knowledge issues.
0	Level 1 was not achieved.

(3) Knower's Perspective:

- Did the presentation, particularly in the use of arguments and examples, show an individual approach and demonstrate the significance of the topic?

Level	Descriptor
5	The presentation, in its distinctively personal use of arguments and examples or otherwise, showed clear personal involvement and fully demonstrated the significance of the topic.
3-4	The presentation, in its use of arguments and examples or otherwise, showed some personal involvement and adequately demonstrated the significance of the topic.
1-2	The presentation, in its use of arguments and examples or otherwise, showed limited personal involvement and did not demonstrate the significance of the topic.
0	Level 1 was not achieved.

(3) Connections:

- Did the presentation give a balanced account of how the topic could be approached from different perspectives?
- Did the presentation show how the positions taken on the knowledge issues would have implications in related areas?
- In awarding the higher achievement levels, the emphasis should be more on the quality of the consideration of connections than on the quantity of connections mentioned.

Level	Descriptor
5	The presentation gave a clear account of how the question could be approached from different perspectives and considered their implications in related areas.
3-4	The presentation gave a satisfactory account of how the question could be approached from different perspectives, and began to explore their similarities and differences.
1-2	The presentation explored at least two different perspectives to some extent.
0	Level 1 was not achieved.