

TOK Presentation Advice

You can present your Oral Presentation either individually or in a group. Your presentation only has to last for about **12-15** minutes.

Your presentation will not take you that long to research and plan once *you* are *clear* what it is that you are required to do, and how to do it.

You are **free** to do your Oral Presentation on any topic you like – just keep in mind what the aim of the Theory of Knowledge course is, and how the objective of your presentation relates to it.

Cultural and Personal Sensitivity – obviously we do not know the complete personal background of all of our class members. We do know that certain images and words will cause offense, such as photographs of violence, bigoted language and propaganda. However, you are still able to critically examine and discuss issues that involve things that we may all find unpleasant without having to show any images whatsoever. Refrain from 'shock tactics' but focus on analyzing what problems are involved in gaining knowledge in the topic under discussion.

Remember the Aim of the Theory of Knowledge Course: *Think Critically* – question everything. The course revolves around two fundamental questions:

- i. What it is I claim to know?
- ii. How valid are the methods used to establish what it is I claim to know?

In your presentation you must investigate, discuss and critically examine – that means to challenge and show the limitations as well as also showing the successes – the *methods* used to try and explain 'How we know what we claim to know?' You must discuss the role of the Ways of Knowing, their strengths and limitations in the processes and methods used by the different Areas of Knowledge. This will become easier as the year progresses.

You must highlight all of the 'controversies' (the Problems of Knowledge and Knowledge Issues), where assumptions and claims are made but whose basis is still questionable, or where something works in one Area of Knowledge but not in another.

Read the Assessment Criteria: You'll find this in the Theory of Knowledge Handbook.

Remember the Theory of Knowledge Diagram: When planning your presentation, have a copy of the Theory of Diagram to hand. Whatever topic you choose, try and see what the role of the Ways of Knowing are within it, and which Areas of Knowledge your topic excels in and which ones it has problems in, or is

completely irrelevant. Try and create a 'spider's web' across the diagram as you go back and forth relating different parts to your topic.

You will need:

- i. Counter-examples** – clear illustrations of where assumptions made in your presentation work in one Area of Knowledge but completely collapse, or are not relevant in another. You need to evaluate your argument.
- ii. Cross-cultural examples** – try and find examples which support the assumptions in your presentation, or challenge them and so become your counter-examples, from as international a background as is possible. The results of an experiment, a historical event, a word or action, may all be interpreted differently by different ethnic cultures, religions and socio-economic political societies.
- iii. Personal examples** – include examples that are from your own learning experience – if you've read a book, heard a song, seen a film, have a friend or relative whose views challenge the assumptions of your presentation – then quote and reference them.

You may choose a presentation on whether experimenting on animals is justified in the pursuit of scientific knowledge. You could firstly look at the Ways of Knowing:

- i. Perception** – see what images are presented by animal cruelty (antivivisectionist) pressure groups and the scientific laboratories doing this kind of thing.
- ii. Language** – look at the style of language used by pressure groups and the scientists – is it "torture/murder" or an "experiment"? How does this effect the presentation of the topic being investigated?
- iii. Emotion** – how do the images or the language employed in the arguments influence your emotions, and in turn, what role does your emotions play supporting or opposing to such actions?

Look at two or three Areas of Knowledge – say in this case it could be the Natural Sciences and Ethics to get examples to explore justification and objections to experimenting on animals.

- i. Reason** – what is the use of logic in arguments for and against experimentation on animals in both the Natural Sciences and Ethics? Explain the arguments and then critically assess them – try to find **supportive examples** and **counter-examples**.
- ii. Other Areas of Knowledge** – you could look at History, Social Science or religion to see if there are any international examples of societies who treat animals differently, or if our behavior has changed because of knowledge gained from another Area of Knowledge?

Finally, you do not have to arrive at a ground breaking conclusion. You can say here is the area I have investigated, here are the problem(s) that I have found, and here is my response to them. Then you can open the topic up to further discussion from your classmates to see what they think.

The Format of Your Presentation: Always have:

- i. An **introduction** – tell your audience what you are going to focus on and why?
- ii. A **body** – have some core information but move quickly onto **core questions** – '**analyzing**' the validity of the 'methods' of what we claim to know. Really focus on 'How do we know what we claim to know?', 'How trustworthy are those methods?'
- iii. A **conclusion** – briefly tell your audience what you investigated, what you found out, and what you now think/feel on the matter.
- iv. Have a selection of **open-ended questions** for the class debate – find out *what* they think, and *why* they think it, with regard to your topic of investigation.

The Style of Your Presentation: What is really of importance is your **critical analysis** and addressing the two fundamental questions:

- i. What it is I claim to know?
- ii. How valid are the methods used to establish what it is I claim to know?

As long as you are assessing and evaluating the success, controversy and failure of the *methods* used to try and explain 'How we know what we claim to know?' – you are free to use any of the methods listed below, or even invent your own:

- i. Critical questions on a whiteboard;
- ii. Worksheet with critical questions;
- iii. Newspaper Article with critical questions;
- iv. Power Point presentation with critical questions;
- v. Watch a section of a film/DVD followed with a critical analysis;
- vi. Perform a social experiment followed with a critical analysis;
- vii. Perform a role play to highlight a critical analysis;
- viii. Perform a good piece of music and then a bad piece to investigate what supposedly gives it its quality;
- ix. In pairs deliver and highlight the opposing views of debate.

Remember – Always have your presentation planned, with the points you want to say on a piece of paper in front of you.

Do not write an essay to read out in class, or read out points that you've already placed on a Power Point Presentation, as this wastes time and is boring – tells us what we need to know and then leads us straight into the **analysis**.

Research: Obviously you will need to know a certain amount on the topic – but don't do too much – sometimes reading one newspaper article can be enough – as the focus is on your analysis and the critical questions:

- i. What is claimed?
- ii. What methods were used to reach that conclusion?
- iii. How valid are those methods?
- iv. Do these methods work in any/or other Areas of Knowledge?
- v. What still puzzles you?
- vi. What methods/evidence would you need to accept their claim?