TOK

Theory of Knowledge

Introduction

Lesson 1 - Introduction to the exhibition
Lesson 2 - Assumptions and Reason
Lesson 3 - Mapping Knowledge
Lesson 4 - Knowledge Communities
Lesson 5 - Who Do You Think You Are
Lesson 6 - Relativism
Lesson 7 - The Truth
Lesson 8 - The Tip

FACTS

Bulls get angry when they see the color red.	Goldfish only have a three-second memory.
We only use 10 percent of our brains.	George Washington had wooden teeth.
The Great Wall of China is the only man-made structure visible from space.	Marie Antoinette said "let them eat cake" to spite the poor.
Albert Einstein failed math class.	You have to wait 24 hours before submitting a missing person's report.
The forbidden fruit in the story of Adam and Eve is an apple.	Cracking your knuckles too much will cause arthritis.
Sugar causes hyperactivity in children.	Bats are blind.
Shaving your hair makes it grow back thicker.	It's safe to eat food that's been on the floor for five seconds or less.
Fortune cookies originated in China.	You should urinate on someone if they get stung by a jellyfish.

Henny Penny

Look at the picture, do you know the story of Henny Penny?

Let us imagine that Henny Penny had a TOK perspective? Would this have saved her from the fox?





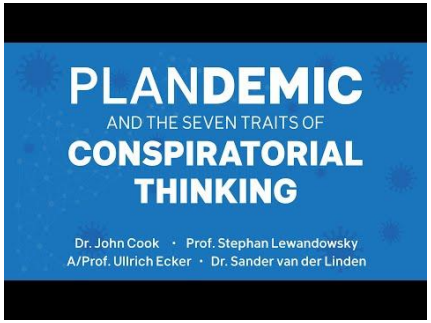
Aims of Theory of Knowledge

"Throughout the course, the focus will be on how individuals and institutions come to hold the beliefs and knowledge that they do. You will also be encouraged to analyse your own beliefs. The simple step of asking 'how' will start you on an intellectual journey with more layers than you might expect."



Plandemic

Watch



Summarize

On your journals and here

Resources

TOK Textbook Kognity
Epistemology, Stanford
Coronavirus Plandemic

Areas of Knowledge



Human Sciences



History



Mathematics



Languages



Arts



Natural Sciences

Conceptual Framework



Ethics



Scope



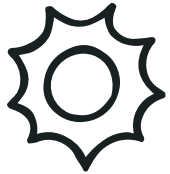
Perspective



Methods and Tools

12 Key Concepts





Responsibility	Certainty	Truth	Interpretation
Power	Objectivity	Evidence	Culture
Values	Explanation	Perspective	Justification

01 TOK Exhibition

What is it?
What is a good one?
What is a not-so-good one?





How does TOK manifest itself in the world around us?

The TOK exhibition is an internal assessment task (marked by your teacher, moderated by the IB), representing ⅓ of your overall mark in TOK.
You choose an IA prompt (from this list) and select 3 real-world 'objects' that each show a different perspective on that prompt. You then write a 950 word commentary connecting your 3 objects to your IA prompt.
Your exhibition will be set within one of our themes: **Knowledge and the Knower; Knowledge and Language; Knowledge and Technology**



A few important considerations

Your objects must be different to those of the other students in your class.

You may choose the same IA prompt as another student in the class.

You cannot change or edit the IA prompt in any way.

What kind of Objects

- An image of Banksy street art
- Your Extended Essay
- A Nike Vaporfly shoe
- The graphic novel, Maus
- A piece of music created for your DP Music course
- An image of a school that you helped to renovate for a CAS project
- A Washington Post news report on the Syrian refugee crisis
- A photograph of one of your grandparents
- A mannequin you used in a DP visual art class
- A 20th century history textbook
- A 3D globe
- An episode from the TV series Black Mirror
- A photograph of a public sculpture
- A microscope
- A English/Chinese translation dictionary
- The x-ray of a broken arm
- A Trump Tweet



TASK

Choose ONE object that links to the prompt you have chosen.

You must focus on the CORE THEME: **Knowledge and the Knower**



02

Assumptions & Reason





Analysing the Process of Knowledge Acquisition

01

Fact: Π was discovered in 1706 by William Jones

02

Perception: Leonhard Euler popularises Π

03

Belief: About 500-480 BC, Homer writes the Iliad and the Odyssey

04

Initial Claim: The Ptolemaic dynasty established Alexandria as the “Pharo” of eastern Mediterranean

05

Reviewed Claim: Alexander the Great initiates a military campaign against Indian Kings 323 BC

The Dangers of Crossing the Road

The old lady had just finished her shopping and was starting to cross the road when a car sped around the corner. The cyclist, fearing an accident, shouted 'Watch out!', and the car driver slammed on the brakes - but it was too late. A collision was unavoidable. Shopping bags were scattered all over the road, but fortunately no-one was seriously injured.

The police appeared soon afterwards and interviewed all the relevant witnesses. The lady's vision had contributed to the accident and the car had been speeding.

Now, look at the statements below. If the statement is definitely true (based only on the information in the story) mark 'T'. If the statement is definitely false (based only in the information in the story) mark 'F'. If there is not enough information to say one way or the other, then mark '?'



The Dangers of Crossing the Road

There is, however, one catch. Once you have answered a questions, you should not go back and change any of your earlier answers. Doing so will invalidate the exercise.

1. There was a car travelling faster than the speed limit.
2. The old lady in the story had been shopping.
3. A vehicle came round the corner just after a lady had stepped off the pavement.
4. The car driver was unable to avoid a collision.
5. The police came to investigate the incident.
6. Although the old lady was struck by the car, she was not seriously injured.
7. Shopping bags were scattered over the road.
8. The driver slammed on his brakes.
9. The police interviewed the car driver.
10. The old lady had poor eyesight.
11. The car's speeding contributed to the accident.
12. The old lady was riding a bicycle.
13. The cyclist was seriously injured.
14. There was at least one car driver involved in the accident.
15. The lady crossed the road near a corner.

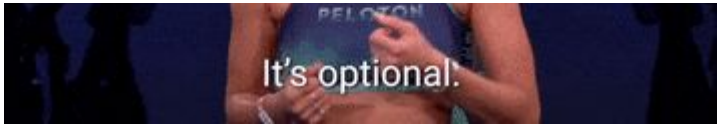
How did you do? What should the majority of your answers be? What do you learn from such stories? Make up a situation, like the stories you see here, where the reader naturally makes all sorts of assumptions.



Incident in the Store

The old man had just turned off the lights in the store and was preparing to lock up and go home when a youth appeared and demanded money. The owner opened the cash register; the contents were grabbed, and the man ran away. The police were informed immediately.

1. A young man appeared after the lights had been turned off.
2. The old man was preparing to go home.
3. The robber demanded money.
4. Someone opened the cash register.
5. The robber demanded money from the owner.
6. The person who opened the cash register was a man.
7. The cash register contained money, but we are not told how much money.
8. The gender of the owner was not revealed in the story.
9. The robber did not demand money.
10. After the man grabbed the contents of the cash register, he ran away.
11. The young man appeared after the lights had been turned off.
12. The robber was a man.
13. The owner was a man.
14. The owner appeared and demanded money.
15. The man ran away after he had demanded money.





Nacirema

Read a classical anthropological account of a strange, yet somewhat familiar, culture. Click on the following link for the American-Anthropological Report on the Nacirema. Once you've done this:

Write down two observations that would be good examples of 'sense perception'.

consider what (logical) evidence there is that the Nacirema have constructed a paradigm or world view.

Finally, can you identify any problems associated with measurement and/or experimentation in the study of the Nacerima? Research the Verstehen Position and then return to the case study - how might this be a prime example of the verstehen position?

Select only one Nacirema body ritual. Describe it briefly but precisely. Propose two rival hypotheses to explain the origin and/or cultural significance of uour chosen ritual. Formulate three questions that you would ask Nacirema subjects.

Torajan people on the Indonesian island Ma'nene ritual,

03 Mapping Knowledge



Signifiers

1. Work online individually to research and write down the word for fish in as many European languages as possible in a timed 5 minutes.

2. Next work in groups matched in the raucous icebreaker to find and write down as many words as possible, in any language, for the sounds that dogs make, in a timed 7 minutes.

3. Appoint a spokesperson and scribe. They should address the following questions.

A. What is going on here? What patterns emerged? What are the essential differences between the various words for fish and the various words for dog sounds?

B. To what extent can we say that the words we use for things mental maps?





"Naming things is a human act, it is not an act of nature. We are the ones who through language create things out of the phenomena around us. Yet we forget that we control this process and let the process control us. Naming thing– using language–is a very high level abstraction, and when we name something we 'freeze' it by placing it in a category and making a 'thing' out of it. Language is a map but three important things to remember about maps are: the map is not the territory; no map can represent all aspects of the territory; and every map reflects the mapmaker's point of view."

— Lutz, Wiliam (1996) The New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone is Saying Anymore. HarperCollins, New York, NY.

To what extent can knowing the name of something be a negative thing?

Map of a Cat

Step forward and stand close to the screen in a darkened classroom. Scroll through this eccentric cat slideshow. Taking each image in turn ask:

In this particular map of a cat, what is being emphasized?

What is being left out?

How effective or useful is the map?



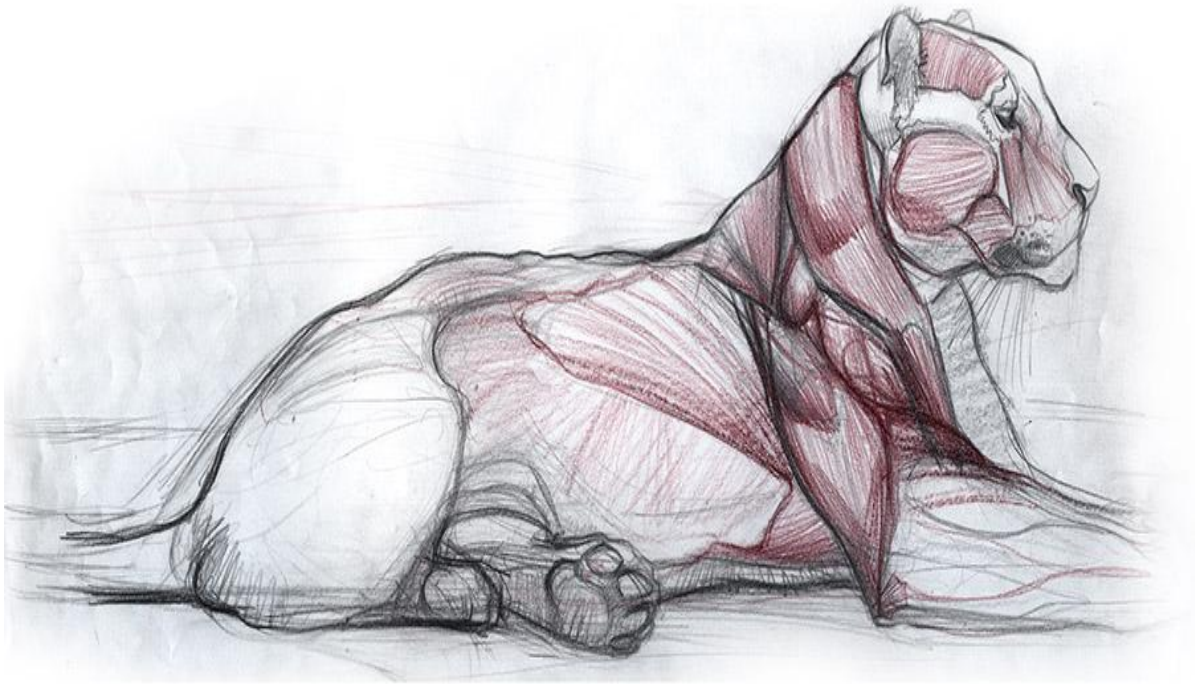
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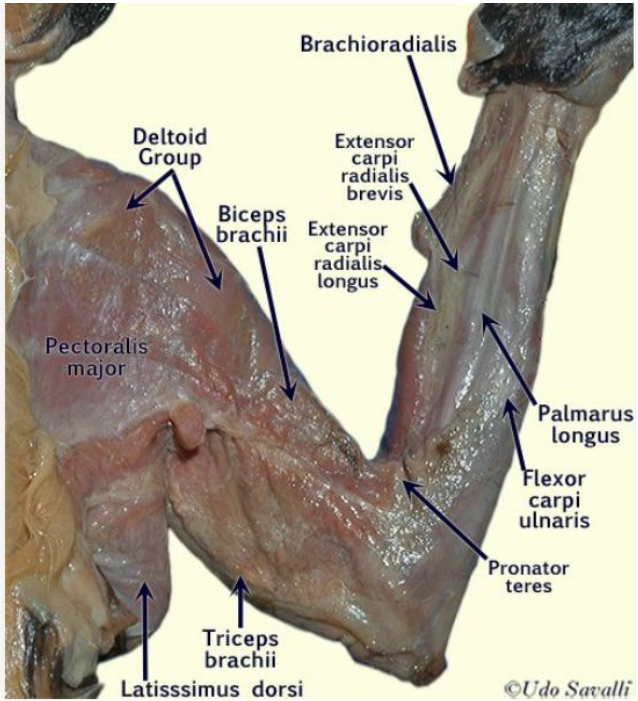
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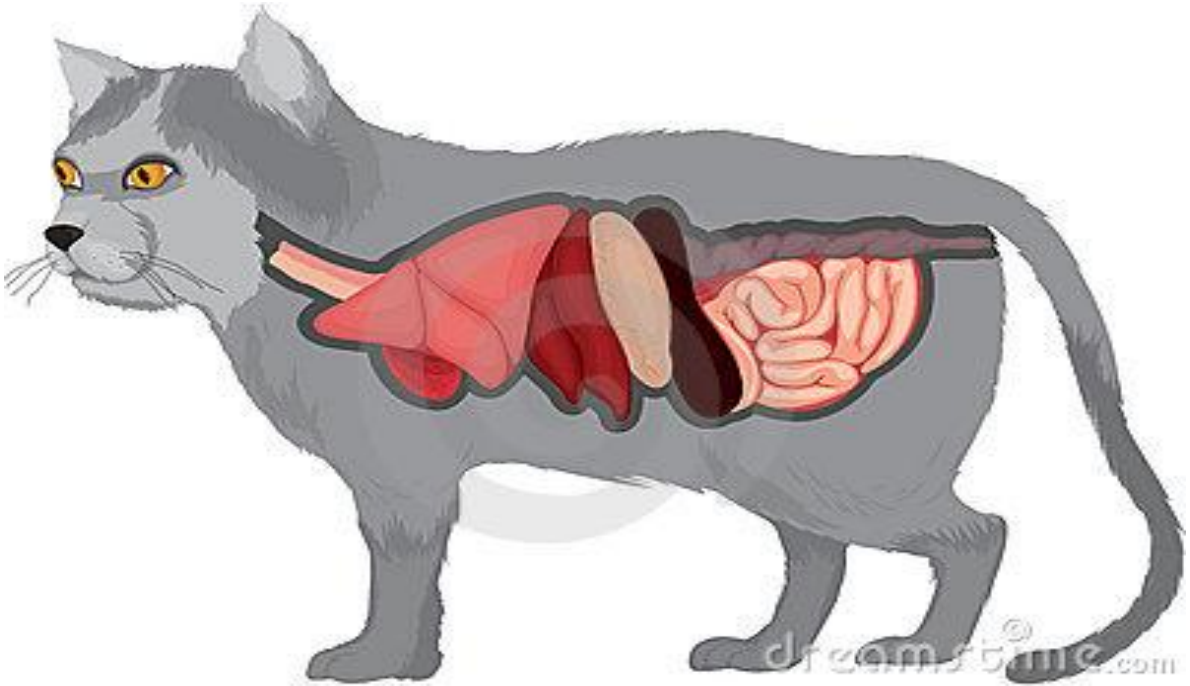
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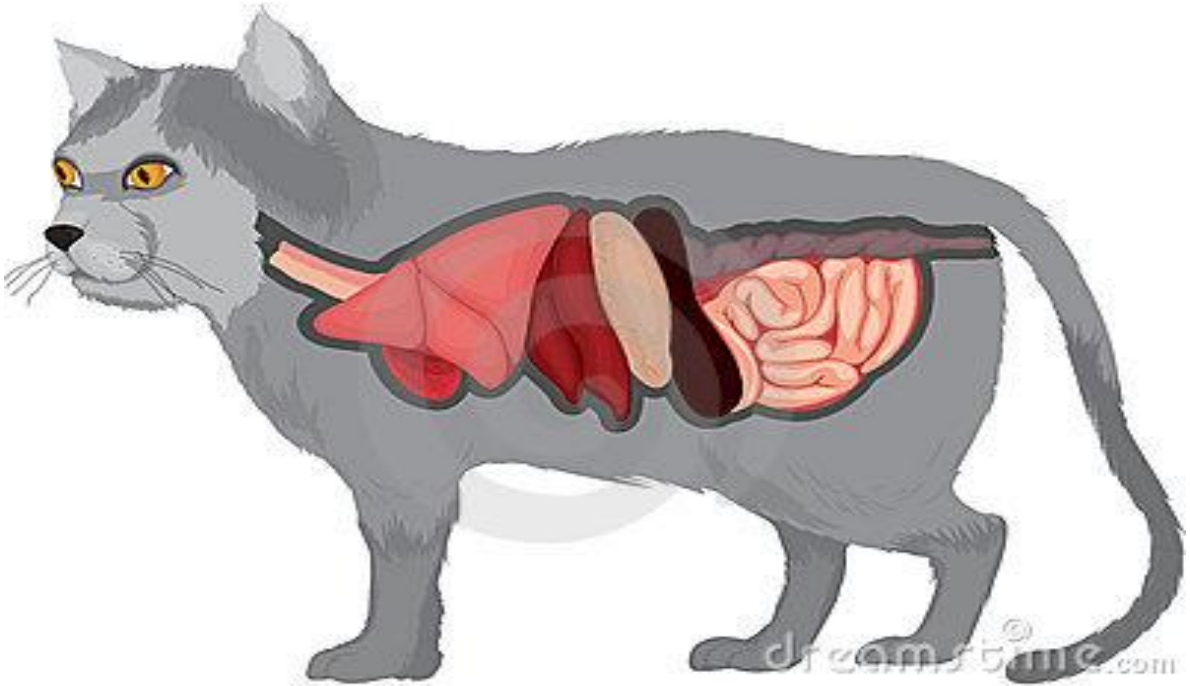
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LONDON UNDERGROUND MAP

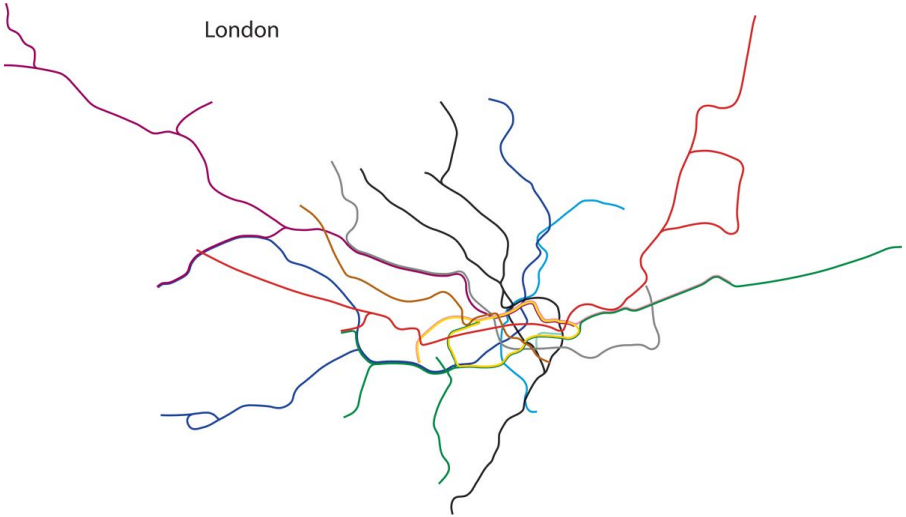
Worksheet

Working in pairs, carefully circle all the visible London underground stations on your street map section (which accurately reflects satellite pictures of Central London).

Find the same stations on your section of the iconic London Underground Map.

Using a bold colored pen, connect the stations, respecting the way that they are actually connected underground.

Compare and contrast the orientations between stations and the distances apart on your two maps. What is going on here? How does the London map compare with the other subway or metro maps that you know?



Draw a map of the world. Which areas did you draw well? Which ones did you struggle with? Why? What type of projection did you use? Why?

LONDON UNDERGROUND MAP

The London tube map was designed by Harry Beck in 1933. It is a simplified model of reality. The map informs the traveller how to navigate precisely between stations. It offers nothing more, nothing less, and ignores all extraneous information. The layout, which resembles a circuit diagram, corresponds only loosely to the physical locations of the stations.

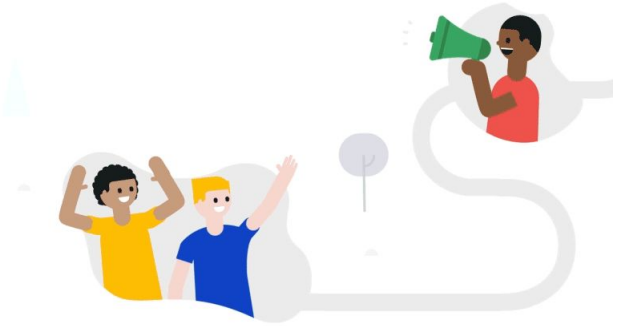


Many major cities around the world have spectacular subway systems with iconic simplified maps based on the conventions of the London original. Is your city one of those?


Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

04

Knowledge Communities



Stand in increasing order of distance from school

Your Community

Into this Padlet add one object that the country you come from is well known for. Don't mention the country.
Then, comment on other entries with your guesses of what the country is.

Watch this TED talk video.
What questions did this video made you think about.

Your knowledge:
Where does it come from?
Do the countries you live in affect it?

Stereotyping

Is stereotyping a good thing?

What does this picture symbolise?

Consider the groups that you are part of.

1. Compile a list of knowledge or beliefs that are common or which overlap in that community.
2. What disagreements are there in the community?



Stereotyping

Knowledge about the world, and people in the world, is often generalized; that is, the claims are about groups rather than individuals. When economists talk about 'the market' or when psychologists talk about behavioural trends across populations, they are not talking about individuals. Similarly, when talking about 'communities of knowers' we are talking about general features which can be used to group people together.
What might be the dangers of this sort of generalization?
How might our thinking about individuals be influenced knowing that they identify, or we identify them, as part of a group?

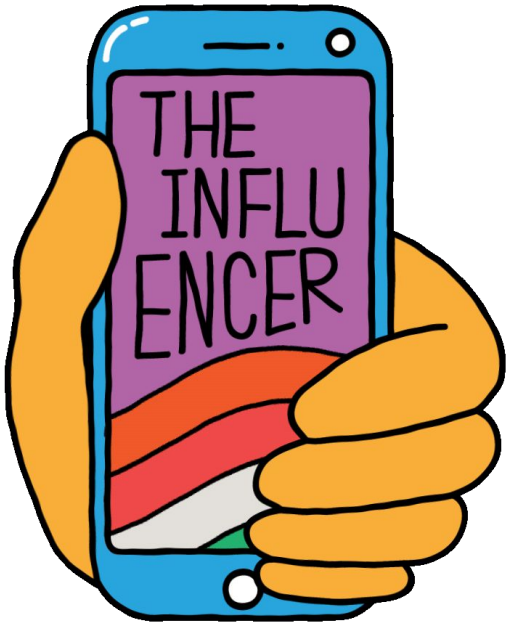
How would you define a community of knowers?



Influencers

Imagine interviewing someone who you would consider being in the same 'community of knowers' as you but whom you think is an influencer.

1. Try to identify what makes them more of an expert.
2. Is there anything which they have that you don't have yet?
3. Is there anything which they have which you cannot have?

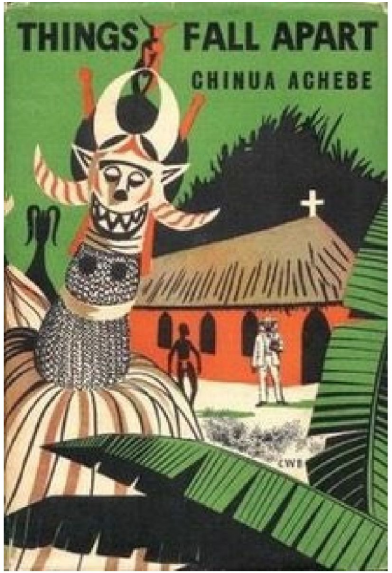


What makes you 'trust' the knowledge you gain from these Influencers?

What makes you 'trust' the knowledge you gain from these communities?

"Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?"

Choose one of the objects below and use it to answer the question.







05

Who Do You Think You Are





Your Knowledge Claims

Write down, on a piece of coloured paper, several things that you claim to know.

Put your names on the page, then write, in well formed sentences, five different knowledge claims in the form: "I know_____."

Generate at least one personal example of something they know with certainty.

Next, work in pairs with someone of the same paper colour and attempt to refute each other's claims.

We find ourselves in *medias res*—already in the thick of the action!

Who are you?
How do you identify yourself?
Is this identification going to change later?
How so?



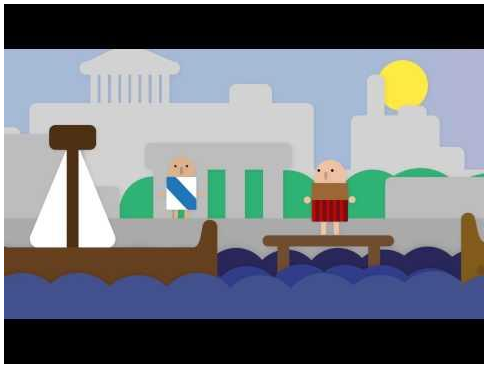


Nicholas Nixon Forty Portraits in Forty Years

Interlude: The Ship of Theseus

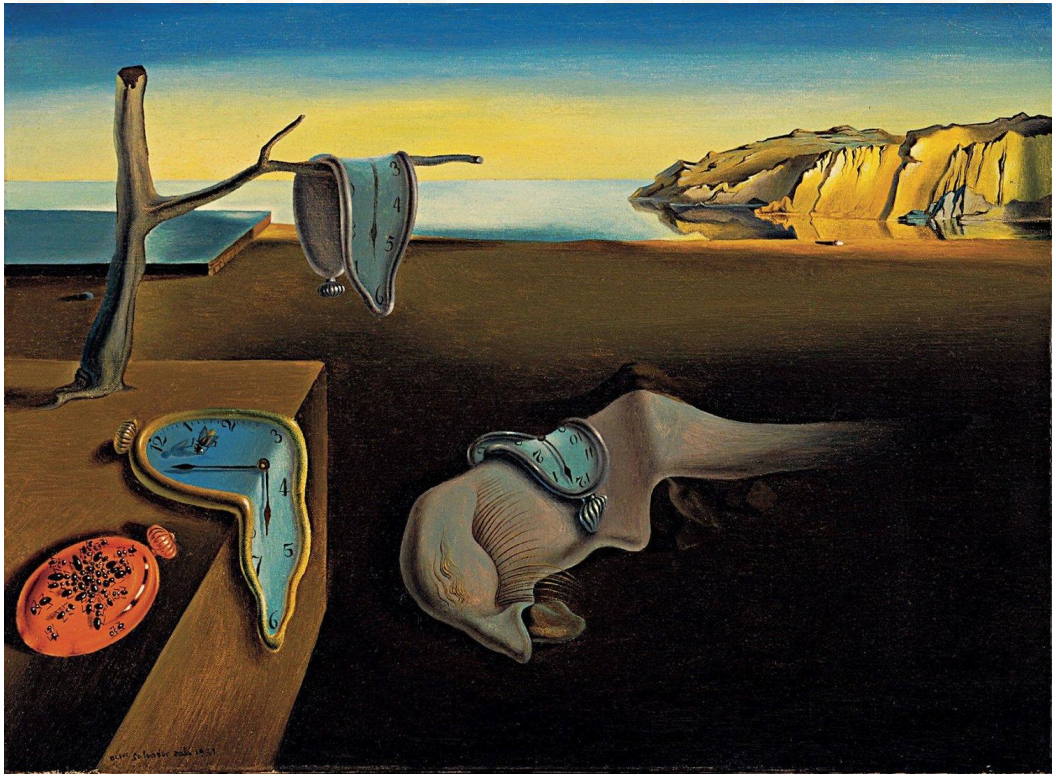
The ancient historian, Plutarch asked whether a ship that had been restored over a period of time, by replacing every single plank and mast, remained the same ship.

Do you agree or disagree?



We know that life changes to stay the same. Most cells in the body are younger than the individual. We get a new stomach lining every few days, a new liver every couple of years and a whole new skeleton about every ten years but, most neurons of the cerebral cortex are not replaced.

However, the *Ship of Theseus* problem returns when we note that the hippocampus is critical for long-term and spatial memory. Also, *all* cells are constantly recycling worn out macromolecules and organelles.



Salvador Dalí (1931) *The Persistence of Memory*. Oil on canvas. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

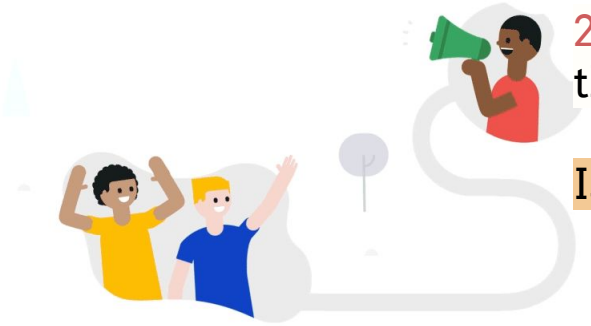
06

Relativism

1. What is cultural relativism?

2. Try to think of a logical argument that could undermine relativism

Is this relative?



12 Concepts

Give yourself an adjective that starts with the first letter of your name

Would you possibly call yourself an octopus?



Evidence	Certainty	Truth
Interpretation	Power	Justification
Explanation	Objectivity	Perspective
Culture	Values	Responsibility

REMINDER

Look up information about the octopus

Octopus Intelligence

Octopuses seem to be the most intelligent of the invertebrates. Years of maze and problem-solving experiments have revealed that octopuses are playful, have long-term memory and can learn from experience. There is little social learning for octopuses in the wild because they are solitary. Their accumulative learning is limited because they rarely live longer than three years. There is no learning associated with parental care. Larval octopuses are orphaned, micro-plankton, initially the size of a grain of rice.

1. What are the biological factors that limit what the octopus can know?

2. What are the commonalities and differences between how what and how young octopi and young humans learn?

3. Termites have nests, beavers make dams. Artifacts and technologies that are adjunct to the physical body of an organism but are ubiquitous and necessary for its way of life are known as the extended phenotype.





FERAL CHILDREN



Genie: "LA Wild Child" after she was discovered

Experiments on non-consenting victims, including young children, were performed in concentration camps by Nazi doctors. Mengele's scientifically worthless and disgusting twin studies are the most notorious example.



07

The Truth



Flying Penguins



What questions did you ask yourself when watching this video?

You mentioned sources of information that you rely on:

- Knowledge communities
- Influencers
- etc

Is there any source of information that does not make any mistakes whatsoever?
Does everybody agree to what you think?



Colours



How many of these flags do you already know?" Record the names of the flags you know with a high degree of confidence. You should record your educated guesses too.

Next, work in pairs to check your answers at The Nations Online Project. Next you should work collaboratively for a full six minutes, using any study technique or short term memory trick that works, to memorize the names as many of the flags as possible.

Here is a link to a brain befuddling **Flags Memory Game at Memozor.** You should play three times, noting your time and number of moves.

Stroop Test

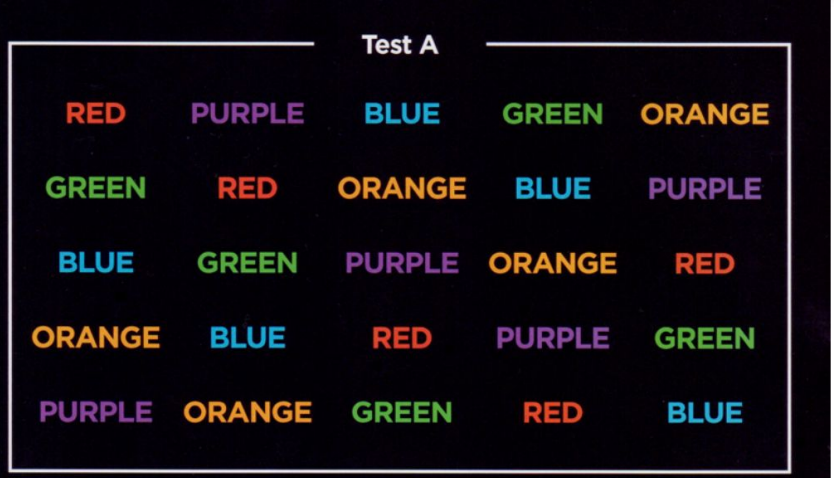
Test A:

Work quickly. Do not just read the words. Concentrate on the color of the ink of each word. Say them out loud in order

Test B:

Again, work quickly. Same instructions again, but more tricky this time. Concentrate on the color of the ink of each word. Say them out loud in order.

Printable color pdf.





Whole Class Discussion

1. Compared with your partner's performance, how successful were you at naming the flags initially? How well did you do after the six minutes of study time? How do you and your partner account for any personal differences?

2. In the online matching game was there anything about the choice of flags that made the task particularly tricky? Did you improve your performance over the three trials? Was that a result of changing your strategy?

3. What was going on when you were participating in the Stroop Test?

Stroop Test is an old and highly trusted tool in Psychology. It has been a reliable measure of focus, interference and reaction times, since it was introduced in 1937. Also, in an IB context, it might be worth mentioning that high functioning bilinguals, presumed to have with enhanced executive function in the frontal lobes of their brains, have been shown to do better on the Stroop Test.

Is this true?



Selective Attention

Next, on a piece of paper, write your name legibly on one side. Work in absolute silence.

You will attempt a simple counting test using a video made by some college students and write your answer on the reverse side of the paper as soon as the video stops. Silence is very important.

If you have seen the video before you should keep that fact to yourself; they will simply have a slight advantage in the competition!



Where's the Truth?



Who is to blame?

Could all of this have been avoided?

Connect all the activities to one another.

08

Iceberg



The Tip

Two volunteer students act as assistants. The remainder of the class are about to enter a zone of sensory distortion and introspection; and must listen to the instructions carefully.

The times (in seconds) and student first names can be recorded in sequence by the assistants on the whiteboard.

1. Close your eyes... Relax completely... Focus your own gentle breathing... Notice the sounds around you, but do not be distracted by them...

2. In a moment, when a I say "begin," keep your eyes closed and try to estimate when three minutes have passed. At that point simply raise your hand. My assistant will touch your hand gently to indicate that the number of seconds of your estimate has been logged and that you can lower your hand. After that you will continue to keep your eyes closed, and continue to relax, until I say, "now open your eyes." to indicate that the activity has ended.

What was going on?
Was this fast (intuitive) or slow (analytical) thinking?

Intuition

What is intuition?

Can we count on intuition for knowledge?



Learned intuition

Now think of a situation where:
You made a snap decision without using any intellectual analysis
You trusted your gut in a tough or awkward situation
You used your instincts or physical reflexes in a potentially life or death scenario
You had a feeling about entering a place or situation that you could not define that something was not quite right
You trusted your intuition at the time but it turned out that you misread the situation and got it all wrong
You felt tired and down but you put in one of your best performances
You used your intuition effectively in a creative or problem-solving situation
You overcome stage fright or otherwise used nervous energy in a positive way
You experienced a palpable feeling of déjà vu
You instantly stereotyped somebody
You did the opposite of following all the sensible advice and arguments and followed your own feelings
You performed very well in a physical skill because all the long hours of training and practice, as well as your natural talent

Work in a fire circle. Relate stories in rapid fire

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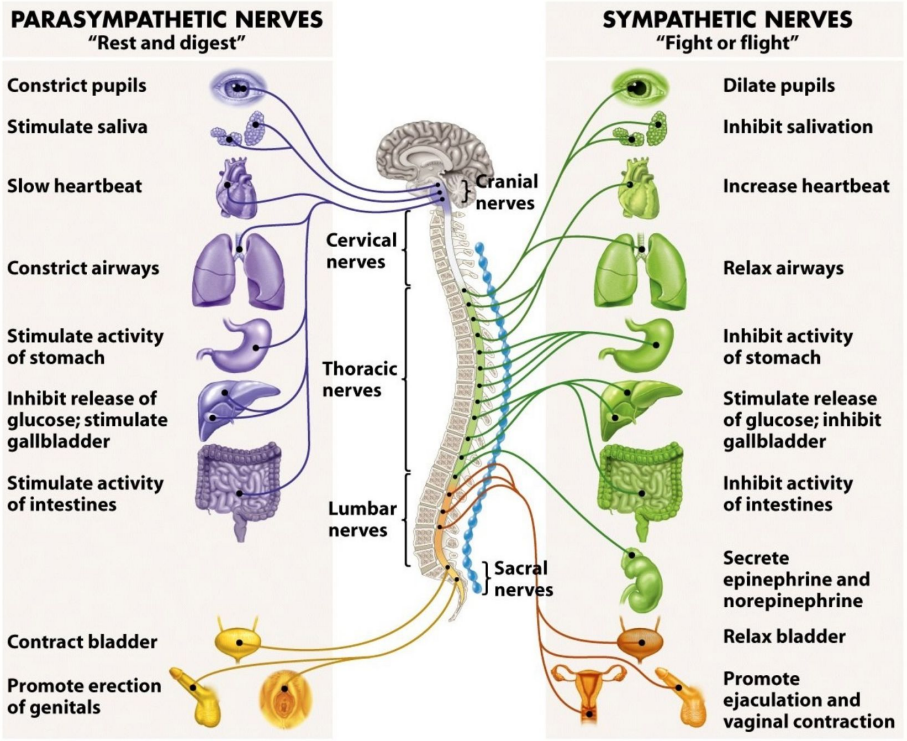
Reason depends on a constant supply of material from our pre-rational, animal nature—from perception, feeling, and natural desires. There is also an intermediate level of automatic judgment, some of it learned through experience, that operates more quickly than conscious reasoning and is essential for navigating the world in real time. The relation among these faculties is complicated. Even when we think we are using reason to arrive at the right answer to some factual or practical question—taking the relevant data consciously into account—our reasoning may be influenced more directly, without our knowledge, by the instinctive forces with which it coexists.

— Thomas Nagel: Reason, Almost. Critical review of Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman. New Republic: January 24, 2012.



Trusting Your Gut

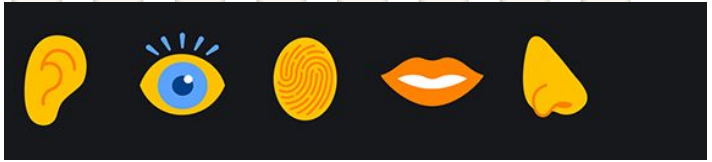
Fight or Flight Reaction



Our animal nature has equipped us with a range of early warning survival devices. They work in mysterious ways. A nuanced aspect of this might be the strange, and difficult to define, instant feeling that something is "not quite right" when entering a place or social situation.

This last, more enigmatic, aspect has been labelled "the 6th sense." Although we might agree with the spirit of this term, and cannot ignore its ubiquitous, colloquial use; we should keep "balance" and "proprioception" in mind, as deserving full status alongside the traditional five Aristotelian senses.

Senses



A. Auditory
B. Electromagnetic radiation of wavelengths between 380 and 750 nm. (visible color spectrum)
C. Equilibrium
D. Gustatory
E. Inertia forces caused by acceleration of viscous fluids moving in the three canals
F. Muscle fibre nerves
G. Olfactory
H. Physical pressures exerted
I. Proprioreception
J. Puffs of air, vibrating between 12 and 20,000 Hz
K. Rod and cone retinal cells of the eyes
L. Sensory cells in nasal lining
M. Semi-circular canals
N. Skin receptors
O. Taste buds on tongue
P. Tensions (tone) across muscle fibres
Q. Visual
R. Wide range of volatile chemicals in the air

SENSE	FORMAL NAME	RECEPTOR ORGAN	WHAT EXACTLY IS BEING SENSED
SIGHT			
HEARING		Tympanic membranes of the ears	
SMELL			
TASTE			Chemicals corresponding to salt, bitter, sweet, sour and *umami*
TOUCH	*tactile*		
BALANCE			
BODY POSITION			

Astronomer Arthur Eddington* noted that an ordinary view of the world, one "which spontaneously appears around me when I open my eyes" is "a strange compound of external nature, mental imagery and inherited prejudice." How accurate a description is this of everyday experience? Provide an example for each category?

*Eddington(1928) The Nature of the Physical World. MacMillan, London.

Trusting Your Gut

TASK I: Close your eyes and hold your breath for a full 90 seconds.

QUESTION: *Why is it impossible to commit suicide by simply holding your breath?*

TASK II: Conduct a staring contest with your partner. The first one to blink is the loser. Try it three times.

QUESTION: *What is the difference between a blink and a wink?*

TASK III: Inhale to your maximum capacity. Wait seven seconds; then exhale completely, emptying your lungs to the fullest extent possible.

QUESTION: *How is deliberate hyperventilation different from regular relaxed breathing? To what extent is breathing under conscious control?*

TASK IV: Some advanced yoga practitioners claim to be able to lower their heart rate slightly by sheer concentration of the mind. Try it yourself for a few minutes. Measure your success by monitoring your own your pulse rate.

QUESTION: *What real-life scenarios that you know have caused your resting heart rate to accelerate? Make a mental list of seven of them.*

09

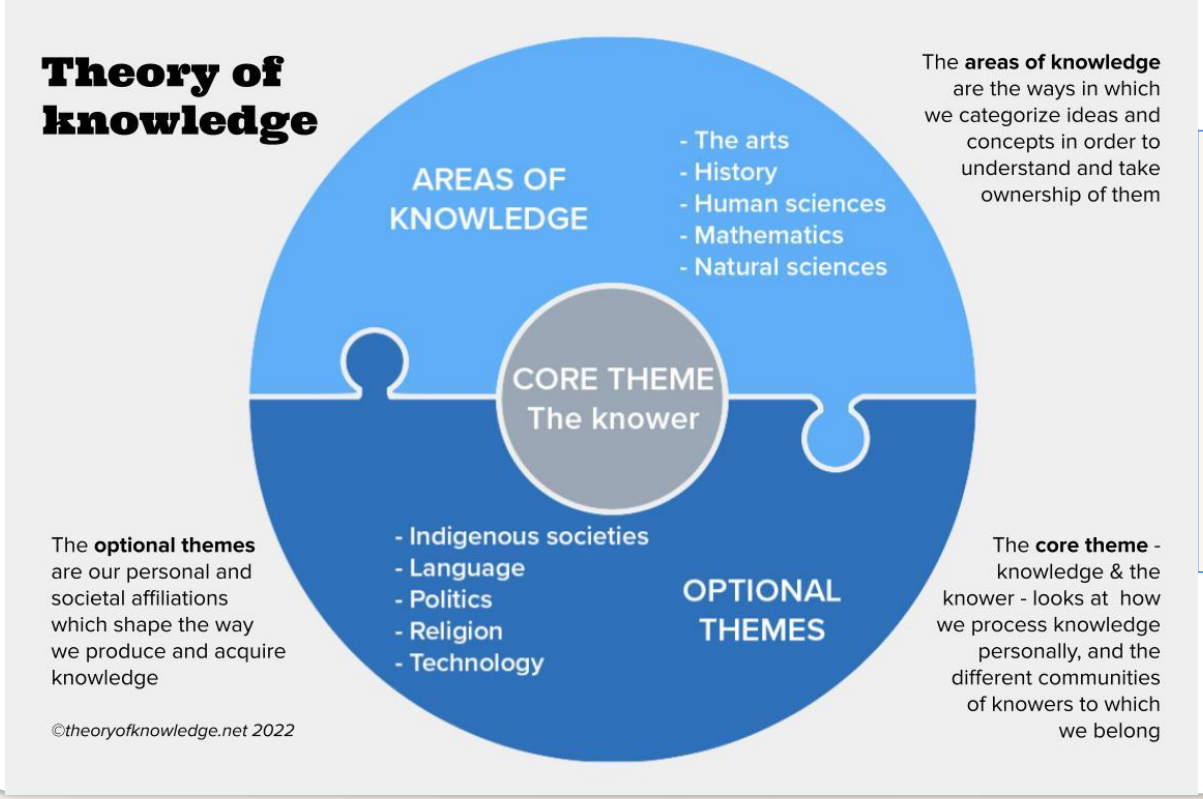
KNOWLEDGE







Areas of Knowledge



This semester's areas:

The knower

Human sciences

Mathematics

The arts

Technology

Knowledge Questions

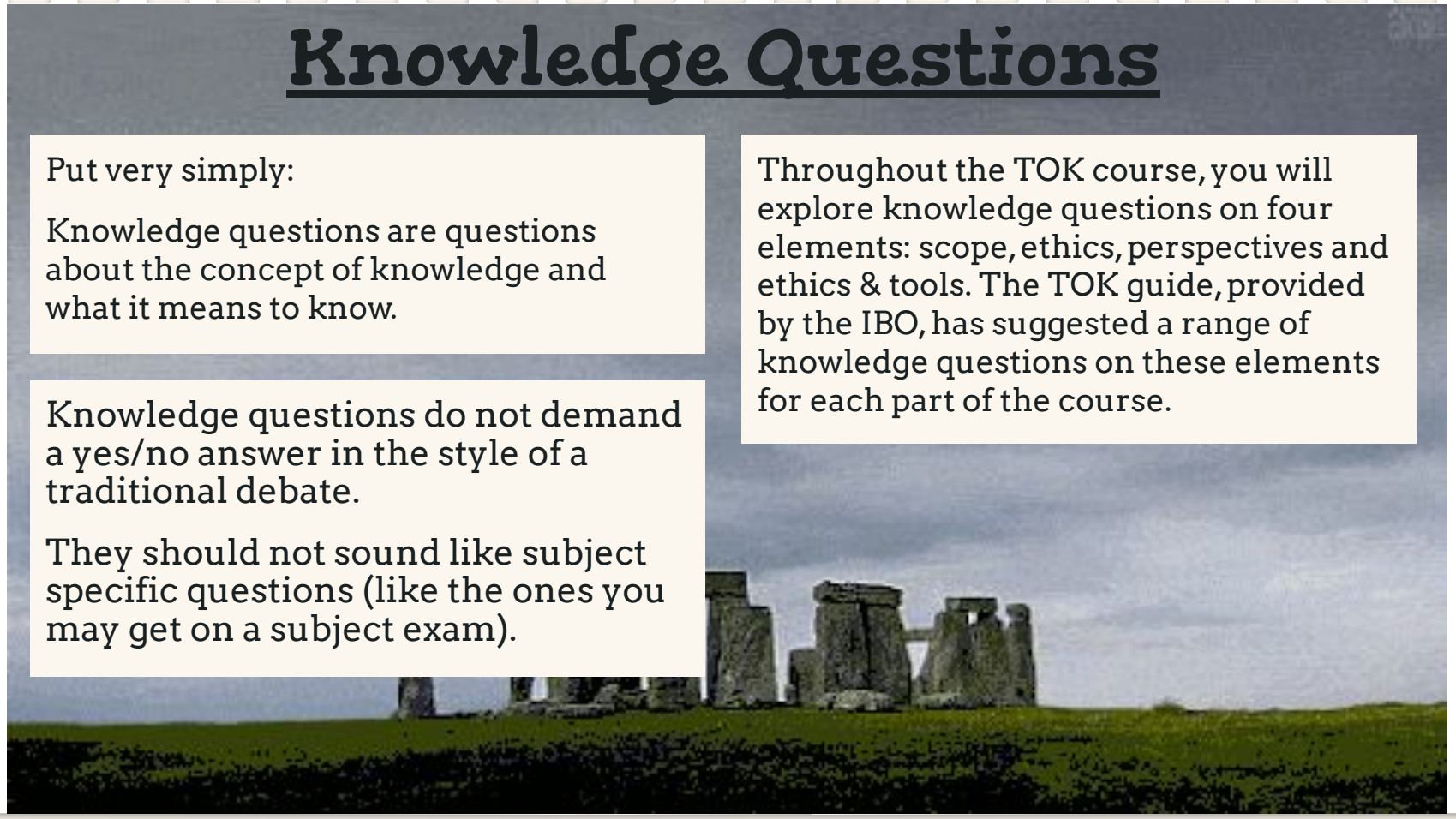
Put very simply:

Knowledge questions are questions about the concept of knowledge and what it means to know.

Knowledge questions do not demand a yes/no answer in the style of a traditional debate.

They should not sound like subject specific questions (like the ones you may get on a subject exam).

Throughout the TOK course, you will explore knowledge questions on four elements: scope, ethics, perspectives and ethics & tools. The TOK guide, provided by the IBO, has suggested a range of knowledge questions on these elements for each part of the course.



Examples of Knowledge Qs

Scope

What are the key current open/ unanswered questions in these themes/ areas of knowledge?

Perspectives

What is the nature of the contribution of influential individuals to these themes/ areas of knowledge?

Methods&Tools

What counts as “good evidence” in these themes/areas of knowledge?

Ethics

What ethical responsibilities do we have regarding knowledge that has been created or published by other people?

Knowledge Questions

First, choose your Prescribed Title

Second, choose your 2 AOKs

The courtroom analogy

It's helpful to think of the answer as though you're sharing the most interesting bits of a conversation between two smart people. Or you could think about it as presenting two sides of an argument about knowledge, in front of a judge. To be successful each side needs to present evidence and explain clearly how the evidence relates to the question.

One side would say YES to the (prescribed title) question, using evidence and the other is arguing the other side (saying NO), also using evidence.

In your answer, we want to see both sides argued well and then, in your conclusion, you'll weigh up the evidence --telling us which side is the more right (or the ways they're right) and maybe the circumstances wherein the other side would be right.

Making sure your evidence actually supports your claims and counterclaims is one of the toughest aspects of the essay.

Examples of Knowledge Qs

How do we know if a source or claim can be trusted?
How do we know what is morally right or wrong?
How do we know what our conclusions rest on?
How do we know if results are accurate?
Is Mathematics present in Nature? What does this imply?
How reliable is 'proof' in the Natural Sciences?
Are the human 'Sciences' really Science?
Under what circumstances can we say that something is "true" in .... (AOK)?
How useful is knowledge gained in History? Does knowledge have to be useful?
What is Scientific about Science?
How is a subject defined – are there disagreements?
Where are the boundaries of your subject?
What does your subject have in common with other subject areas?
Why is your subject area clustered in a specific Area of Knowledge?
How should the various Areas of Knowledge be structured in a diagram, and why?
Does the word 'truth' have different meanings in different contexts?
What are the best grounds for saying that we know something rather than believe it?

In what ways can we overcome problems of knowing to arrive at an understanding of things as they really are?
How do provisionally accepted but distrusted beliefs become ones we are certain are true?
Are there areas where it is not necessary to rely on one"s experience and culture to understand something?
To what extent can we understand knowledge claims from a different culture?
How important is the role of value judgements in different areas of knowledge?
In what ways and areas would the absence of experts most severely limit our knowledge?
Under what circumstances should we ignore the opinions of experts in the various areas of knowledge?
On what basis might we decide between the judgements of experts if they disagree?
To what extent is the knowledge that experts possess transferable?
To what extent do different areas of knowledge incorporate doubt as a part of their methods?

THE EXHIBITION

Acknowledgements: the factual features of this web-page are based on the TOK Guide of the 2022 specification.





What Is It?

Structure

- Worth 10 marks
- Usually done in year 1
- 3 objects
- Written commentary (950 words) and moderated by the IB

Purpose

To explore how the TOK manifests in the world around us

Commentary yes/no

- Real-world context
- Link to IA prompt
- Justify inclusion
- Explain link to a theme
- Link objects to each other

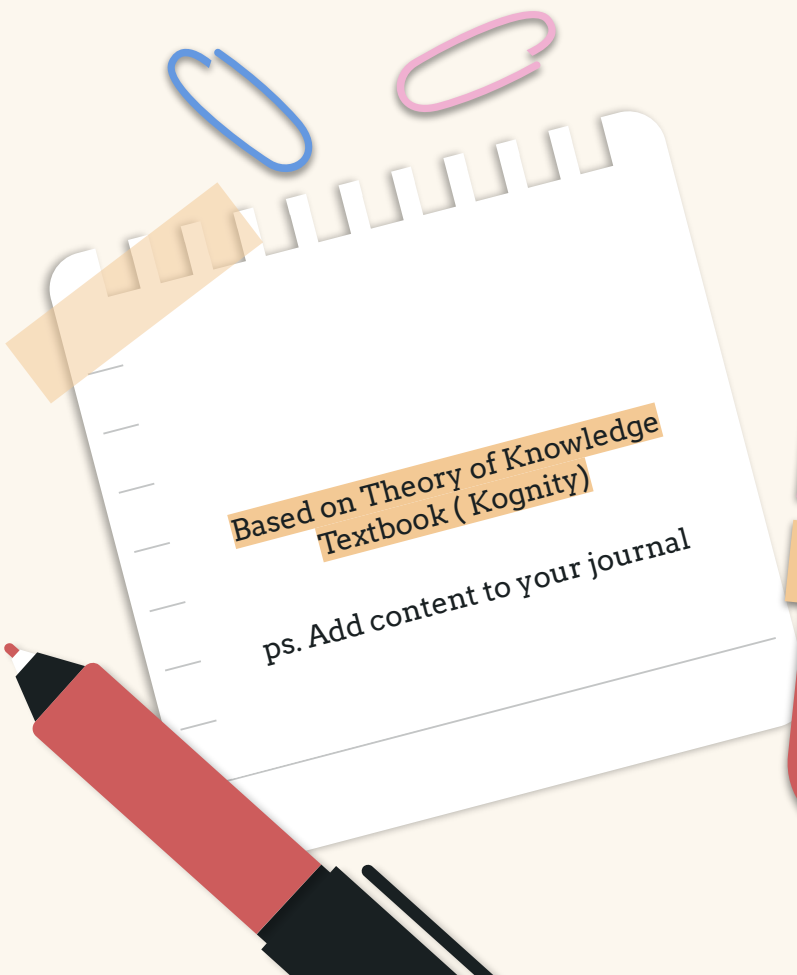
The challenge

- Specific
- Concrete
- Real-world context
- Palpable

Improve These Objects

A gun





The End

Any questions?

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