

**Murrieta Valley Unified School District**  
**High School Course Outline**  
**April 2013**

**Department:** Social Studies

**Course Title:** Theory of Knowledge IB

**Course Number:** 1892

**Grade Level(s):** 11-12

**Length of Course:** Year

**Prerequisite(s):** Acceptance into IB Diploma Program

**UC/CSU (A-G) Requirement:** G

**IB Exam Requirement:** Students attempting to receive college credit for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses are required to pass a College Board exam which validates coursework. This exam is not a requirement for District High School credit, grade increases, or extra credit.

Student fees are allowable for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Diploma examinations for college credit, so long as (1) taking the exam is not a course requirement; (2) the exam results have no impact on a pupil's grade or credit in a course; and (3) eligible economically disadvantaged high school pupils who receive school district funding towards the exam fee shall pay \$5.00 of the fee. (EC sections 52240-52244; 52920-52922.)

---

## **IB Diploma Programme course outlines**

---

Teachers responsible for each proposed subject must prepare a course outline following the guidelines below. While IB subject guides will be used for this exercise, teachers are expected to adapt the information in these guides to their own school's context. Please be sure to use IBO nomenclature throughout. The name of the teacher(s) who wrote the course outline must be recorded at the top of the outline.

**Name of the teacher who prepared the outline:**

Diana Hess
------------

**Name of the course:**

For example, English A1, HL.

## Theory of Knowledge

### Course description:

In two to three paragraphs, describe the course in terms of focus, purpose, aims and objectives, the inclusion of internationalism, the proposed process, and expected assessment. This should be a summary.

Theory of Knowledge is an all inclusive course which aims to develop and encourage reflective and critical thinking in the IB student. All students have had eleven years of education, yet for the most part they have not been asked to examine the knowledge they have learned to determine if it is indeed knowledge, if it is, is it reliable, and what is its value. These are just a sample of the questions students will be asked to ponder. The TOK course will facilitate the student through a journey which will in the end develop his/her ability to express his/her opinion as well as hear the opinions of fellow students. Developing this capability will allow the IB student to be an excellent thinker who considers what he/she is learning, what its value is and how it relates to all areas of knowledge.

Students will focus on all six areas of knowledge: Natural sciences, Human sciences, History, the Arts, Ethics, and Mathematics. In addition students will also focus on the ways of knowing in combination with all six areas. The TOK course is not complete if it doesn't include the knower as well. Therefore, the course will focus on the student as the knower and the center of the learning process to develop reflective thinkers and students of knowledge. This focus will allow the student to develop into critical thinkers and learners who will then be excellent 21<sup>st</sup> century students who are able to contribute and adapt to our quickly changing world.

It is the objective of Murrieta Valley High School that the TOK course will develop in students the ability to analyze knowledge to critically evaluate the implications of its assertions; to construct questions in regard to knowledge issues surrounding the information; express an understanding of other perspectives on knowledge issues; develop the ability to approach the different knowledge issues from various perspectives and at the same time be able to make comparisons as to how each perspective contributes to the ways of knowing and to the perspective of the knower; to develop a solid understanding of self; and finally to encourage a deep respect and appreciation of the world, and the wonderful richness of other cultures and perspectives that other cultures bring to life and the areas of knowledge.

### Topics:

In narrative or outline form, list what you will cover in your course to meet the IB syllabus requirements. In addition, if IB courses are going to be combined with Advanced Placement or other curriculums, outlines should address additional non-IB topics to be covered.

This course will not be taught in combination with any Advanced Placement courses. It will be taught with consideration of other IB courses taught to allow the students to apply critical and reflective thinking to all classes they are taking. Areas to be covered will include:

I. Introduction to Theory of Knowledge: Course Overview and Objectives

- A. Knowledge issues
- B. Nature of Knowing
- C. Knowledge Communities
- D. Knowers and sources of knowledge
- E. Justification of knowledge claims

II. Ways of Knowing

- A. Sense Perception
  - 1. Nature of Sense Perception
  - 2. Importance and Limitations
  - 3. Linking Questions
  - 4. Sense Perception and Areas of Knowledge
- B. Language
  - 1. Nature of Language
  - 2. Language and Culture
  - 3. Language and Thought
  - 4. Language and Knowledge
  - 5. Linking Questions
  - 6. Language and Areas of Knowledge
- C. Reason
  - 1. Nature of Reason
  - 2. Reason and Knowledge
  - 3. Strengths and Weaknesses of Reason
  - 4. Linking Questions
- D. Emotion
  - 1. Nature of Emotion
  - 2. Emotion of Knowledge
  - 3. Linking Questions

### III. Areas of Knowledge

#### A. Math

1. Nature of Mathematics
2. Mathematics and World
3. Mathematics and Knowledge Claims
4. Mathematics and the Knower
5. Organizing Question: Is Mathematics “the language of the universe?” And if so, how do culture and experiences people have, still convey “truths”?

#### B. Natural Sciences

1. Nature of the Sciences
2. Natural Sciences: Methods of Gaining Knowledge
3. Natural Sciences and knowledge claims
4. Natural sciences and values
5. Natural Sciences and technology
6. Natural Sciences: Metaphor and Reality
7. Organizing Question: How does the knower know if what he/she perceives as truth is exactly that or a reflection of previous learned knowledge applied to what is being studied?

#### C. Human Sciences

1. Nature and Human Sciences
2. Human Sciences: Methods of Gaining Knowledge
3. Human Sciences and knowledge claims
4. Human Sciences and values
5. Organizing Question: How does perspective influence the knower’s perception of discoveries made while studying Natural Sciences?

#### D. History

1. Nature of History
2. History: Methods of Gaining Knowledge
3. History and knowledge claims
4. History and values
5. Organizing Question: How do the ways of knowing: language, emotion, perception, and reasoning, affect how the knower interprets history and how he/she finds truths in history?

#### E. Arts

1. Nature of the Arts
2. The Arts Methods of Gaining Knowledge
3. The Arts and knowledge claims
4. The Arts and values
5. The Arts and knowledge perspectives
6. Organizing Question: To what extent does the social context in which the knower has experience determine his/her knowledge of art, and is the knower affected by the other areas of knowledge in his/her creation of art?

#### F. Ethics

1. Nature of Ethics
2. Ethics: Methods of gaining knowledge and knowledge claims
3. Ethics and knowledge perspectives
4. Ethics and politics
5. Ethics and areas of knowledge
6. Organizing Question: How does the knower affect his/her own perception of ethics when he/she examines the sense of morality and the moral codes they develop from that sense?

Throughout all areas taught, linking questions will be discussed to consider the following concepts when evaluating knowledge: Belief, Certainty, Culture, Evidence, Experience, Explanation, Interpretation, Intuition, Technology, Truth and Values.

- How each of the areas are connected: i.e.: are Ethics and Natural Science connected? If so, how do you know?, etc.; How can we use language to understand the nature of history?, etc.
- Knowledge Issues: how the knower relates to knowledge through language, how his/her community affects their perceptions, how his/her own personal experiences influence his/her thinking, and how knowledge claims are justified such as the use of intuition, reason, authority, etc.; finally, students will be asked to use linking questions to further analyze knowledge issues.

## Assessment:

Knowledge of IBO-required assessments and descriptors should be evident. All parts of IB assessment should be addressed, both internal and external. In addition, examples of non-IB monitoring should be given, if they are part of the course.

The TOK course will include the two required assessments, internal and external. In addition students will have other opportunity to monitor their growth and help develop reflective and critical thought:

- The Internal Assessment will be a presentation of approximately 10 minutes. The presentation will include a written element which will provide the basics of planning involved in the development of the presentation. It will include the knowledge issue that is the focus of the presentation; it will also include a summary of how the knowledge issues will be approached during the presentation. Finally it will include the evaluation form on which the student will be assessed. The students will be required to present a topic of their choosing and the presentation should be a tool which will enable the student to demonstrate his/her growth and ability to be a critical and reflective knower. The stress of the presentation will be on demonstrating an understanding of knowledge at work in the world.

*This assessment will be given towards the end of the junior year (1<sup>st</sup> semester of TOK), however, students will be assigned the internal assessment within two weeks of the first semester of TOK in order to give each student ample time to decide what topic they would like to use for the presentation and to prepare for it. The Internal assessment will be scored using the rubrics and guidelines set forth by the IBO.*

- The External Assessment is an essay on a prescribed title issued by IB Organization. It is an essay of 1200 to 1600 words. The students will be given a list of ten titles and may choose the title for their assessment. Students will be given ample time to write the essay and therefore will work at their own pace, however the students will be given a deadline to turn in their final draft. Students will have one opportunity to be given feedback on their essay; however, the feedback will be limited to suggestions of areas that could show further development. The emphasis of the essay is to allow the students to show their thinking skills in discussing a conceptual issue.

*This assessment will be given towards the end of the first semester senior year (2<sup>nd</sup> semester of TOK), however, students will be assigned the external assessment within two weeks of the first semester of TOK in order to give each student ample time to understand and learn what will be required to prepare for it. Students will be given the actual topics from which to choose according to dates and guidelines given by the IBO. The Internal assessment will be scored using the rubrics and guidelines set forth by the IBO.*

- Students will be asked though out the two semesters to write on various knowledge issues and ways of knowing to help the students develop into writers that are able to express themselves in a reflective manner and to be able to develop demonstrating their thinking skills.
- To aid students is developing their ability to present topics of interest to them, students will be asked to present various topics that are covered in class using technology and in group format.
- Students will keep a “Knowbook”, a reflective journal that will be “safe” journals that will allow students to honestly and openly answer, by giving the student the power to allow the instructor to read only what he/she chooses. The instructor will assess the student by merely giving credit for responses that show thoughtful and reflective attempts.
- Students will also be required to be active participants in discussions.

- Finally, students will be given various assignments such as contributing to discussions on various topics by bringing in newspaper, magazine, or on-line articles that provide “food for thought” on current knowledge issues being addressed in class.
- All students will be required to comment on topics being discussed on an on-line wiki board.
- Grading will be allotted as follows:
  - Participation 20%
  - “Knowbook” and other class work 25%
  - Essays 20%
  - Internal Assessment 15%
  - External Assessment 20%

**Resources:**

List the books and other resource materials and software that will be used in the course. Information should include what is currently available as well as what is being ordered.

Texts requested:

Philosophy: A Text with Readings, 10th ed.	9780495103097	Cengage: Wadsworth
IB Theory of Knowledge Course Companion	0-19-915122-9	IB Source

Dombrowski, Eileen, Lena Rotenberg, and Mimi Bick. IB Theory of Knowledge Course Companion. USA: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Velasquez, Manuel. Philosophy: A Text With Readings. USA: Wadsworth Pub Co, 2007

Other assorted articles from many resources: newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times, the Press Enterprise, and the Californian; magazines such as Time, Newsweek, Scientific America, Discover and internet articles as well as video clips.

All resources will be for in-class use. Each resource will be used to facilitate discussion. No book will be used in its entirety; rather, various chapters, segments, and/or topics will be pulled out and used as needed to ensure students are able to fully grasp what it is to be reflective and curious learners.

**Teaching time:**

List all classroom teaching hours for each HL and SL course. Explain how the hours are calculated.

HL/SL course	Teaching hours
Theory of Knowledge (100 hours required)	Total teaching time is 124 hours before the assessment deadline. Course will satisfy the 100 hour requirement.
	<i>(add rows as necessary)</i>

***In addition:***

**For theory of knowledge:**

- Is the TOK course designed to conform to IBO requirements in substance and classroom hours?
- Indicate the distribution of TOK topics over the two years of the IB Diploma Programme.
- Does the course provide adequate training in analytical and critical thought?

The TOK course conforms to IBO requirements in substance and classroom hours based on:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The course is taught in the second semester (Spring) of the junior year and the first semester (Fall) of the senior year; giving the student approximately 145 hours, fulfilling the requirement of 100 hours.</li><li>• The course is designed to consider various sources of knowledge and the varying ways in which individuals perceive and process the knowledge as it is acquired.</li><li>• The course is built on critical reflection, asking the student to reconsider and reevaluate information already acquired previous to the program.</li><li>• In addition to reflecting on previously acquired knowledge, students will be asked to critically analyze currently acquired knowledge to understand different perspectives on various knowledge issues. In addition, students will be able to understand and make connections and comparisons between the areas of knowledge, the ways of knowing, how they interrelate and how they relate to theoretical positions as well as to cultural values.</li><li>• Finally, the students will learn how to personally reflect on their own growth and acquire self-awareness as to how they as learners relate to knowledge issues so that they understand their responses to these issues.</li></ul>

During the first semester, students will study:

- An Introduction to Theory of Knowledge: Knowledge issues, Knowers and Knowing
- Natural Sciences and Ways of Knowing including language and thought as well as strengths and weaknesses of reason
- History and Ways of Knowing including reason and knowledge as well as the nature of sense perception
- The Arts and Ways of Knowing including nature of emotion as well as language and culture
- Oral presentation-Internal assessment

During the second semester, students will study:

- Human Sciences and Ways of Knowing including importance and limitations of sense perception as well as nature of reason
- Ethics and Ways of Knowing including emotion and knowledge as well as the nature of perception
- Mathematics and Ways of Knowing including language and knowledge as well as reason and knowledge
- Essay on a Prescribed Title-External Assessment

The course provides adequate training in analytical and critical thought through various methods.

- Use of questions to facilitate analytical thought such as, “What counts as knowledge, How does it grow, etc.”
- Facilitating the students’ pondering the knowledge they have already acquired, exploring the significance of that knowledge and critically examining the validity and worth of that knowledge. Students will also examine how what they claim to know is valid.
- Discussion will be used to facilitate dialog to help students share their ideas and the reflective thoughts that each student thinks everyday and perhaps doesn’t recognize. This practice will also simulate students to go beyond their scope of experience to come into contact with other thoughts and experiences.
- Students will use journals to record their responses to various thought-provoking quotes, stories, pictures, scenes, etc. The journals will be “safe” journals that will allow students to respond to the prompts honestly and openly, by giving the student the power to allow the instructor to read only what he/she chooses.
- Students will be exposed constantly to global experiences, authors, articles, art, music, etc. to provide and enhance the students’ experience with other cultures and to understand other world views and perspectives.



**For all subjects:**

- Has a thorough review of the available resource materials and equipment (both within the department and in the library/media centre) been conducted?
- Are instructional materials available in sufficient quality, quantity and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the courses?
- Are community resources used both within the classroom and as part of regular field trips?
- Are the needs and projected costs of acquiring all necessary materials and equipment for each subject group clearly stated?
- Is an international perspective included?

- The library has many resources available, both on-line and within the actual library itself.
- For the resources that will be used by the instructor, the library will need to order two of the core books listed in the outline.
- Many resources will be provided for the student by the instructor in the form of copies of articles, on-line resources, and videos that the teacher will supply.

- Instructional materials are available in sufficient quality, quantity and variety to give effective support to the aims and methods of the course.

- Community resources such as visiting speakers are being considered for classroom use. No field trips are currently planned, although fieldtrips, traveling, and community projects are being discussed for CAS and the entire IB program. Costs for field trips will need to be fund raised.

- A budget has been developed for the IB Program for the first few years of the program. Currently, a list of all needs (materials, textbooks, technology) for all subjects areas is being itemized and prioritized. The IB Coordinator and school Principal are developing a plan to begin the purchase and acquisition of necessary materials for the implementation of the IB Program in all proposed subject areas.

- An international perspective is integral to the TOK course. In order for a student to truly understand how or why they know something, they will always need to identify their perspective, which is influenced by many factors, such as culture, and where you live. The goal of TOK is to broaden students' perspectives to include those that are different from their own, in which the international perspective will become crucial.