

# International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge

@ Durham Sixth Form Centre

"Tell a man there are 300 billion stars in the universe and he'll believe you. Tell him a bench has wet paint and he'll have to touch to be sure"

– Anon

"The TOK course encourages critical thinking about knowledge itself, to try and help young people make sense of what they encounter...The course encourages students to share ideas with others and to listen to and learn from what others think. In this process students' thinking and their understanding of knowledge as a human construction are shaped, enriched and deepened"

(taken from the IB subject Guide)

All IB Diploma students must study 100 hours of Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and the programme is considered central to the educational philosophy of the International Baccalaureate. It challenges students and their teachers to reflect critically on diverse ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, and to consider the role which knowledge plays in a global society. It will encourage you to become aware of yourself as a thinker, to become aware of the complexity of knowledge, and to recognise the need to act responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world.

## Courses:

Questions are the very essence of Theory of Knowledge, both ageless questions on which thinkers have been reflecting for centuries and new ones, often challenging accepted belief, which are posed by contemporary life. You will explore the different Areas of Knowledge – "What do I know?" and the Ways of Knowing – "How do I know what I know?" Students will be expected to keep a journal and reflect on their experiences, relating the knowledge they acquire back to the Theory of Knowledge programme. This means that the students themselves will be providing most of the stimuli for discussion taking place in lessons.

## Assessment:

You will be assessed via a 20 minute presentation given in pairs based on a knowledge issue. This is worth 20 points. You must also submit an essay worth 40 points. Success in Theory of Knowledge will help you to learn more effectively in all your subjects. It is at the core of your IB learning and you must pass the Theory of Knowledge element to pass the whole Diploma!

"We know accurately when we know little; with knowledge, doubt increases"

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

know-ing-ly adv. —  
know-it-all (-it əl) adj.  
know-much about al  
know-it-all person: al  
knowl·edge (nəl'ij) n  
confession < Late OE  
element of une. orig.]  
specif.: a) acquaint  
etc.) b) aware  
facts; range  
all-  
enlightenmen  
SYN, see IN  
as far as