

Theory of Knowledge for the IB Diploma

✓ New course structure

- The coursebook and *Teaching for Success* are structured to mirror the new course structure, with chapters dedicated to the **core theme**, each of the **five optional themes** and the **five areas of knowledge (AOKs)**.
- They include the new core theme on **'Knowledge and the Knower'** which allows students to reflect on themselves as knowers and thinkers.
- Chapters on the new optional themes on 'Knowledge and Technology' and 'Knowledge and Politics' are included, with real-world examples of TOK, such as topical issues like fake news, social media 'filter bubbles' and more.

✓ New knowledge framework

- Chapters are structured according to the knowledge framework, with a section dedicated to each of the four elements: Scope, Perspectives, Methods and Tools, and Ethics.
- The coursebook and *Teaching for Success* contain knowledge questions relating to the relevant element of the framework in each section.
- The *Skills for Success* book contains a chapter devoted to the knowledge framework, with in-depth discussions of each of the four elements.

✓ Conceptual learning

- Both the coursebook and *Teaching for Success* feature an introductory chapter containing in-depth discussions of each of the twelve course concepts.
- *Concept Connection* boxes in the subsequent chapters highlight the relevance of one of these concepts to the topic being discussed.

CONCEPT CONNECTION

Objectivity

Another important reason for peer review is that scientific knowledge must be made as objectively as possible. The aim of science is to find out about the world as it is, not as scientists think or feel or believe

or wish it to be. One function of the scientific method is to screen out as much as possible any bias or subjectivity on the part of the scientist, and peer review acts as a final check for any such interference with facts.

✓ TOK in the real world

Real-world examples are drawn on throughout the coursebook to illustrate the issues raised by the TOK course. In-depth examples are labelled as **Case studies**.

CASE STUDY

Kaluli creation myth

The creation myth of the Kaluli people of central Papua New Guinea (who are generally non-literate) starts with a completely formless land, populated with people, who quickly become cold and hungry. From within the ranks comes one person who gathers the people together and begins assigning them various roles in the natural world, from streams and rivers, to plants, trees and animals. The people left over after this dividing are the ancestors of the humans living today.

This myth, which may be considered 'true' by the individuals in the community, teaches an important point, that the human beings of the tribe are no different than anything around them, as everything is essentially the same, just taking on a different form. Thus, the myth teaches that humans are not 'other' than the world around them (Schieffelin 93–94).



Interestingly, the fact that the Kaluli people are non-literate underscores the importance of myths in the community – without the intuitive and relatable myths, the knowledge of their relationship to the world would disappear.

✓ Develop diverse and balanced arguments with a variety of activities and tasks

- The coursebook contains more than 150 activities designed to help students check their understanding and engage with the ideas being discussed. QR codes are used to link to related online activities and resources.
- *Teaching for Success* includes guidance on how to use these activities in the classroom, as well as further activities and detailed lesson plans.

ACTIVITY

Use the QR code to find out more about Project Implicit and take the test.

- 1 What do you think the *point* of a test like this is?
- 2 Are there *values* written into this test?
- 3 How might the results of a test like this impact our future behaviour?



✓ Deeper thinking

Deeper Thinking boxes are designed to help students think through some of the difficult issues or dilemmas that the TOK course raises in the depth required.

DEEPER THINKING

Generalization and 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?



■ It is easy to pigeonhole people into particular groups

Whether justified or not, people might have certain beliefs about these communities, and it might be unfair to use these beliefs about the community to describe someone in that community. This is the root

of the injustice of 'stereotyping', where we place an individual into a community and then unfairly pre-judge that individual based on what we think is true about that community.

✓ Common mistakes – TOK traps

Our authors have identified some common mistakes that students make when studying TOK. These are labelled **TOK trap**.

TOK trap

Many students want to write about the Copernican Revolution in their TOK essays, often using it as an example of a paradigm shift. There is nothing wrong with the idea of doing so, but far too often students are not careful about their facts. They think that they know something about Copernicus and the shift from the **geocentric** universe to the **heliocentric** universe, and too often students make the mistake of relying on sweeping generalizations which are, in fact, wrong. To give just one example: as we noted in Chapter 1, Nicolaus Copernicus published his theory of the heliocentric universe in a book entitled *De Revolutionibus* in March of 1543, and then died two months later. The Catholic Church did not ban the book until 1616 (Solis). You can use the QR code on the right to read more about the history of Copernicus and the Catholic Church.



Galileo, on the other hand, was indicted for his 'heretical support for Copernicus' heliocentrism' (Linder) in 1616. An important idea to take away from this TOK trap is that it is always going to be wise to do some research about any example you wish to use in your TOK essay, rather than trying to rely on easy generalizations or 'facts' you think you know from sometime in the past.

✓ Assessment support including guidance on the NEW TOK Exhibition

- Assessment advice relating to both the essay and the new **TOK Exhibition** are included throughout the coursebook.
- **IA prompts** feature in the coursebook at appropriate points, to inspire students to start thinking about their exhibitions.
- Both *Teaching for Success* and *Skills for Success* feature a chapter containing in-depth advice for teachers and students about how to approach each of the assessment components.