**Outline Guide for TOK Oral Presentation**

**INTRODUCTION:**

*Our main Knowledge Question is: What informs a society’s decision on what limits or expands human freedom?*

*Our real life situation that got us thinking about our main Knowledge Question:*

We decided upon our topic on an issue that caught our attention after it came out on the news. It was about a 29-year-old girl named Brittany Maynard. Brittany was diagnosed in January of 2014 with a glioblastoma brain tumor and was told by doctors that she had six months to live. She had moved to Oregon because of the fact that Euthanasia is legal there. In other words, she wanted someone to assist her in her suicide, as she was terminally ill. She had spent the last few weeks of her life campaigning the right for people who were terminally ill to take their own lives instead of having to live through the pain. Maynard had planned to take a prescribed medication to end her life when it became unbearable, and that’s what she did. Before dying, however, Maynard raised funds through Compassion & Choices to promote assisted suicide as an option for terminally ill patients as an alternative for people who have been, or will be, in the same position she was in. This inspired the Legislative Branch to legalize euthanasia in California in the past few months because Governor Jerry Brown would have wanted to be able to make his own decision on the way he should pass away.

**BODY:**

**First Question**

***Linking question****: What role does intuition, reason and emotion play in making the decision of what is ethical?*

***Claims***

1. David Lewis - Intuitions are simply opinions. (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/intuition/>)
2. Counter Argument: Intuition is based differently for for all people, at different time periods and about what is right and wrong. (TOK Book 162)
3. Reason can lead us to a “prison of logic” (TOK Book 137)
4. Counter Argument: Reason gives us certainty (TOK Book 112)
5. Emotions interfere with one's ability to make good decisions; they can influence our perceptions and create bias information.( According to Myeong- Gu Seo And Lisa Feldman Barrett
6. CounterArgument: Emotions play a major role in our mental lives, without them we’d be unable make sense of the world. (TOK Book 151)

***How is each Claim Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?***

1. In the TOK book it’s said,“ It could be argued that the aim of education is to help us ‘unlearn’ our naive intuitions so that we can acquire a more sophisticated and reliable understanding of the world.” (TOK Book 161) This means that intuitions keep us from seeing the world with different perspectives. Intuitions keep us from understanding the world in several ways rather than understanding and seeing the world through our opinions .
2. According to the TOK book, reason can make it hard for us to see things with a different perspective. ( TOK Book 137)
3. In the TOK book, it’s stated that emotions are a source of knowledge, but can also be an obstacle to knowledge. (TOK Book 151) James-Language theory says that emotions are essentially physical in nature but that they can also be influenced by our beliefs (TOK Book 166)

***Examples and stories that can help illustrate the claims and different perspectives***

1. First claim : Intuition is our opinions.

Question: Would it be wrong to kill all killers in order to save a city of innocent people?

An example for the first claim is Death Note, an anime show about a young teen named light, who gets ahold of a journal in which whose name is written in it dies. This leads light to kill off all criminals in order to make the world a safer and better place. In death note, Light decides killing all the criminals because he thinks it’ll make the world a better place. This raises the question, if he’s killing criminals in order to make the world a better place, will he have to be killed as well, since he has committed the crime of killing others? If people were asked to fill out a survey about whether if they would kill all criminals in order to make the world a better place, not all would say they would, proving that our intuitions are only opinions. according to the website decision-making-solutions.com, our intuition responds quickly to inaccurate, insufficient, unreliable, or incomplete information based on previous experiences therefore intuitions tend to be our opinions.

1. Counterclaim: Intuitions are based and influenced by time periods, different perspectives and beliefs.

An example for the counterclaim is how two people in a relationship treat each other. For example my cousin's boyfriend doesn't let her wear makeup, he doesn't let her dress up when she goes out, he doesn't give her freedom at all. Once i was texting her and hours later i get a text from her number asking “Who’s this?” After a couple of more texts i realized it was her boyfriend being insecure about who she was talking to. Once women were believed to be only useful at home, cooking and taking care of kids, and now women are able to work just as much as man but even after time has changed, many men and women still believe that they are only good for cleaning their home, doing all the cooking and babysitting. The example of my cousins boyfriend and how he treats her shows that over time, even though time changes, limits and standards that we sometimes don’t even realize exist keep us from growing or becoming someone we could be.

2. Second Claim: Reason leads us to a “ Prison of logic”

An example for the why reason leads us to a “Prison of logic” is Plato's Allegory of the cave. People grew up never truly knowing what it was outside the cave. To them, the shadows was their reality. They couldn't accept the fact that there was more to life than the black figures on the walls of the cave they grew up in. This example shows how our reasoning can keep us from being able to see the whole picture or past what is placed in front of us.

Counterclaim: Reason gives us this certainty that is only certain within the context of our experience, knowledge and our ability.

Question: If one of your friends were thinking about committing suicide, would you let them kill themselves? Why?

The example for the counterclaim is Suicide. We feel compelled to talk someone out of suicide because our reasoning tells us it’s wrong to kill ourselves since once we die, there’s no coming back. We believe that we aren't supposed to die until after we have achieved a purpose in this life. We’re so sure of our human purpose that we try to stop people from killing themselves and “wasting” their lives.

3.Third Claim: Emotions interfere with one's ability to make good decisions; they influence our perceptions and create bias information.

An example of how emotions interfere with one’s ability to make good decisions is being optimistic vs. being pessimistic. Being optimistic is seeing the positive outcomes in all situations, even when it’s not that good. Being pessimistic is only focusing on the negative outcome of a situation rather than being positive. Emotions such as Fear, doubt or negativity, confidence and thinking positive influence our decisions and actions. When we fear or doubt, we don’t do the things we want to do for fearing to fail and of being rejected. Not having confidence leads us to see the world with a negative perspective rather than when we are confident, feel happy and think positive we see the world through completely different perspectives. If a cup filled halfway with water was placed in front of several people and they were asked what they saw some would say the cup is half empty and others would say it’s half full. This is because some are optimistic and others are pessimistic. According to spldbch.blogspot.com, when it comes to emotions there are two factors that determine how emotions influence decision making: *how* people experience their emotions and *what* they do with them. For example, when one is a pessimistic, they can chose to not let these negative thought affect their actions and decisions.

Counterclaim: Emotions play a major role in our mental lives without them we’d be unable make sense of the world. (TOK Book 151)

An example for the counterclaim is the true life experience of a man named Elliot who was mentioned in the Theory Of Knowledge book. Elliott suffered from ventromedial frontal lobe damage as a result of a tumor and subsequent surgery for removal. This made him lose his emotions which lead him unable to make decisions. This proves that without emotions, we wouldn't be able to make decisions.

***How does learning about this second knowledge question help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?***

Learning about how intuition, reason and emotion affect our decision making in what is ethical will help come to a closer understanding of the factors that influence the decisions on what limits or expands our freedom. Over all, our subconscious mind somehow finds links between our new situation and various patterns of our past experiences, which affect our decisions.

***How is this secondary Knowledge Question connected to your Real-Life Situation?***

Reason, Intuition and emotions are involved in our real life situation because these three categories are what lead someone to want assisted suicide in a situation where death is the outcome no matter what. Intuition and reason affect the decision whether to ask for assisted suicide because killing ourselves in general is a sin. According to my second claim, reason can make it hard for us to see things with a different perspective, therefore many people will never truly understand why euthanasia is legal in many places. Since Euthanasia is a very controversial subject, and according to my first claim, intuitions are simply opinions, everyone's opinions about Maynard's decision of her assisted suicide will either gain her hatred or support. For example those who are religious hate the idea of people who are terminally sick killing themselves instead of enjoying their last few days. On the other hand, Maynard's family and friends support her because they love her and would hate to see her in pain. When Maynard was diagnosed with the brain tumor she probably right away taught about how her loved ones would feel seeing how every day she slowly dies, and about how she would live her last few months in agony. If i were in her shoes i know that's exactly what i’d think about right away. I’d hate to live my last days in pain, i’d specially hate to put my family through that pain of knowing they are slowly losing their family member.

**Second Question**

**Linking question:** In what ways are language and one’s actions limited by history?

**Claims**

1. When one does not study their history they are bound to repeat many mistakes that have imposed limitations upon a culture or society. (According to <http://bigthink.com/the-proverbial-skeptic/those-who-do-not-learn-history-doomed-to-repeat-it-really>).
	1. Counter Argument: History does not have to be studied when the events of a country have done more harm than good. ([According to http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/02/cult-of-memory-when-history-does-more-harm-than-good](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/02/cult-of-memory-when-history-does-more-harm-than-good)).
2. We are all categorized by gender, race, and class, meaning we are all being obstructed from certain actions one way or another. (According to [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19934/)](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK19934/%29).
	1. Counter Argument: Race, gender and class have no effect on the limit to what we can become and do with ourselves. (According to <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/limiting-students-race-class-gender-lisa-mims>).
3. Past events in countries around the world obstruct the use of some language throughout the world because it has been ravaged by people with malignant intent. (According to <http://www.racialslurs.com/search?q=term&sort=slur)>
	1. Counter Argument: All language must be written down and recorded because of the fact that it is a part of our natural history. (According to <http://www.roangelo.net/logwitt/language-limit-emotion.html>).

**How is each claim Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?**

1. According to the TOK Book, the first claim and contrasting claims are supported because, “History is concerned with the past, and one obvious problem with trying to know the past is that it no longer exists… At the opposite extreme from scepticism, it could be argued that, since the past no longer exists, it cannot be changed and is therefore completely objective.” (307, 308).
2. According to the TOK Book, the second claim and contrasting claims are supported because, “It has, for example, been said that history shows that war is inevitable, or that different races are unable to live together in harmony.” (307).
3. According to the TOK Book, the first claim and contrasting claims are supported because of the entire “History is a defence against propaganda” (305, 306) section in the History chapter!

**Examples and stories that can help illustrate the claims**

1. An example for the first claim about how history should be studied in order to avoid mistakes that have imposed limitations upon a given society or culture is if somebody goes into politics. For example, let's say somebody goes into politics and decides to go run for a position of extreme power, such as President, Prime Minister, etc. Before they do that, they should be careful to review the history of people who have been in that position in the past, their mistakes most importantly. Say, Hitler for example, the person in question should know that Hitler was not a good leader. He blamed an entire people for the negative events that happened and were happening in his time frame and caused millions of deaths simply because he needed a scapegoat. This is a time that proves history SHOULD be studied because the person in question running for that position of power should be careful not to repeat another genocide, or anything just as bad.
	1. The example for the counter argument is a situation we discussed here in class that is going on today in Japan. Japan wants to leave out certain events in their textbooks because of their “unique” history. They basically want their history purged because they believe their history is so bad, it should not be learned. One of the events they want to leave out is what happened in World War II, with their use of Kamikaze pilots. The Kamikaze were Japanese pilots who would fly their planes into targeted locations, destroying the target, and ending their own life. This is a bad enough part of their history, that the Japanese would consider purging it from their books, because it should not be worth bringing it up again.
2. An example for the second claim is, let's say an African-American, lower-class woman in a Prestigious university full of snobby, rich people. Her teachers and peers would look down upon her simply because she is black, poor, and a woman, as that's a very controversial topic. They would pressure her into leaving, telling her they can't do this, and that because of the fact she's not the same as them. White, rich, and most likely male. Which is how it's been since the evolution, creation, or what have you, of man.
	1. An example for the counter argument is the same version of that story, however instead of her teachers and peers looking down upon her, they would encourage her to do her best, because she has already made it that far, which means she can go even farther, because she is not letting her race, gender, or class hold her back!
3. For the third claim, an example would be when there was slavery in America. The white people of the time would use negative words to antagonize the blacks, aka, the slaves, such as the “N” word or “boy”. Those are the reasons they are considered derogatory this day in time, which is why we are limited from using that type of language.
	1. An example for the counter argument would be somebody saying that we need these past words and terms written down, for the purpose that we need to know it. For example, take “Boy” or the “N” word into consideration. We would have to know what it meant and why it was used the way it was used in order to fully understand why they used it that way in our history.

**How does learning about this second knowledge question help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?**

This question contributes to our understanding of the Main Knowledge question and help formulate a response to it because of the fact that we need to know why things are considered the way they're considered today in time. We need to know why people think the way they do about controversial topics, which helps us understand why we are limited as a society.

**How is this secondary Knowledge Question connected to your Real-Life Situation?**

This secondary knowledge question is connected to our real-life situation because we need to know what role history plays in the way Euthanasia is seen in society. Why it is illegal in many states and considered immoral to many people, such as politicians, doctors, and many religious people. It helps us to understand the reasons why we are limited in making our own decisions about ourselves and our future and destiny as individuals.

**Third Question:**

**Linking question:** To what extent do religious beliefs influence our perception on the world?

**Claims**

1. Having religious beliefs influences the way we behave and think. (According to: <http://time4thinkers.com/do-your-religious-beliefs-influence-the-way-you-behave-how-so/>)
	1. Counter Argument:
2. Having religious beliefs can cloud our judgement and warp our morals. (According to <http://www.alternet.org/belief/how-conservative-christianity-can-warp-mind>)
	1. Counter Argument: None
3. Having religious beliefs promotes having a good ethical foundation. (According to <http://www.reflectingonjudaism.com/content/relationship-between-religion-ethics>)
	1. Counter Argument: Even with religious beliefs, people won’t always be ethical. (According to <http://kalinbooks.com/atheism-religion/22-ways-religion-promotes-crime/>)

**How is each claim supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?**

1. According to a class conversation we had in our TOK class, having religious beliefs does indeed affect the way we behave and think about others. We talked about how it may change the way people view other people, such as homosexuals.
2. According to the TOK textbook the second claim is supported because it says, “Perhaps the simplest approach to ethics would be to find an authoritative rule book which told us what moral principles to follow.” (485).
3. According to the TOK textbook, the third claim and counter arguments are supported because it states that, “The world’s great religions have been, and continue to be, important sources of moral insight and guidance to millions of people. However, they do not settle all the questions, or free us from the responsibility of thinking about ethics.” (485).

**Examples and stories that can help illustrate the claims and different perspectives**

1. An example for the first claim would be how a man, or person in general, views homosexuality. The bible, for example, states that “man shall not lie with man.” Even people say “It’s Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.” Or “It’s Adam and Eve, not Madam and Eve.” This may change the way that the person acts around someone that's homosexual because they are being taught that it's a sin and shouldn't be done. It can cause aggressive behavior, language, thoughts, etc, harming the other person mentally, emotionally, and possibly physically.
2. An example for the second claim would be the Religions themselves. The Religions all say that they are the only true religion, while spreading hate about the others. For example, in the New Testament Bible, it is mentioned that “one should pray to God alone, secluded, not loudly and in public like the hypocritical Jews.” This is how hate is spread through religions, all wanting to gain more people to join their cause, clouding a person’s judgement about another Religion.
3. An example for the third claim would also be the Bible. In the bible, it states that “One shall love thy neighbor as they would themselves.” This promotes a healthy and positive ethical foundation for people. It is teaching them to be selfless, and peaceful, loving the other person as they would themselves. It impacts that person in many positive ways, possibly allowing them to gain more in life because of their selflessness.

**How does learning about this second knowledge question help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?**

Learning about religion helps with the main knowledge question by using theories and seeing how they affect us. Most, if not all, religions are not technically “proven”, so it shows us how much faith people have in their religion, and how their faith drives them to make the decisions and actions that they make and take.

**How is this secondary Knowledge Question connected to your Real-Life Situation?**

Religion is connected with our real-life situation because religion is a giant reason why people don’t choose going through euthanasia, or forbid it to be done, because it is viewed as a sin, as religion views suicide as a sin itself. Saying that religion doesn’t tie into our laws is a lie, because a lot of people use religion as a reason to oppose things like euthanasia and much more.

**CONCLUSION:**

**Our *answer to your Main Knowledge Question and what implication does it have for your real-life situation?***

The scope of our knowledge and cognitive abilities is always limited, therefore we are never fully aware of all the factors influencing the outcome of any given choice, thus we make decisions based on limited information. We are limited in order to live a long, happy and safe life. Without limitations life would vanish. Religion, history, our own intuition, reason and much more greatly affect our freedom, both limiting and expanding it in certain aspects. They all play a role in what we are limited and not limited to. Although not every single point is agreeable with, without them to limit us in certain ways, everything would be hectic and chaotic, as we would never know when enough is enough, or what is right from wrong.