

## General Advice for Success in the TOK Presentation

- Read the grading criteria carefully before you even start preparing your presentation. A copy of these can be found in the presentation section of my blog. Make sure that you understand these and that your presentation will clearly touch on all of them.
- If you are bilingual, think carefully about in which language you prefer to present (i.e. in which language you are most comfortable expressing your ideas) and that the IB and your school will accept your use of that language. Remember that your TOK presentation and essay must be in the same language. Do not mix languages within the presentation – remember your examiner may not be bilingual. You may have to translate some things into the preferred language of your presentation.
- Remember that currently three of the four criteria are based on you identifying a knowledge issue and your subsequent treatment of it. You may include more than one knowledge issue, but avoid throwing too many at the audience and make sure you give all of them sufficient treatment. Do not leave a knowledge issue unanswered.
- You are required to identify a real-life situation. This is something that you know has actually happened in the real world (not a piece of fiction, rumor or a general statement about something you think may have happened to an unidentified person). You must give evidence to support your supposition that this event actually occurred and it must be linked explicitly to your knowledge issue and run throughout the presentation. The real-life situation is something you need to keep coming back to to support your arguments. The IB does not like you to use real-life situations that are clichéd (this is true of the essay as well), so try to make it original.
- To gain a good grade in criterion D, you are required to show personal involvement in your subject. This means that the examiner is expecting to hear your own voice and your own arguments (not necessarily a detailed demonstration of why you have been intimately involved in your real-life situation in some way).
- Criterion D requires the examiner to see that you have approached your topic from different ‘perspectives’. You should have included arguments and counterarguments (irrespective of what your personal position is), and couched your arguments in terms of the different relevant ways of knowing and areas of knowledge. This does not prevent you from stating your own position during your presentation.
- Remember that this is a TOK presentation and therefore must be based on how we acquire knowledge. If the presentation becomes expository (descriptive, rather than argumentative), you are not meeting the requirements. Assume that your audience is fairly TOK-literate, and therefore avoid defining things that you would expect a TOK student to already fully understand. While some definitions may be necessary, going into detailed analysis of a theory or the meaning of something is a sure way to make your presentation too expository.
- My personal view is that it can be difficult to fit a really good presentation into ten minutes (unless it is really well crafted), and a half hour presentation can become flabby and start to drag if you are not careful. I think a two person presentation generally makes best use of the available time (in this case twenty minutes). If you are working in a team, make sure you trust all of the members to pull their weight – both in terms of presenting and preparing your material. The examiners are free to award different marks to each member of the team if they feel they have

evidence that they have not contributed equally, but unequal contributions will, of course, drive your grade down rather than up. Each member of your team must make an approximately equal contribution verbally. Ensure that no member of your team inadvertently hogs too much of the available time, or does not say enough.

- You must not read from a script, but you can have prompt cards with you to help you to remember the points you want to make and the sequence in which they will appear. Avoid powerpoint presentations with too much text (well-chosen images and bullet points add much more to a presentation than a simple regurgitation of a speech on the screen). Your presentation will be recorded, so make sure any text you put on the screen is visible to the camera. I recommend light text on a dark background. Quickly flip through your presentation beforehand you start to make sure everything fits on the screen and there are no problems with any media you are using. Do not assume that the internet will be working on the day of your presentation. I wouldn't advise the use of any hyperlinks. Download anything you intend to use to your hard drive or USB beforehand.
- Be careful if you intend to use any sound or video clips. They should be short, and not detract from or contradict your own arguments. I would prefer to see your own commentary over a video clip rather than defer to a journalist, presenter or celebrity. If you are not careful, the examiner could interpret your use of videos as a way to avoid giving your own thoughts on a subject (or worse – simply to fill in time).
- Try to be original in the way you present (but do not lose sight of your topic or the requirements of the criteria). This will help the examiner to see that you have personalized your presentation. You may want to pretend to be different characters, for example, but make sure this serves a purpose. It could be one way to produce arguments and counterarguments and allow you to come to a conclusion. This could be another reason to go for a two-person presentation.
- Make sure you have practiced your presentation as much as possible, and avoid too much ad-libbing. You need to make sure you finish in the required time. If you finish too early, you are risking a low grade, and will be at the mercy of questions from the audience (which may not necessarily be helpful). If you go on too long, the examiner may ask you to stop, and you may miss out some important information you really wanted to include.
- My own students tell me every year that the TOK presentation is one of the most nerve-wracking things they are expected to do during high-school. It's hard to disagree with this, however, if you are really well prepared it should be a rewarding (and maybe even an enjoyable) experience.

