

The Theory of Knowledge Journal

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Theory of Knowledge is an extremely practical subject. It can be applied in all your IB subjects, and in almost any aspect of your daily life. Your essays and your presentations will be awarded marks for how you relate what we do in class to your own experiences. It is therefore important that you get used to applying the ideas of Theory of Knowledge to your own original examples.

You are required to keep a Theory of Knowledge journal, in which you make weekly entries about the ideas of Theory of Knowledge and how they apply to your everyday life. You may write the journal entries on any topic which interests you; the only requirement is that it is TOK-related. You will find that the journals are hard to write at first, but after a while you will begin to see possible entries all around. Importantly, essays/presentations are made much easier by a series of good journals.

You must make a journal entry every week; there are no word limits, but some good journal entries are given here as examples. Your teacher will read your journals every few weeks.

On Holiday to Jakarta

I went to Jakarta for the Easter Holiday. I went with a Dutch airplane from Singapore to Jakarta (KLM). It was so bored in the airplane, so I read the airplane's magazine. When I was reading it, there is an article about my country, Indonesia. I was quite shocked to see some of the data about Indonesia that they have given. One thing that really surprised me was that they have given a different date for our Independence Day. Of course it could be a misprint but when I think about it again I think they have put it deliberately. The real Independence Day, or at least the one that government has told us, is 17 August 1945. But in the magazine they have put 1950, and they said the Dutch gave the independence because the UN have insisted. But according to our history, the Dutch did not give the Independence Day in 1950. It is said that we have fought for it, and on that day our first president, Soekarno, had declared our independence. When I read this I felt confused which one I should believe, because both countries may be trying to make their country look good. For the traveller who read this maybe it is not such a big deal for them. But it certainly gave me a headache. But in the end I concluded that both dates are true. I'm certain that Soekarno did declare it, because there are lots of proof about it, like photos and people that listened to it. And I'm certain that Dutch did leave in 1950. So I thought that the date isn't very important, though I'm still suspicious about that we fight for it or is it just given. And after reading this I feel more doubt about History.

Tanya Wihardja

Do Males and Females think differently?

I remember an English class when we were studying poetry. As we discussed, we spoke about the definitions of the word 'home'. To the guys in the class it was quite clear - a place with four walls, windows, a door and a room where you slept. The reaction from the girls was one of utter disgust (and think disappointment). A 'home' was a place where you were always welcome, a domain of your private comfort. Males and females think differently. I don't mean ideas, but *ways* of thinking differ between the sexes. As in my class discussion, males tend to be more literal with ideas and females have more 'figurative' thoughts. Generally, they tend to do these things well and be weaker at the other. The case again arises when we see in school more males taking science subjects while females enrol in the arts. The arguable thing is to say why males/females are different like this. I think it's not built into people, but that it is an imposition of values by society - that it is not nature, but its nurture. Throwing it back I suppose we could say that it is nature which makes the sexes susceptible to society's pressure and even what causes society's mind set in the first place. This doesn't mean that a woman can't do science better than most men, or a man can't write better poetry than most women (Marie Curie, Ted Hughes). We can both start at the same point and arrive at another similar destination, but the ways and routes we travel will differ.

Sui Yang Phang

Aboriginal Art

For project week I visited Australia, and looking at the Aboriginal paintings I started to think about the definitions of Art again. Some of the dot paintings are so simplistic and don't depict a story or image - they are just lines of dots, yet they are still art. I wonder if it is just from the cultural aspect that they are considered art. There is something about these lines of dots which is creative - unlike, in my opinion, the sheep in formaldehyde and other modern paintings. There are other aboriginal paintings which would without a doubt be called Art - those telling a story, a part of their culture. There are now modernised aboriginal paintings which aren't just using traditional earthy colours, but which are becoming a crossover into modern art.

Yokoi Udea

English and Japanese

When I learnt to speak English I don't think I was really aware that I was learning a language. I had no teachers who speak Japanese and when I try to write an essay there were problems. If I look up one word in English, I get several Japanese translations, all of which are totally different. Depending on my choice, my sentence might not make sense. But after studying Japanese literature, I realised that there are some words and phrases that will never exist in English. It might be in the dictionary, but it wouldn't be the right feeling/meaning. So only Japanese people who have the word for this feeling can talk

about it, which I think is cool. So speaking another language broadens your knowledge and ability to feel things. Even though I have never studied Japanese literature before, I can feel what the author meant because we have a similar culture. I was surprised that I could feel this even though I can't read the letters properly or understand half the vocab. I guess culture is something that doesn't disappear even if you are not immersed in it. I've lived in Japan for a year (5-6 yr old) but because my parents talk to me in Japanese and I'm taught manners that show Japanese values, I think I still understand Japanese literature.

Yoko Ueda

The Matrix

After seeing previews of the movie 'The Matrix' I have been doing a lot of thinking and an uncontrollable burst of uncertainty has taken over me. What would really happen if we were all living in a computer programme and this world wasn't really what we thought it was? There is no way we can say for certain that it is all impossible and not so at all. But that means that the 'real' world (that we don't know, and maybe can't know) might also be 'unreal'.... And so on. That seems ridiculous, but we can never prove it isn't like that. I suppose we can just live our lives without worrying; if the illusion is so good that we can't tell the difference between illusion/reality then maybe it isn't really an illusion at all - it is our reality'. Why bother worrying? On the other hand, it *is* pretty worrying! I don't want to live my life inside a computer vat! But I can't quite explain why it should matter, it I can't tell the difference....