

Get an A in TOK Sample Introductions!

A lot of students stress about the first words of their essay. The secret that teachers don't tell you is this – it doesn't matter! If your paper is amazing – if it has thorough research, amazing analysis, and mind-blowing evaluation of your claims – I'm not going to mark you down because you didn't have a quote by a philosopher in the beginning! So, before you read the examples below, I want to offer you my best piece of introduction advice: don't do it!

Stop!

Wait!

If you are stuck in how you want to begin your paper, don't worry about it until later. Make sure you have your thesis (how you want to answer the essay title) and then just start with your research. Once you really understand your evidence, an introduction should come easier.

Lastly, please remember that each of these approaches is not a magic bullet. Some techniques will work better for some essay titles. You need to think about your AOK, your own experiences, your ensuing claims, and the pieces of evidence to come up with the most effective introductions.

Thanks for downloading my outline! If you would like further help with your TOK essay, consider hiring me as your tutor on Fiverr – [click here to access my TOK Essay Tutoring Links!](#)



The Personal Approach

A lot of students that I tutor around the world wrote great introductions with the Personal Approach. While this will not work with each person and each title, consider using it if you think it will work for you!

Essay Title: Is there solid justification for regarding knowledge in the natural sciences more highly than knowledge in another area of knowledge? Discuss with reference to the natural sciences and one other area of knowledge.

Get an A in TOK Example:

I love music. I have been first chair clarinet in my school band for six years in a row. Everyone knows me as ‘the clarinet guy.’ But because of this, I also fall into the stereotype of being someone who doesn’t really care for science. In fact, it’s my worst and least favorite class. Because I like music and hate science, I tend to value artistic knowledge more than knowledge in the Natural Sciences. This prompt was intriguing to me because I know that I am not in the majority: most people value knowledge in the Natural Sciences highly because it is highly certain, uses inscrutable methods and tools. On the other hand, knowledge in the arts is subjective and changes over time. Does that make it less valuable? Should it be considered lower? Though many people will not agree with me, I believe that there is not solid justification for regarding knowledge in the Natural Sciences more highly than knowledge in The Arts.



The Direct Approach

I like the direct approach because it will catch your examiner off guard. Also, I'm so tired of reading essays that take too long to get to the point. There is nothing wrong with being clear and concise. As always, this approach works better with certain prompts than others.

Essay Title: If we conclude that there is some knowledge we should not pursue on ethical grounds, how can we determine the boundaries of acceptable investigation within an area of knowledge? Discuss with reference to two areas of knowledge.

Get an A in TOK Example:

The boundaries of acceptable investigation should always be drawn at causing harm to human life. Throughout history, morals, ethics, and religions have changed, which have caused the boundaries of gaining knowledge to change as often as cultures grow and die. But the one thing that doesn't change is people. The Areas of Knowledge of Human and Natural Sciences both provide opportunities to explore times in which the investigation of knowledge was justified (and not justified) by harming humans. But as can be seen through an exploration of the ensuing evidence, harming (and the potential to prevent harm to) fellow humans should be the method used to determine the boundary of acceptable investigation.



Thematic/Title Discussion Approach

In this approach, you discuss the main theme or idea that the title gives you. This can be done to many different levels of depth. Some essays attempt this and produce a forgettable introduction. Others do this with a unique perspective and successfully interest their readers. What might help you in doing a Thematic/Title Discussion introduction is to wait until you have finished your essay and know your conclusion's main takeaway. Then, knowing your approach on the theme, preview that in your introduction.

Essay Title: How can we distinguish between good and bad interpretations? Discuss with reference to the arts and one other area of knowledge.

Get an A in TOK Example:

Though TOK is a class focused on knowledge, this title made me wonder: is there any knowledge that is not connected to one's interpretation? In researching for this essay, I realized that interpretation, and the distinguishing of bad and good interpretations, is an essential step in gaining and using knowledge. Simply put, there is no knowledge without interpretation. I can listen to my favorite teacher's lecture, for example, for an entire class period. And I can take copious notes. But I cannot accept and use the knowledge disseminated in class until I interpret it in my own mind. The Arts and History both implement different methods, tools, and approaches for determining whether an interpretation is of value or not. Ultimately, the level of certainty associated with these are the most important way of distinguishing between good and bad interpretations.

