

TOK Great Proofiness Civics Debate 2017

Description:

In groups of **four**, you will select real-life civics examples that involve assigned types of proofiness. Develop a TOK Presentation with arguments and counter arguments to explore the real-world implications of your example. You will present a debate where arguments and counter-arguments are legitimate, accurate, and precise. You will enhance your presentation by researching and using philosophical ideas from *The Great Books of the Western World* and related web resources. The presentation should include a careful look at how TOK Ways of Knowing affect the real-life situations. Explore how imagination, memory, reason, emotion, language, intuition, or faith affect the real-life topic. You may research philosophers, using the Great Books as your starting point, and then expand the presentation.

1st Steps:

Select a real -life example

Extract a knowledge question (not about the subject, but about how we know)

Explore how the real-life situation is affected by ways of knowing: (Choose 3)
imagination, memory, reason, emotion, language, intuition, or faith

1. Your arguments should be presented in debate (argument/counter-argument) format. Therefore, your characters (you will role-play) should disagree on major points. **You must ask knowledge questions during your debate. Identify assumptions made during arguments and counter-arguments.**
2. The setting of your presentation must be **creative** and **contemporary**.
3. The time on stage will divided into two parts:
 - a. The Presentation—9-12 minutes
 - b. Questions from the audience—10 minutes

Grading:

The entire assignment will be worth 100 points:

1. 75 points for your presentation, your answers to audience questions, and the notes you use for your presentation (no highlighted photocopies).
 - a. smooth interaction
 - b. convincing portrayal
 - c. articulate responses with arguments and counter-arguments
 - d. **integration of knowledge questions**
2. 25 points for the notes taken on the other presentations as a member of the audience.
 - a. basic philosophies of each thinker and implications of proofiness
 - b. at least one well thought out question for each speaker

Real Life Example: Make American Great Again

Assumptions: America is no longer great/At one time in the past, America was great/America was great for everyone.

To what extent does emotion influence reason?

Can we understand a historical event if we did not experience it?

Can the use of memory lead us to discover knowledge? Truth?

Proofiness Real Life Example: President Trump outperforms polling data and wins the election

Assumptions: Polling data was wrong/Polling cannot predict results/Polling is biased

Can mathematical measurements accurately predict election results?

Can polling accurately measure who will vote?

Your Question:

Topics:

- Potemkin Numbers
- Fruit-Packing (cherry picking, apple polishing)
- Disestimating
- Casuistry (causuistry, randumbness, regression to the moon)
- Risk Mismanagement
- Gerrymandering

Knowledge questions are questions about knowledge, and contain the following features.

- Knowledge questions are questions **about** knowledge. Instead of focusing on specific content, they focus on how knowledge is constructed and evaluated. In this sense knowledge questions are a little different from many of the questions dealt with in the subject classrooms. In this way, they are considered second-order questions in TOK.
- Knowledge questions are **open** in the sense that there are a number of plausible answers to them. The questions are contestable. Dealing with open questions is a feature of TOK. Many students encountering TOK for the first time are struck by this apparent difference from many of the other classes in their school experience. Many find the lack of a single “right” answer slightly disorienting. Nevertheless, knowledge questions underlie much of the knowledge that we take for granted. Much of the disagreement and controversy encountered in daily life can be traced back to a knowledge question. An understanding of the nature of knowledge questions can allow a deeper understanding of these controversies.
- Knowledge questions should be expressed in **general** terms, rather than using subject specific terms. For example, instead of a question focusing on a specific model in development economics, such as the Harrod-Domar model, a knowledge question might focus on the reliability of modelling as a method of gaining knowledge in economics.

Clarifications

1. Each group member should use 1 philosopher to spur debate. You do not need to role-play that philosopher, but you should be able to use parts of the philosophy in the debate.
2. Start with your Real-Life Situation
3. Identify a Knowledge Question

(A question about how knowledge is generated, validated, etc.)

EX: Is the use of reason to generate personal knowledge reliable?
4. Discuss the first example, debating the use, effects, and implications of proofiness. Discuss the way emotion, reason, language, etc. affect the real-life situation. This is where you can weave in ideas from your philosopher.
5. After the 1st real life discussion, think about another example of proofiness. Now compare and contrast how the reasons for committing the proofiness error, the implications, etc. are similar or different from the first example. Do the ways of knowing: reason, emotion, language, etc. work the same way in each example? Do they change in some way? Why?
6. Your group should wear school appropriate costumes—you are role playing!