

Theory of knowledge (TOK)

- Essay
- Exhibition

External Assessment – Marking the Essay

These instructions must be read in conjunction with:

- the “Information for all examiners” section accessible from the menu
- the [TOK guide](#) (February 2020) available on the TOK website on the Programme Resource Centre
- the TOK [marking annotations](#)
- the TOK Examiner preparation notes (available on IBIS)
- any additional documentation provided by the principal examiner, team leader or the IB Global Centre, Cardiff.

Important dates

Event	Latest arrival date
Examiners have access to all essays	20 March/20 September
Completion of 50% of essay marking target	10 April/10 October
Completion of 100% of essay marking target	1 May/1 November
All marking claims submitted on IBIS	31 July/31 January

Nature of the task

The TOK essay engages students in a formal, sustained piece of writing in response to one of the six titles that are prescribed by the IB for each examination session. These titles take the form of knowledge questions that are focused on the areas of knowledge. The maximum length for the essay is 1,600 words. The essay is marked out of a total of 10 marks and contributes 67% of the final mark.

The driving question: Does the student provide a clear, coherent, and critical exploration of the essay title?

The driving question “Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?” summarizes, in one sentence, what it is we are looking for in the essay.

Examiners must keep the driving question in mind throughout the process of marking the essay. The task is to form a global impression of the essay in response to this question and then match this impression with the appropriate descriptor of the student’s achievement on the assessment instrument.

Key terms

The key terms identified below are from the driving question and the assessment instrument.

The driving question

1. **Clear and coherent** are part of the driving question and first appear together in the description of the essay when it reaches the “Good” level (7-8), and they appear again in the description of the “Excellent” level (9-10). Clear means that the discussion, i.e., the arguments provided and the examples that are used are explained in a way that allows the examiner to follow and understand the student’s ideas. The parts of the essay are coherent when the examples support the arguments and are linked to the chosen area of knowledge and to the prescribed title. A coherent essay weaves together smaller pieces such as analysis of examples and general argument into a larger, logically consistent whole that answers the prescribed title.
2. **Critical** means the essay is analytical as opposed to merely descriptive. The word “descriptive” is not the same as the word, “description,” which is an essential component of all writing. Students should not be penalized for fully and clearly describing aspects of their argument. A *descriptive* essay lacks the qualities or components that are essential to achieve a good or excellent essay as described on the assessment instrument. In a descriptive essay, examples are offered but not linked to an area of knowledge or to the

prescribed title, and there is no use or only minimal use of TOK concepts. In a critical essay, arguments are supported by examples, the implications of arguments are considered, and there is an awareness and evaluation of different points of view. Considering the implications of one's argument indicates an awareness that there are consequences to any argument and a critical essay would acknowledge and possibly address some of them. A critical essay would also acknowledge the limitations of the student's own arguments. A critical exploration suggests an awareness that there are different points of view: the one from which the student approaches the prescribed title and others. A more accomplished essay will acknowledge the other points of view and evaluate them.

The descriptors on the [assessment instrument](#)

1. The discussion has a **sustained focus**. This means that the essay's line of argument, examples, analyses and evaluations are all aimed at answering the question in the prescribed title. The argument is coherent if it is sustained throughout the entire essay.
2. The discussion is **linked effectively to areas of knowledge**. This means that the arguments, examples (evidence), implications and evaluations are all discussed within areas of knowledge. All prescribed titles require exploration of two areas of knowledge selected from the five areas of knowledge specified in the guide. An effective link to an area of knowledge focuses on a discussion of issues to do with knowledge in that area. This means that the target of discussion is not the world itself that the area of knowledge (AOK) deals with but the knowledge of that area, in other words, the nature of that knowledge, its scope, such as how it is produced (methodology) and acquired.
3. The **implications** of an argument that may be considered are conclusions that can be drawn from the argument that can further support what is being answered or defended or perhaps suggest other applications of the argument.
4. Different **points of view** that should be considered are different perspectives or positions from which the question could be addressed, and which could influence or impact the nature of an argument or its justification.

Global impression marking

The assessment instrument presents five described levels of performance. These levels are to be seen as global and holistic descriptors rather than as a checklist of necessary characteristics. When marking, the aim is to find the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for a mark in that level to be awarded.

Forming a global impression

While reading an essay, examiners should consider to what extent the student focuses on the title, links to the two chosen areas of knowledge, makes clear and coherent arguments and supports these arguments with examples. Examiners should take notice of whether the student considers any implications of their arguments and whether there is an awareness and evaluation of possible different points of view. The key is to read the entire essay, noticing these aspects, while allowing an impression to form.

Determining the mark

After examiners have formed a global impression, the task of differentiating between the levels of the instrument will depend on understanding (and internalizing) the components of the driving question and the degrees of difference in achievement as stated in the descriptors.

Until examiners are familiar with the assessment instrument, it is best to read each descriptor every time. It is recommended that examiners begin reading the descriptors for an excellent essay and continue down the levels until they come to descriptors that clearly indicate a less successful essay than indicated by their global impression. If a piece of work seems to fall between two levels, examiners should re-read the driving question and then read the two levels again. The level that more appropriately describes the overall holistic impression of the student's work should be chosen. If the decision is taken to place the response in the higher of the two levels being considered, then the lower of the two marks in that band should be awarded. If the decision is taken to place the response in the lower of the two bands being considered, then the upper mark in the band should be awarded. Following this method will ensure that examiners are soon familiar enough with the instrument to begin reading the instrument at, or close to, the level that most accurately describes their global impression.

Using the "Possible characteristics"

When making a final decision on which level best describes the achievement of the student, examiners may find it useful to read the words at the bottom of the level, as they offer an additional way of expressing a global impression of the essay.

General tips

When using the TOK assessment instrument, it is to be understood that:

- the described levels are not a checklist; it is the **overall impression** that is most important
- only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks are not acceptable
- the highest level of the instruments does not imply faultless performance and examiners should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed
- examiners should not think in terms of grades but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate level and mark.
- the mark of zero should be awarded for an essay that does not even reach the description of a lower-level rudimentary essay. In other words, there are no connections to the prescribed title, or it was not written to one of the prescribed titles for the particular examination session.

Marking instructions

Examiners should follow these steps to mark the essay.

1. Examiners should ensure that they have a copy of the assessment instrument in front of them.
2. There is no requirement that the essay title be copied out. However, as many students will copy the title, the examiner should begin the assessment by checking to see that the title is written correctly and that it is a title for the current session. If the title has been changed but can still be recognized as a title for the current session, the essay should be marked. Any irrelevance due to the changing of the title will be self-penalizing. If the title is not current, the essay should receive a mark of zero as stated on the assessment instrument.
3. Examiners should read the essay, keeping in mind the driving question and the aspects that will contribute to their global impression of the essay.
4. After reading the essay, examiners should begin reading the highest level of the assessment instrument and work their way down until they come to descriptors that clearly describe a less successful essay.
5. If examiners find that an essay falls between two levels, they should read the descriptors for the higher and lower levels as well as the possible characteristics.
6. Examiners should select the mark within the level according to whether the essay is closer to the next higher level or lower level. Examiners are reminded that we are considering the best fit so, as stated in the guide on p.46, "it is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for a mark in that level to be awarded".
7. Examiners should enter the mark they have selected.
8. It is very important that examiners write a summary comment justifying the mark awarded using the **Off-page comment** functionality on RM Assessor³.

TOK essay assessment instrument

The TOK essay is an opportunity for students to engage in a formal, sustained piece of writing in response to a prescribed title focused on the areas of knowledge. The assessment of this task is underpinned by the following single driving question.

Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?

The assessment instrument provided describes five levels of performance in response to this driving question. These levels are to be seen as holistic descriptors rather than as a checklist of characteristics.

Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?					
Excellent 9-10	Good 7-8	Satisfactory 5-6	Basic 3-4	Rudimentary 1-2	0
The discussion has a sustained focus on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.	The discussion is focused on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.	The discussion is focused on the title and is developed with some links to areas of knowledge.	The discussion is connected to the title and makes superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge.	The discussion is weakly connected to the title.	The discussion does not reach the standard described by the other levels or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles for the correct examination session.
Arguments are clear, coherent and effectively supported by specific examples. The implications of arguments are considered.	Arguments are clear, coherent and supported by examples.	Arguments are offered and are supported by examples.	The discussion is largely descriptive.	While there may be links to the areas of knowledge, any relevant points are descriptive or consist only of unsupported assertions.	
There is clear awareness and evaluation of different points of view.	There is awareness and some evaluation of different points of view.	There is some awareness of different points of view.	Limited arguments are offered but they are unclear and are not supported by effective examples.		
Possible characteristics					
Insightful	Pertinent	Acceptable	Underdeveloped	Ineffective	
Convincing	Relevant	Mainstream	Basic	Descriptive	
Accomplished	Analytical	Adequate	Superficial	Incoherent	
Lucid	Organized	Competent	Limited	Formless	

The exhibition

These instructions must be read in conjunction with:

- the “Information for all examiners” section accessible from the menu
- the [TOK guide](#) (February 2020) available on the TOK website on the Programme Resource Centre
- The TOK [marking annotations](#)
- any additional documentation provided by the principal examiner, team leader or the IB Global Centre, Cardiff.

Important dates

Event	Latest arrival date
Examiners have access to exhibitions	TBC
Completion of 50% of exhibitions marking target	TBC
Completion of 100% of exhibitions marking target	TBC
All marking claims submitted on IBIS	31 July/31 January

Examiners are reminded that the purpose of moderation is not to re-mark the work but to determine whether the teacher has applied the assessment instrument accurately and adequately.

Nature of the task

The driving question “Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?” summarises, in one sentence, what it is we are looking for in the exhibition commentaries. This driving question, which examiners must always keep in mind, refers to “TOK” and to “the world around us”, that is to the TOK world of ideas and concepts, and to the real and concrete world. The exhibition asks students to explore the links between these two worlds.

Students are required to explore the links between the TOK world and the real world around them:

Students do this “successfully” when they show the practical importance of TOK enquiry in the real world.

Examiners appraise the teacher’s ability to apply the exhibition assessment instrument adequately and accurately. This is done through the moderation of a sample set of exhibition commentaries. Like the teachers, examiners need to remember that TOK marking is holistic; it uses a global impression marking approach. Therefore, each level in the assessment instrument must be seen as providing “global and holistic descriptors” rather than “as a checklist of necessary characteristics” (PDF version of the *TOK guide* p.46).

It is important that examiners are well acquainted with the assessment instrument before starting moderation. They must read it carefully and check their understanding of it. To help in that respect, below are explanations of some key terms and general tips.

Key terms

The key terms identified below in bold are from the “Excellent” level of the assessment instrument. They have been listed individually for their clarification within the assessment instrument, but examiners must not forget that they form part of holistic descriptors.

*The exhibition clearly identifies three **objects** and their specific **real-world contexts**. **Links** between each of the three objects and the selected IA **prompt** are clearly made and well **explained**. There is strong **justification** of the particular contribution that each individual object makes to the exhibition. All, or nearly all, of the points are well supported by appropriate **evidence** and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.*

1. **Objects** serve to show how TOK is manifested in the world and the student will aim to explain how their selected objects are interesting in light of their chosen prompt. Objects are something tangible in the real world and can be physical (including people or animals) or digital. The IB takes quite an open view about what is an object and examiners should avoid making judgements about the appropriateness of the objects themselves. To resolve doubts regarding vague or generic objects or objects used to represent an idea symbolically, examiners will find guidance in the assessment instrument. Students will find it difficult to place such objects in a real-world context, thus greatly limiting the success of their exhibition.
2. **Real-world contexts** – the real-world context is the time and place where the object exists and could refer to where and when the student first saw or held the object or where it is to be found and, if pertinent, its moment in time. Contextualising includes what matters (according to the student’s interpretation) for the reader to be able to situate the object.
3. **Links** demonstrate how the objects help us explore the prompt. The link between the object and the prompt illustrates how TOK manifests in the world. These links could be seen in multiple forms including viewpoints, perspectives, and personal positions.

4. **The prompt** is one of the 35 knowledge questions listed in the guide. The guide states that the prompt should be used as the title of the exhibition and that students should not change the wording at all. If they do, but the change is so small that the meaning of the prompt is unchanged and which prompt they selected is evident, then the commentary should be marked as if the student were responding to the original prompt from the guide. If they write their own question, a mark of 0 is to be given as is made clear in the assessment instrument.
5. **Explained** – links are well explained when it is possible to see how an object illuminates an aspect of the prompt.
6. **Justification** refers to the explanation given regarding how the object and the prompt are connected and what it is about the object that makes one think about the prompt. It is the next step after the links between the objects and the prompt have been made and explained. The justification constitutes a stronger and more detailed explanation of the link between the object and the prompt and for that the specific context of the object is needed. A generic object will not give any TOK to talk about. The justification will discuss what it is about that specific object in its real-world context that is so interesting for the prompt.
7. **Evidence** is required and refers to how the points are supported. Evidence can be of different types such as the student's own experience (their studies or other personal experience), clearly constructed arguments, examples, or outside sources (e.g. studies, books, journals and other publications, reputable media).

General tips

1. The central theme, optional themes and areas of knowledge (AOKs)

The guide recommends that students base their exhibitions on one of the themes because the themes lend themselves to a focused exploration of the world. Examiners must not look for a theme in the commentaries and should note that there is no mention of the themes in the assessment instrument. Therefore, examiners must not penalise students for not including a theme or for not doing so consistently across the objects. Ultimately, the consideration of how a theme structures the exhibition is important for teachers when advising their students but plays no part in the assessment of the exhibition commentary. It is also important for examiners to note that no mention is made of areas of knowledge and there is no expectation for any to be discussed; their appearance or non-appearance in the exhibition is not assessed.

2. Introductions and conclusions

Examiners may find that students include an introduction and/or a conclusion in their commentaries but neither is required. The student has to decide whether or not an introduction is desirable for their exhibition commentary but on its own it will not change the mark awarded. A conclusion is not recommended because all too often conclusions are used to suggest an answer. Importantly, in the exhibition **students are required to discuss the links between their chosen objects and the prompt, not to answer the prompt**. What they need to do is to say how each object helps us think about the prompt, showing how that particular object is interesting for the exhibition and effective in exploring the driving question. The exhibition is different from the essay, which asks students to answer the prescribed title. Hence there is the possibility that including a conclusion shows a misunderstanding of the task, although on its own its inclusion is unlikely to change the overall mark.

3. Word count

The maximum total number of words permitted is 950 and examiners are instructed to stop reading after 950 words. The title, words within the images, labels on the images, references and footnotes are not included in the word count. Students should aim to write about 300 words for each commentary.

4. The IA prompt

When submitting the work on IBIS, students and teachers will select the IA prompt used for the student's TOK exhibition. The prompt number will appear on RM Assessor³ when examiners open the response. Examiners should review the instructions on how to proceed when there are issues with the IA prompt. The table below includes the different possible scenarios

Exhibition moderation scenarios:

#	Scenario	Action to take	Exception type
1	The IA prompt title in the commentary is not the same as the prompt number indicated in RM Assessor³	Examiner to mark it based on the prompt that can be identified within the commentary itself	Examiners must not raise an exception
2	There is no permitted IA prompt as the title but the prompt can be obviously and clearly identified in the content of the commentary	Examiner to mark it based on the prompt that can be identified within the commentary itself (even if this is a different prompt to what is indicated in RM Assessor ³)	Examiners must not raise an exception
3	The IA prompt title has been altered but can still be considered to be close enough to one of the permitted prompts	Examiner to mark it based on the prompt that can be identified (even if this is a different prompt to what is indicated in RM Assessor ³)	Examiners must not raise an exception
4	There is no permitted IA prompt as the title and no prompt is obviously or clearly identifiable in the content of the commentary either	Examiner to mark it based on the prompt number indicated in RM Assessor ³	Examiners must not raise an exception
5	The IA prompt title has been completely made up	Examiner to mark it based on the prompt number indicated in RM Assessor ³	Examiners must not raise an exception
6	There are no images	If the objects are described and situated in a way that they can be visualized, the commentaries should be marked as normal according to how well the objects can be identified	Examiners must not raise an exception
7	Only the images are included (and possibly the IA prompt) but it does not contain the commentary	Examiner to mark it in line with the assessment instrument – this will almost always result in a mark of zero	Examiners must not raise an exception
8	Work for a different subject uploaded instead	E.g. TOK essay instead of exhibition. The examiner to mark it in line with the assessment instrument. This will almost always result in a mark of zero	Examiners must not raise an exception
9	No commentary - only the prompt	Examiner to mark it in line with the assessment instrument. This will almost always result in a mark of zero	Examiners must not raise an exception

10	Teacher comments only - no commentary	We will notify the school of this and ask them to upload the commentary – examiners should raise it as an exception	‘Incorrect file’
11	Old course presentation uploaded instead of the exhibition commentary	Examiner to mark it in line with the assessment instrument – this will almost always result in a mark of zero	Examiners must not raise an exception
12	Group work – not individual	If multiple students submit the same piece of work as part of the sample examiners should raise an exception if they recognise more than one piece of work is the same. Or If the examiner identifies evidence of group work in a sample through the teacher comments or the commentary itself they must raise an exception.	Academic misconduct- c) collusion

FAQs

1. **What if there is no prompt?** If the student has not written the prompt as a heading but from the commentaries it is obvious or possible to discern which prompt is being discussed, then the exhibition should be moderated as normal. If it is not possible to tell with certainty which prompt was chosen, a mark of 0 should be awarded and an exception should be raised.
2. **What if the three objects are very similar?** The important feature here is what it is about each specific object that manifests TOK in the world, rather than whether or not the objects are similar. In that sense, more than the object itself, the driving question asks about aspects of the object which make the link to the prompt interesting. Similarity on its own is neither a requirement for success nor a reason for failure.
3. **What if the student has written about the three objects in one continuous 950-word piece of writing rather than in three separate commentaries?** Examiners must assess what is said about each object and the prompt as if the writing were in three distinct sections. It should be possible to discern where one commentary ends and the next begins.
4. **What if there is no referencing?** Students are required to reference sources they have used as indicated in the guide. However, examiners must not penalize students for not doing so. Examiners must moderate the sample as normal and if there are any concerns about academic integrity, an exception should be raised.
5. **What if the quality of writing is poor?** Grammar and syntax are not mentioned in the assessment instrument and only matter when it is not possible to understand what the student is trying to say (so poor expression is self-penalising). It is the content that is being assessed, not the quality of writing. Many of the students are writing in a language that is not their first language.
6. **What if two commentaries are good and the third one is weak?** It is possible that the quality of the commentaries for each object might not be of similar standard. Examiners must remember that the mark is awarded for the entire exhibition, the three commentaries combined, so examiners will need to exercise judgment regarding which level is most representative of the commentary as a whole using the best-fit principle.
7. **What if there is no IA prompt?** There are different scenarios that examiners might encounter, such as where the student has selected the wrong IA prompt on IBIS, or has not included it in their submitted work, or the work does not relate to any of the IA prompts. Examiners should refer to the table above which lists the possible scenarios and instructions on how to proceed.

Moderation instructions

Examiners are strongly recommended to follow the steps below to moderate the exhibition commentary samples. Examiners should:

1. have a copy of the [assessment instrument](#) at hand
2. read the prompt and check the word count
3. read the teacher's mark and comment (or if preferred, do that later)
4. look at each image and read each commentary while keeping the driving question, "Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?" in mind to form an impression of the exhibition as a whole after reading the three commentaries. As examiners read the commentaries, they may find it helpful to make annotations. They will help focus and serve as reminders of what was commended or questioned with respect to the descriptors
5. choose the band in the assessment instrument that represents the best fit for the combined three commentaries and take into consideration the possible characteristics at the bottom of that band
6. now determine if the mark within that band should be the higher one or the lower one by reading the descriptors for the bands either side as well as the possible characteristics, remembering that it is the best fit which is sought so, as stated in the PDF version of the subject guide, p.46, "it is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for a mark in that level to be awarded". Examiners are reminded that use of the annotations is helpful when marking: it helps focus and can serve as a reminder of points well-made or questionable ones
7. once they have settled on a mark, read (or reread) the teacher's comment and decide whether it confirms or alters their decision. At this stage examiners may wish to reread the three commentaries, or parts of them. If examiners can confirm the teacher's mark, they should, enter that mark. and write 'ok', 'agreed' or something similar in the enhanced off-page comment box at the top. If examiners change the mark, they should enter the mark they have determined to be the better fit and write a brief comment in the comment box explaining why.
8. keep in mind that they may be asked to provide a feedback report that explains to the school the outcome of the moderation process. The brief summary comments made in the enhanced off-page comment box will be helpful when writing the feedback report.
9. write the feedback reports during the examining period, not wait until the end. After having completed a certain number of samples examiners should access the feedback forms to write their feedback. The feedback forms can be accessed in IBIS under My marking > Allocations and mark entry > Theory Knowl. Exhibition work. Examiners will be able to see which schools require feedback and fill in the feedback forms.

[Exhibition assessment instrument](#)

Examiners should refer to the assessment instrument below to moderate the exhibitions.

TOK exhibition assessment instrument

The TOK exhibition is an opportunity for students to explore links between knowledge questions and the world around us. The assessment of this task is underpinned by the following single driving question. **Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?**

Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?					
Excellent 9-10	Good 7-8	Satisfactory 5-6	Basic 3-4	Rudimentary 1-2	0
The exhibition clearly identifies three objects and their specific real-world contexts. Links between each of the three objects and the selected IA prompt are clearly made and well-explained.	The exhibition identifies three objects and their real-world contexts. Links between each of the three objects and the selected IA prompt are explained, although this explanation may lack precision and clarity in parts.	The exhibition identifies three objects, although the real-world contexts of these objects may be vaguely or imprecisely stated. There is some explanation of the links between the three objects and the selected IA prompt.	The exhibition identifies three objects, although the real-world contexts of the objects may be implied rather than explicitly stated. Basic links between the objects and the selected IA prompt are made, but the explanation of these links is unconvincing and/or unfocused.	The exhibition presents three objects, but the real-world contexts of these objects are not stated, or the images presented may be highly generic images of types of object rather than of specific real-world objects. Links between the objects and the selected IA prompt are made, but these are minimal, tenuous, or it is not clear what the student is trying to convey.	The exhibition does not reach the standard described by the other levels or does not use one of the IA prompts provided.
There is a strong justification of the particular contribution that each individual object makes to the exhibition. All, or nearly all, of the points are well-supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.	There is a justification of the contribution that each individual object makes to the exhibition. Many of the points are supported by appropriate evidence and references to the selected IA prompt.	There is some justification for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. Some of the points are supported by evidence and references to the selected IA prompt.	There is a superficial justification for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. Reasons for the inclusion of the objects are offered, but these are not supported by appropriate evidence and/or lack relevance to the selected IA prompt. There may be significant repetition across the justifications of the different objects.	There is very little justification offered for the inclusion of each object in the exhibition. The commentary on the objects is highly descriptive or consists only of unsupported assertions.	
Possible characteristics					
Convincing	Focused	Adequate	Simplistic	Ineffective	
Lucid	Relevant	Competent	Limited	Descriptive	
Precise	Coherent	Acceptable	Underdeveloped	Incoherent	

Examiners should note that if a student provides images and accompanying commentaries for only two objects, teachers should award a maximum of 6 marks. If a student provides an image and accompanying commentary for only one object, teachers should award a maximum of 3 marks.

Irregularities

Examiners encountering any of the following situations must raise an exception on RM Assessor³ to inform the IB:

- The coordinator has uploaded the wrong file
- The student has done a presentation instead of an exhibition
- The student's exhibition is based on an essay prescribed title

Examiners should not award a mark to a sample in any of the situations listed above unless instructed by the IB to do so.

Examiner report

It is very important that examiners complete the examiner report after finishing their marking. It is recommended that examiners make notes during the examining period about points they wish to make in their report. This report ultimately informs the production of the subject report that is published for the benefit of schools and teachers. Writing this report is a **requirement** of the examiner role.

IA feedback

Only schools where significant adjustments are made to the teacher's marking will receive IA feedback. **The feedback must explain the reason for this adjustment.** As stated above, it is recommended that examiners complete this feedback on IBIS as they moderate samples and have completed the moderation of some schools, not wait until the moderation is completed for all their allocated schools. This is the feedback form:

TOK internal assessment feedback form

Exhibition: Does the exhibition successfully show how TOK manifests in the world around us?

Commendations: (reference may be made to the quality of aspects such as: the clear identification of three objects and their real-world context; the exploration of the links between each object and the prompt; the justification of the contribution each object makes to the exhibition; the effective use of evidence in support of the points; references back to the selected IA prompt)

Recommendations: (reference may be made to the quality of aspects such as: the clear identification of three objects and their real-world context; the exploration of the links between each object and the prompt; the justification of the contribution each object makes to the exhibition; the effective use of evidence in support of the points; references back to the selected IA prompt)

Assessment: Was the assessment instrument applied adequately?

Comments on the adequate application of the assessment instrument and suggestions for the future preparation of students for the exhibition

Examiners will not download all a school's samples together (sample students' work is downloaded at random from all the allocated schools). Examiners are strongly advised to keep notes, using the off-page comments function, on each of the samples moderated where large differences between the teacher's and the examiner's marks have been identified. Examiners will see the school code in the "Submitted - closed" worklist on RM Assessor³ only after the response has been submitted. These closed responses can then be cross-referenced with the IA feedback form links on IBIS to provide feedback to the particular school.

Comments should focus on the complete sample rather than on individual students' work. Whilst comments on a teacher's application of a particular criterion are encouraged, the comments made should not make any reference to specific marks awarded or any student details (for example, student name and/or session number).

IA feedback is extremely important to schools and teachers. It is the main channel of communication for teachers to learn about the quality of their marking and to know what needs improvement. With this in mind, we urge examiners to provide quality feedback to schools, that is, feedback that provides teachers with useful information about their marking, and what and how they can improve.

Below are some DOs and DON'Ts for guidance when providing feedback:

DOs

Examiners should:

- **acknowledge and commend good practice.** It is important for teachers to know what they have done right. However, examiners must ensure that those commendations are reflected in the moderation. In other words, examiners should not simply add a note of praise, for example, on how good the teacher comments were in justifying the marks, when the examiner has actually lowered the marks significantly.
- **give feedback on the teacher's comments.** Examiners are moderating the teacher's marks and the teacher's comments, so the feedback to the school and teacher should support and reflect their assessment of the exhibition. Examiners should also provide feedback to the teacher on the quality of their comments.

Examples of comments:

- *the teacher's comments were clear and pointed, in a concise manner, to the particular strengths and weaknesses of the exhibitions in order to justify the marks awarded*
- *there was inconsistency in the teacher comments and some high marks were awarded to exhibitions for which comments were mostly critical.*
- *the teacher comments were too brief and mostly devoid of content.*
- *the comments were unhelpful as they just repeated the assessment instrument or were very general.*
- **make recommendations for the future:**
 - *students must ensure that their commentaries link the objects to the IA prompt*
 - *teachers must ensure that their students understand the assessment instrument*
 - *it is recommended that teachers carefully read the subject report as it contains clear and considered advice for the exhibition task*
- **check the feedback carefully before submitting it.** It is important to reread the feedback comments and consider whether they are clear and useful.
- **make sure there are no spelling or grammar mistakes.** These can undermine the seriousness and respect with which they are received by the teacher.

DON'Ts

Examiners should not:

- **write general, vague, stock comments that can apply to all.** These are not helpful to the teacher and often create confusion as one or more points may not apply to particular schools. Each school should receive feedback specific to its own issues.
- **make comments aimed at criticizing the teacher or the student.** The examiner is commenting on the teacher's marks for the exhibitions according to the evidence seen in the students' work.
- **discuss only one or two of the exhibitions.** The feedback should refer to the evidence seen in the entire sample.
- **write comments that are so general that teachers are unable to determine where they went wrong,** such as:

The student's exhibition commentary was not clear or well supported.

While this may be true, it does not help the teacher to pinpoint where the weakness is.

- **make assumptions about what the teacher knows or might understand.**
- **use sarcasm or jokes.** These may be misunderstood and may be considered offensive.