IBDP
THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

100 AI PROMPTS

for Smarter Revision *and* Exam Prep

Active recall, exam technique, and mark-scheme thinking — without cheating.

by James R. Martin

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The author has made use of artificial intelligence tools to assist with drafting, structuring, and generating example material. All educational guidance, explanations, and exam-related advice have been reviewed, edited, and curated by the author. Any resemblance to specific published materials is unintentional.

This book is intended to support revision and exam preparation. It does not replace formal teaching, textbooks, or official specifications. Students are responsible for ensuring that all work submitted for assessment is their own.

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How to Use This Book

For a long time, high-quality tutoring has been a major contributor to elite academic achievement. Used well, AI can now act as a powerful tutor that most students and parents could not previously afford.

This book is a **starting point**, not a rulebook. Each prompt is designed to help you revise, test your understanding, and think more clearly — not to give perfect answers. You are encouraged to **adapt, improve, and remix** these prompts.

You are learning how to think carefully about the questions you ask — a skill that will matter far beyond these exams.

Note on Exam Boards and Syllabi

Theory of Knowledge (TOK) is a core component of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme. It is assessed through two tasks: the TOK essay (externally assessed, maximum 1,600 words, responding to one of six prescribed titles released by the IB each session) and the TOK exhibition (internally assessed, maximum 950 words, in which students select three objects and link them to one of 35 IA prompts to explore how knowledge manifests in the world around us).

The TOK course explores the nature of knowledge by examining how we know what we claim to know. It is structured around a core theme — Knowledge and the Knower — and optional themes such as Knowledge and Technology, Knowledge and Language, Knowledge and Politics, Knowledge and Religion, and Knowledge and Indigenous Societies. Students also study five Areas of Knowledge: History, the Human Sciences, the Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and the Arts. Each area is explored through the knowledge framework, considering its scope, methods, tools, ethics, perspectives, and key concepts.

The prompts in this book are designed for the current IB TOK curriculum, which was introduced for first assessment in 2022. They align with the syllabus structure of core theme, optional themes, and Areas of Knowledge, and they reflect the types of knowledge questions, real-life situations, and analytical thinking that TOK demands. Whether you are preparing for your TOK essay, planning your exhibition, or deepening your understanding of a

particular area, these prompts are crafted to support genuine engagement with TOK concepts.

Students should always adapt AI-generated responses to their own real-life situations, personal experiences, and the specific prescribed titles or IA prompts they are working with. The IB values authentic, original thinking — your TOK essay and exhibition must reflect your own voice, your own examples, and your own analysis. Use AI outputs as a starting point for deeper reflection, not as a finished product to submit.

AI should supplement, not replace, genuine personal engagement with knowledge questions. The most effective way to use these prompts is to critically evaluate every response the AI gives you: challenge its claims, identify assumptions it makes, consider perspectives it has overlooked, and always ask yourself whether the analysis holds up when tested against your own experience and understanding. TOK is fundamentally about thinking for yourself — let these prompts sharpen that thinking.

Contents

Section 1
Core Theme: Knowledge and the Knower

The core theme of TOK — Knowledge and the Knower — is the foundation of the entire course. It asks you to examine your own relationship with knowledge: how your personal background, values, experiences, and community shape what you know and how you know it. This theme runs through every other part of the syllabus and should inform your thinking in every area.

Central to this theme is the distinction between personal knowledge (what you have come to know through your own experience, skills, and reflection) and shared knowledge (the collective body of knowledge built up by communities and disciplines). Understanding how these interact — how shared knowledge shapes the individual knower, and how individual knowers contribute to shared knowledge — is essential for strong TOK analysis.

The prompts in this section will help you explore key concepts such as perspectives, the scope and limitations of knowledge, justification, evidence, certainty, and the role of the knower. They are designed to push you beyond surface-level descriptions and into genuine critical engagement with knowledge questions.

Prompt 1: Personal vs Shared Knowledge Distinction

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I'm studying TOK and want to understand the relationship between personal and shared knowledge. Give me three concrete real-life situations where personal knowledge and shared knowledge come into conflict, and for each one, ask me a knowledge question I should try to answer before you give your analysis.

What this helps you practise:
Distinguishing between personal and shared knowledge and understanding how they interact, which is fundamental to the core theme.

How to use it well:
Try to answer each knowledge question yourself before asking the AI to continue. Compare your reasoning with the AI's analysis and note where your perspectives differ.

Prompt 2: The Knower's Perspective

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Act as a TOK examiner. Present me with a knowledge claim about a controversial topic, then challenge me to identify at least three different perspectives (individual, cultural, and disciplinary) from which this claim could be evaluated. After I respond, tell me which perspectives I missed and why they matter.

What this helps you practise:
Analysing how different perspectives shape the way knowledge claims are understood and evaluated.

How to use it well:

Write out your three perspectives before sharing them with the AI. Focus on explaining why each perspective leads to a different evaluation of the claim, not just naming the perspectives.

Prompt 3: Scope and Limitations of Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Help me explore the concept of the scope and limitations of knowledge. Pick an everyday knowledge claim that most people take for granted, then walk me through a Socratic questioning process — ask me one question at a time — to help me uncover hidden assumptions and limitations in that claim.

What this helps you practise:
Identifying assumptions, boundaries, and limitations in knowledge claims through structured questioning.

How to use it well:
Engage with each question seriously before asking for the next one. Keep a written record of how your thinking shifts as the questioning progresses — this process mirrors what strong TOK essays do.

Prompt 4: Justification and Evidence

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with four different knowledge claims, each justified by a different type of evidence: empirical observation, logical reasoning, testimony from authority, and personal intuition. Ask me to rank them by reliability and explain my reasoning. Then challenge my ranking with counterexamples.

What this helps you practise:
Evaluating different forms of justification and understanding that the strength of evidence depends on context.

How to use it well:
Write your ranking and reasoning before seeing the AI's counterexamples. This forces you to commit to a position and then defend or revise it — exactly the kind of thinking TOK rewards.

Prompt 5: Certainty and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I need to understand the TOK concept of certainty. Give me a spectrum of five knowledge claims ranging from near-certain to highly uncertain, drawn from different areas of knowledge. For each, ask me: what would it take to make this claim more certain, and is absolute certainty achievable here? Then critique my answers.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding degrees of certainty across different areas of knowledge and what factors affect how certain we can be.

How to use it well:
Consider what 'certainty' actually means in each context — mathematical certainty is different from historical certainty. Use your responses as potential examples in your TOK essay.

Prompt 6: The Role of Values in Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how values influence what counts as knowledge, using two contrasting examples from different cultures or communities. Then present me with a real-life situation where a value-laden assumption is embedded in what appears to be a neutral factual claim, and ask me to identify it.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising how values, beliefs, and assumptions are embedded in knowledge claims that appear objective.

How to use it well:
After identifying the embedded assumption, try to articulate a knowledge question that arises from it. This is a key TOK skill — moving from a real-life situation to a knowledge question.

Prompt 7: Knowledge Communities

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Act as a TOK tutor. Explain how belonging to a particular knowledge community (such as a scientific discipline, a religious tradition, or a cultural group) shapes what an individual knows and how they justify their knowledge. Then give me a scenario and ask me to identify which knowledge community is most influential and why.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how communities of knowers establish norms for what counts as knowledge and valid justification.

How to use it well:
Think about your own knowledge communities — your school, your cultural background, your hobbies — and how they shape your own knowledge before engaging with the scenario.

Prompt 8: Knowledge and Power

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three real-life situations where power dynamics determine whose knowledge is accepted and whose is marginalised. For each situation, ask me to formulate a knowledge question that connects to the TOK concept of the knower's relationship with knowledge. Evaluate my knowledge questions for quality.

What this helps you practise:
Formulating strong knowledge questions and understanding how power structures influence knowledge production and validation.

How to use it well:
A strong knowledge question is open, general, and about knowledge itself — not about a specific case. Use the AI's feedback to refine your ability to write knowledge questions for your essay.

Prompt 9: Bias and the Knower

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me five different types of cognitive bias (such as confirmation bias, anchoring bias, availability heuristic) with a brief explanation of each. Then present me with a TOK-style scenario and ask me to

identify which biases might be at work and how they affect the knowledge produced. Assess my response.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising how cognitive biases shape the knower's engagement with knowledge and affect the reliability of knowledge claims.

How to use it well:
After the AI assesses your response, ask yourself: how might your own biases affect the way you evaluated the scenario? This kind of self-reflection is what distinguishes excellent TOK work.

Prompt 10: Knowledge Questions Workshop

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I need to practise writing TOK knowledge questions. Give me five real-life situations, one at a time, and after each one ask me to write a knowledge question that arises from it. After I attempt each one, rate it out of 5 and explain how I could make it more open, more general, and more focused on knowledge itself.

What this helps you practise:
The essential TOK skill of moving from a specific real-life situation to an open, general knowledge question about knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is one of the most important skills in TOK. Take your time with each situation and try to avoid yes/no questions or questions that are too specific to the example.

Prompt 11: Exploring What Counts as Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Challenge me on what counts as knowledge. Present me with five borderline cases — things that some people would call knowledge and others would not (for example, knowledge gained through meditation, indigenous oral traditions, artistic intuition). For each, ask me whether I think it counts as knowledge and why. Then present a counterargument to each of my positions.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the contested boundaries of knowledge and defending a position while considering counterarguments.

How to use it well:
This directly prepares you for TOK essay writing, where you must present a claim, develop it, and then offer a counterclaim. Practise articulating both sides even when you have a strong initial view.

Section 2
Optional Theme: Knowledge and Technology

Knowledge and Technology is one of the most popular optional themes in the TOK course, and for good reason — technology is reshaping how knowledge is produced, shared, stored, and validated at an extraordinary pace. From algorithms that curate your social media feed to artificial intelligence systems that generate text and images, technology raises profound knowledge questions that are both urgent and personal.

This theme asks you to consider how technology acts as both a tool for and a shaper of knowledge. It invites you to examine questions about digital knowledge, data, the role of algorithms, the reliability of technologically mediated information, and the ethical implications of knowledge technologies. You should consider how technology changes the relationship between the knower and knowledge itself.

The prompts in this section will help you engage with these ideas in ways that go beyond superficial observations about social media or the internet. They are designed to push you toward the kind of nuanced, concept-driven analysis that scores well in TOK assessments.

Prompt 12: Technology as a Knowledge Tool

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how technology functions as a tool for knowledge production in two different Areas of Knowledge (for example, the natural sciences and history). Then ask me to identify a knowledge question that arises from the way technology mediates knowledge in each area. Evaluate whether my knowledge questions are genuinely about knowledge or just about technology.

What this helps you practise:
Distinguishing between questions about technology and genuine knowledge questions about how technology shapes knowledge production.

How to use it well:
This is a common pitfall in TOK — writing about technology rather than about knowledge. Use the AI's feedback to ensure your analysis always connects back to knowledge.

Prompt 13: Algorithmic Bias and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a detailed real-life situation where an algorithm (such as a search engine, recommendation system, or hiring algorithm) has shaped what people know or believe. Then walk me through how to analyse this situation using TOK concepts: perspectives, bias, justification, and the scope and limitations of technologically produced knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Applying TOK concepts to analyse how algorithms influence knowledge and examining the assumptions embedded in technological systems.

How to use it well:
After the walkthrough, try to apply the same analytical framework to a different example of algorithmic influence that you have personally experienced.

Prompt 14: Digital Knowledge and Reliability

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Act as a TOK examiner and quiz me on the reliability of digital knowledge. Present me with three pieces of information — one from a peer-reviewed journal accessed online, one from a popular social media post, and one from a Wikipedia article — and ask me to evaluate the reliability of each using TOK concepts like justification, evidence, and authority. Then challenge my assumptions.

What this helps you practise:
Evaluating the reliability of knowledge from different digital sources using TOK-specific concepts rather than generic media literacy.

How to use it well:
Focus on explaining why the source matters in terms of knowledge, not just in terms of trustworthiness. What does each source tell us about how knowledge is validated?

Prompt 15: AI and Knowledge Production

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I want to explore the knowledge questions raised by AI-generated content. Present me with a scenario

where AI has produced something that looks like knowledge (for example, a medical diagnosis, a historical summary, or a legal analysis). Then ask me: does the AI know this? What does it mean for a machine to produce knowledge? Guide me through the philosophical issues step by step.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the philosophical question of whether AI can produce genuine knowledge and what this means for the nature of knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is excellent preparation for TOK essays on technology-related prescribed titles. Think about how your answer connects to broader TOK concepts like justification, truth, and belief.

Prompt 16: Technology and Access to Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how technology has both expanded and restricted access to knowledge, giving two specific examples of each. Then present me with a knowledge claim: 'Technology has democratised knowledge.' Ask me to argue both for and against this claim using TOK concepts. Assess the balance of my argument.

What this helps you practise:
Constructing balanced arguments about the impact of technology on knowledge, a skill essential for the TOK essay.

How to use it well:

Pay attention to whether you naturally lean toward one side. Strong TOK essays require genuine engagement with both the claim and the counterclaim.

Prompt 17: Data, Information, and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Help me understand the TOK distinction between data, information, and knowledge. Give me a concrete example that moves through all three stages, then present me with a scenario where large amounts of data are available but genuine knowledge is difficult to extract. Ask me to explain why, using TOK concepts.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the hierarchy from data to knowledge and recognising that more data does not automatically mean more knowledge.

How to use it well:
Try to connect this to a real-life situation from your own experience — perhaps a time when having lots of information did not help you understand something better.

Prompt 18: Social Media and Shared Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a case study of how social media has shaped shared knowledge about a significant event (such as a political movement or a public health issue). Then ask me three progressively deeper knowledge questions about this case,

starting from a descriptive question and moving toward a genuinely analytical TOK knowledge question. Help me see the difference between levels of depth.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how shared knowledge is constructed and contested in digital spaces, and recognising depth in knowledge questions.

How to use it well:
Note how the questions become more analytical as they move from 'what happened' to 'how do we know' and 'what are the implications for knowledge.' Apply this progression to your own essay writing.

Prompt 19: Technology and the Ethics of Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me three real-life situations where technology raises ethical knowledge questions — for example, surveillance technology, genetic testing, or deepfake videos. For each situation, ask me to identify the ethical dimension and connect it to a broader TOK knowledge question about responsibility, ownership, or the limits of what we should know.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the ethical dimensions of technologically produced knowledge and connecting specific cases to general knowledge questions.

How to use it well:
Ethics in TOK is not just about whether something is right or wrong — it is about how ethical

considerations shape what knowledge is pursued, accepted, and shared. Keep this distinction in mind.

Prompt 20: The Filter Bubble and Perspectives

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the concept of a filter bubble in terms that connect to the TOK concept of perspective. Then simulate a short exercise: present me with a controversial topic and show me how two different algorithmic feeds might present completely different knowledge about the same topic. Ask me to analyse what this means for the knower's access to diverse perspectives.

What this helps you practise:
Connecting the technological concept of filter bubbles to the TOK concept of perspective and analysing the implications for knowledge.

How to use it well:
Think about your own filter bubbles — what perspectives might you be missing because of how your technology curates information for you? This personal reflection strengthens TOK work.

Prompt 21: Technology and Memory

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explore the knowledge question: does technology enhance or diminish human knowledge by acting as an external memory? Present arguments on both sides, then ask me to take a position and defend it using at least two specific examples and relevant

TOK concepts such as personal knowledge, reliability, and the role of the knower.

What this helps you practise:
Constructing and defending a position on a knowledge question while using specific examples — a core TOK essay skill.

How to use it well:
After defending your position, ask the AI to present the strongest possible counterargument. Then consider whether you need to modify your view. This mirrors the dialectical structure of a strong TOK essay.

Prompt 22: Technology Shaping What Counts as Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with two examples where technology has changed what counts as knowledge in a particular field — for instance, how big data has changed what counts as evidence in the human sciences, or how digital imaging has changed what counts as proof in the natural sciences. Then ask me to generalise: does technology determine what counts as knowledge, or does it merely provide new tools? Challenge my answer.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the deeper question of whether technology shapes the nature of knowledge itself, not just the methods of knowledge production.

How to use it well:

This question sits at the heart of the Knowledge and Technology theme. Use your response as potential material for a TOK essay or exhibition commentary.

Section 3
Optional Theme: Knowledge and Language

Knowledge and Language is a rich optional theme that examines one of the most fundamental tools humans use to create, share, and contest knowledge. Language is not merely a neutral vehicle for transmitting ideas — it actively shapes what we can think, what we notice, and how we construct meaning. This theme asks you to consider the power, limitations, and complexities of language as it relates to knowledge.

Key areas of inquiry include the relationship between language and thought, the challenges of translation and ambiguity, the power dynamics embedded in language use, the way naming and categorisation shape our understanding, and the differences between literal and metaphorical uses of language. You should consider how language functions differently across Areas of Knowledge — the precise language of mathematics versus the interpretive language of the arts, for example.

The prompts in this section are designed to help you move beyond obvious observations about language and engage with the deeper knowledge questions that arise when we take seriously the idea that language is not just a tool we use but a lens through which we see the world.

Prompt 23: Language Shaping Thought

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three specific examples from different cultures or languages where a concept exists in one language but has no direct equivalent in another. For each example, ask me: does this mean speakers of the language without the word lack the knowledge, or merely lack the label? Guide me through the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and its relevance to TOK.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the debate about whether language determines or merely influences thought, which is central to the Knowledge and Language theme.

How to use it well:
Consider your own multilingual experiences or those of people you know. Personal examples of untranslatable concepts make excellent real-life situations for TOK essays and exhibitions.

Prompt 24: Translation and Knowledge Loss

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a detailed example of a significant concept from one discipline or culture that is notoriously difficult to translate into English (or another language I specify). Walk me through what is lost in translation and ask me to analyse whether the knowledge itself changes when it is expressed in a different language, or only the expression changes.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring whether knowledge is language-dependent and what happens to knowledge when it crosses linguistic boundaries.

How to use it well:
Apply this thinking to Areas of Knowledge: can a mathematical proof be fully translated? What about a poem? The differences reveal something important about the nature of knowledge in each area.

Prompt 25: Ambiguity and Knowledge Claims

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with five knowledge claims that are ambiguous due to the language used. For each one, show me at least two different interpretations and ask me to explain which interpretation I think is most justified and why. Then reveal how the ambiguity could lead to fundamentally different knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising and analysing how linguistic ambiguity can lead to different knowledge claims and the importance of precision in language.

How to use it well:
This exercise trains you to spot ambiguity in TOK prescribed titles, which often contain words that can be interpreted in multiple ways. Identifying and exploring these ambiguities is a hallmark of strong TOK essays.

Prompt 26: Language and Power

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how language can be used as a tool of power in knowledge contexts. Give me two historical and one contemporary example where the dominance of

a particular language has marginalised certain forms of knowledge. Then ask me to formulate a knowledge question about the relationship between linguistic power and what counts as knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how power dynamics in language affect whose knowledge is valued and recognised.

How to use it well:
Consider how this connects to your own educational context — what language dominates in your school or community, and what knowledge might be underrepresented as a result?

Prompt 27: Naming and Categorisation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with two examples where the act of naming or categorising something has significantly affected how it is understood — for instance, how medical diagnoses, species classifications, or political labels shape knowledge. Ask me to analyse whether naming creates knowledge or merely organises it. Challenge my position with a counterexample.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring how the act of labelling and categorising shapes knowledge and whether categories reflect or construct reality.

How to use it well:
Think about categories you use every day and whether they help or hinder your understanding.

This is a powerful line of analysis for TOK essays about the nature of knowledge.

Prompt 28: Metaphor in Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me examples of how metaphors are used in three different Areas of Knowledge (for example, 'natural selection' in biology, 'the invisible hand' in economics, 'colour' in music). For each, ask me to evaluate: does the metaphor help or hinder understanding? Could the knowledge be expressed without the metaphor? Assess my reasoning.

What this helps you practise:
Analysing the role of metaphorical language in constructing and communicating knowledge across different disciplines.

How to use it well:
Pay attention to how metaphors can both illuminate and mislead. This dual nature makes them excellent material for TOK analysis — you can argue for and against the same metaphor.

Prompt 29: Language in Different AOKs

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare how language functions in mathematics versus the arts as tools for knowledge. Present me with a specific example from each area where the type of language used is essential to the knowledge produced. Then ask me: can the knowledge in either area exist without its specific language? Evaluate my response.

What this helps you practise:
Comparing the role of language across Areas of Knowledge and understanding how different types of language serve different knowledge functions.

How to use it well:
This comparison is useful for TOK essays that ask about the methods or tools of different Areas of Knowledge. Note that 'language' includes formal symbolic systems, not just natural spoken language.

Prompt 30: Euphemism, Propaganda, and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me three examples where euphemistic or propagandistic language has been used to obscure, distort, or reshape knowledge — one from politics, one from advertising, and one from history. For each, ask me to identify the knowledge question at stake and explain how the language choice affects what people know or believe.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising how deliberate language choices can manipulate knowledge and analysing the ethical dimensions of language use.

How to use it well:
After identifying the knowledge questions, consider how you might use one of these examples as a real-life situation in a TOK essay. The best TOK examples are specific and clearly linked to a knowledge question.

Prompt 31: Silence and the Limits of Language

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explore the idea that some knowledge resists expression in language. Present me with three types of knowledge that are difficult or impossible to put into words — for example, emotional knowledge, embodied skills, or mystical experiences. Ask me to evaluate whether these are genuine forms of knowledge if they cannot be linguistically expressed. Play devil's advocate against my position.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the limits of language as a knowledge tool and considering whether knowledge must be expressible in language to count as knowledge.

How to use it well:
This connects to the broader TOK question of what counts as knowledge. Use the devil's advocate responses to strengthen your own argumentation skills.

Prompt 32: Language and Identity in Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how language connects to identity and how this connection affects knowledge. Give me a scenario where a person's linguistic identity (their mother tongue, dialect, or register) affects whether their knowledge is taken seriously. Ask me to analyse this using the TOK concepts of perspective, bias, and the relationship between the knower and knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how linguistic identity intersects with knowledge validation and the knower's position.

How to use it well:
Reflect on your own linguistic identity — how does the language you use affect how others perceive your knowledge? Personal reflection adds authenticity to TOK work.

Prompt 33: Definitions and Knowledge Disputes

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with two ongoing intellectual disputes that are fundamentally about how a key term is defined — for example, the definition of 'art,' 'life,' 'intelligence,' or 'justice.' For each dispute, ask me: is this a disagreement about knowledge or about language? Then challenge me to explain whether the distinction matters.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising how definitional disagreements can be at the root of knowledge disputes and evaluating the relationship between language and knowledge.

How to use it well:
Many TOK prescribed titles hinge on how key terms are defined. This exercise trains you to identify when a dispute is really about definitions and to address this explicitly in your essay.

Section 4
Area of Knowledge: History

History as an Area of Knowledge in TOK is not about memorising dates and events — it is about examining how historical knowledge is produced, justified, and contested. Historians work with evidence, construct narratives, make judgements about significance, and inevitably bring their own perspectives to their interpretations. TOK asks you to think critically about what it means to know something about the past.

Key concepts in this area include the nature of historical evidence, the problem of bias and perspective in historical accounts, the role of narrative and interpretation, the question of historical significance, the challenges of objectivity, and the use of counterfactual reasoning. You should also consider the methods historians use, the ethical responsibilities they bear, and the relationship between history and memory.

The prompts in this section are designed to help you engage with these historiographical questions at a level appropriate for IB TOK. They will push you to think about history not just as a body of knowledge but as a way of knowing — with its own distinctive methods, strengths, and limitations.

Prompt 34: Historical Evidence and Reliability

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three different types of historical evidence about the same event — for example, a government document, a personal diary, and an archaeological artefact. Ask me to evaluate the reliability and limitations of each source using TOK concepts such as justification, perspective, and bias. Then challenge my evaluation with a scenario where the least obvious source turns out to be most valuable.

What this helps you practise:
Evaluating different types of historical evidence and understanding that reliability depends on context, purpose, and the questions being asked.

How to use it well:
Apply this framework to historical sources you encounter in your IB History course. The ability to evaluate evidence critically is valuable for both TOK and History.

Prompt 35: Bias in Historical Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a specific historical event and present two competing historical interpretations of it from different national or cultural perspectives. Ask me to identify the assumptions, values, and biases embedded in each interpretation. Then ask me: is it possible to produce historical knowledge that is free from bias? Critique my answer.

What this helps you practise:
Identifying bias in historical interpretations and engaging with the fundamental question of whether objectivity is possible in history.

How to use it well:
When the AI critiques your answer, pay attention to the distinction between recognising bias and eliminating it. This nuance is important in TOK.

Prompt 36: Historical Significance

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the concept of historical significance and the criteria historians use to determine whether an event is significant. Then present me with two events — one widely regarded as historically significant and one often overlooked — and ask me to argue why the overlooked event might be equally or more significant. Assess my argument.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding that historical significance is constructed, not inherent, and practising the skill of constructing a reasoned argument.

How to use it well:
Consider whose perspectives determine what is considered significant. This connects to broader TOK themes about power, perspective, and whose knowledge counts.

Prompt 37: Narrative and Historical Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how historians use narrative to construct historical knowledge. Then give me a set of historical facts about a particular period and ask me to construct two different narratives using the same

facts — one that tells a story of progress and one that tells a story of decline. After I attempt this, ask me what this exercise reveals about the nature of historical knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how narrative construction shapes historical knowledge and recognising that the same facts can support different stories.

How to use it well:
This exercise demonstrates a key TOK insight: historical knowledge is not just about what happened but about how we frame what happened. Use this understanding in your TOK essay when discussing history.

Prompt 38: Counterfactual Reasoning in History

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain what counterfactual reasoning is in history and present me with a well-known historical turning point. Ask me to construct a plausible counterfactual scenario and then evaluate: does counterfactual reasoning produce genuine historical knowledge, or is it merely speculation? Guide me through the arguments on both sides.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the methodological debate about counterfactual reasoning and its status as a source of historical knowledge.

How to use it well:

This is an excellent topic for TOK essays about the methods of history. Note that the value of counterfactual reasoning is contested among historians — you can explore why.

Prompt 39: History and Memory

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a case where collective memory and professional historical knowledge diverge — where what a community remembers differs from what historians have established through evidence. Ask me to analyse this divergence using TOK concepts and to evaluate which form of knowledge is more valuable. Then present a counterargument to my position.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the relationship between memory and history and understanding that both are forms of knowledge about the past with different characteristics.

How to use it well:
Think about examples from your own community where collective memory differs from the historical record. These personal connections make your TOK analysis more authentic.

Prompt 40: The Historian's Methods

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Walk me through the key methods historians use to produce knowledge: source analysis, corroboration, contextualisation, and interpretation. Then present

me with a historical puzzle — a set of conflicting sources about the same event — and ask me to apply these methods to reach a justified conclusion. Evaluate my reasoning.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding and applying historical methodology, which is essential for discussing history as an Area of Knowledge in TOK.

How to use it well:
Focus on explaining not just what you conclude but how you reached that conclusion and what limitations your conclusion has. This methodological self-awareness is what TOK rewards.

Prompt 41: Ethics in Historical Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three ethical dilemmas that historians face: for example, whether to publish harmful truths, how to represent the perspectives of people who left no written records, or whether historians have a responsibility to correct popular misconceptions. For each, ask me to identify the knowledge question at stake and take a position. Challenge my positions.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the ethical dimensions of historical knowledge production and connecting specific ethical dilemmas to broader knowledge questions.

How to use it well:
Ethics is part of the knowledge framework for every Area of Knowledge. Practising ethical analysis in

history prepares you for similar analysis in other areas.

Prompt 42: History and Truth

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Ask me to define what 'truth' means in the context of history. Then present me with a case where multiple 'truths' exist about the same historical event and ask me to reconcile this with the idea that history aims to produce knowledge. Is historical truth relative, or are some accounts more true than others? Interrogate my answer with specific follow-up questions.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the concept of truth in history and understanding how correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic theories of truth apply to historical knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is one of the deepest knowledge questions in TOK. Do not settle for easy answers — push yourself to consider what truth really means when applied to accounts of the past.

Prompt 43: Presentism and Historical Understanding

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the concept of presentism in history — judging the past by the standards of the present. Give me a specific example where presentism distorts historical understanding and another where

applying contemporary values to the past might be justified. Ask me to evaluate where the boundary lies and what knowledge questions this raises.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the methodological challenge of presentism and its implications for how we produce and evaluate historical knowledge.

How to use it well:
Consider how your own contemporary values might affect your interpretation of historical events. This self-awareness demonstrates the TOK concept of the knower's relationship with knowledge.

Prompt 44: Gaps and Silences in History

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with an example of a significant gap or silence in the historical record — a group, event, or perspective that is absent from mainstream historical narratives. Ask me to analyse why this gap exists, what knowledge has been lost, and what methods might be used to recover or reconstruct this missing knowledge. Evaluate my analysis using TOK concepts of scope and limitations.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising that absences in the historical record are themselves a form of knowledge and analysing what causes and perpetuates these gaps.

How to use it well:
Gaps and silences are powerful examples for TOK essays and exhibitions. They demonstrate that what

we do not know is often as important as what we do know.

Section 5
Area of Knowledge: The Human Sciences

The human sciences — including psychology, economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science — study human behaviour and societies using a range of methods. In TOK, this Area of Knowledge raises fascinating questions about whether human behaviour can be studied scientifically, what methods are appropriate for understanding people and cultures, and how reliable the knowledge produced by these disciplines can be.

Key issues include the tension between quantitative and qualitative methods, the difficulty of establishing laws or predictions about human behaviour, the role of cultural context and bias, the ethical challenges unique to studying human subjects, and the question of whether the human sciences can ever achieve the kind of certainty found in the natural sciences. The observer effect — the fact that studying humans can change their behaviour — is a particularly rich area for TOK analysis.

The prompts in this section will help you engage with the methodology, ethics, and epistemological challenges of the human sciences. They are designed to develop your ability to compare this area with other Areas of Knowledge and to formulate sophisticated knowledge questions about the study of human beings.

Prompt 45: Methods in the Human Sciences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare the methods used in the human sciences with those used in the natural sciences. Present me with a specific research question that could be studied using either quantitative or qualitative methods, and ask me to evaluate the strengths and limitations of each approach for that question. Then ask me: does the choice of method affect the knowledge produced? Assess my answer.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how methodological choices shape knowledge production in the human sciences and comparing methods across Areas of Knowledge.

How to use it well:
Think about specific studies you have encountered in your IB courses. Concrete examples make your TOK analysis more convincing than abstract generalisations.

Prompt 46: The Observer Effect

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the observer effect in the human sciences and give me three specific examples of how the presence or actions of a researcher can alter the behaviour of those being studied. Then ask me to evaluate: does this fundamentally undermine the reliability of knowledge in the human sciences, or can it be managed? Guide me through both sides of the argument.

What this helps you practise:

Engaging with a key methodological challenge in the human sciences and evaluating its implications for the reliability of knowledge.

How to use it well:
Compare this with the natural sciences — does an observer effect exist there too? Making cross-AOK comparisons is a hallmark of strong TOK analysis.

Prompt 47: Cultural Bias in the Human Sciences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a well-known theory or finding from psychology or sociology that has been criticised for cultural bias — for example, research conducted primarily on Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) populations. Ask me to analyse what this reveals about the scope and limitations of knowledge in the human sciences. Then present a counterargument about the possibility of universal human science knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising cultural bias in human science knowledge and evaluating the tension between universal claims and culturally specific evidence.

How to use it well:
This is directly relevant to TOK discussions about perspective and whose knowledge is represented. Connect it to your own cultural context for a more personal analysis.

Prompt 48: Prediction in the Human Sciences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare the predictive power of the human sciences with that of the natural sciences. Give me one example where a human science has made successful predictions and one where predictions have failed. Ask me to explain why prediction is more difficult in the human sciences and what this tells us about the nature of knowledge in this area. Challenge oversimplified answers.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the limits of prediction in the human sciences and what this reveals about the difference between natural and human science knowledge.

How to use it well:
Avoid the trap of concluding that the human sciences are simply 'less scientific.' Instead, consider what different kinds of knowledge they produce and why prediction may not be the best measure of their value.

Prompt 49: Ethics of Human Science Research

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three famous studies in psychology or sociology that raised serious ethical concerns (such as the Milgram experiment, the Stanford prison experiment, or Humphreys' tearoom study). For each, ask me: was the knowledge gained worth the ethical cost? Then ask me to formulate a general knowledge question about the relationship between ethics and knowledge production in the human sciences.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the ethical constraints on knowledge production in the human sciences and practising the formulation of knowledge questions about ethics.

How to use it well:
Consider whether ethical constraints enhance or limit knowledge. The answer is not straightforward, and exploring the tension makes for excellent TOK analysis.

Prompt 50: Quantitative vs Qualitative Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a specific topic in the human sciences (such as poverty, happiness, or identity) and present me with both a quantitative finding (statistics, measurements) and a qualitative finding (interviews, case studies) about that topic. Ask me to evaluate which produces more valuable knowledge and why. Then argue against my position.

What this helps you practise:
Evaluating different types of evidence in the human sciences and understanding that different methods produce different kinds of knowledge.

How to use it well:
Strong TOK analysis avoids declaring one type of knowledge superior. Instead, explore what each type of knowledge can and cannot tell us.

Prompt 51: Models and Simplification

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how models are used in the human sciences (for example, economic models, psychological models of decision-making, or sociological models of stratification). Then present me with a specific model and ask me to evaluate: what knowledge does the model produce, and what is lost through simplification? Guide me in connecting this to the TOK concept of scope and limitations.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how models function as tools for knowledge production and recognising the trade-off between simplification and accuracy.

How to use it well:
Consider the famous quote that 'all models are wrong, but some are useful.' Use this as a starting point for deeper analysis about what 'useful' means in terms of knowledge.

Prompt 52: Replication Crisis and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the replication crisis in psychology and its implications for knowledge in the human sciences. Then ask me to analyse: if a study cannot be replicated, does that mean the original study did not produce knowledge? Guide me through the implications for how we define and validate knowledge in this area.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with a current methodological crisis in the human sciences and exploring its implications for the nature of knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is a topical and sophisticated example that shows you are aware of current debates in the human sciences. It connects well to TOK discussions about justification and reliability.

Prompt 53: Human Sciences and Natural Sciences Comparison

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Act as a TOK examiner and present me with a knowledge question that requires comparing the human sciences and the natural sciences — for example, whether both produce knowledge of equal status. Ask me to develop a structured response with a claim, supporting examples, a counterclaim, and a conclusion. Then grade my response and explain what would make it stronger.

What this helps you practise:
Structuring a comparative TOK argument across two Areas of Knowledge, which is a common requirement in TOK essays.

How to use it well:
Use the AI's grading criteria to understand what examiners look for. Focus on depth of analysis rather than breadth of examples.

Prompt 54: Values and Objectivity in the Human Sciences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a research question in the human sciences where the researcher's values could significantly influence the findings — for example, research on inequality, criminal behaviour, or gender. Ask me to analyse how values might enter at each stage of the research process (question formulation, method selection, data interpretation, presentation of findings). Then ask me: can the human sciences ever be value-free?

What this helps you practise:
Tracing how values influence knowledge production at every stage and engaging with the debate about objectivity in the human sciences.

How to use it well:
Apply this analysis to your own values. When you read a study about a topic you feel strongly about, how do your values affect how you evaluate the findings?

Prompt 55: Classification and Human Science Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an example from the human sciences where a classification system has been contested or revised — such as the classification of mental disorders, racial categories, or economic development categories. Ask me to analyse what the existence of contested classifications reveals about the nature of knowledge in the human sciences. Connect this to the TOK concepts of language and categorisation.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding how classification systems in the human sciences are constructed rather than discovered and how this affects the knowledge they produce.

How to use it well:
This connects the human sciences to the Knowledge and Language theme. Note how changing a category can change what we think we know — this is a powerful TOK insight.

Section 6
Area of Knowledge: The Natural Sciences

The natural sciences — physics, chemistry, biology, earth sciences, and their subdisciplines — are often held up as the gold standard of knowledge production. In TOK, however, we examine not just what the sciences have discovered but how scientific knowledge is produced, validated, and sometimes overturned. The natural sciences offer a rich case study in methodology, certainty, paradigm change, and the relationship between knowledge and reality.

Key concepts for TOK analysis include the scientific method and its variations, the role of hypothesis and falsifiability, the nature of scientific laws and theories, paradigm shifts, the social dimensions of science (peer review, scientific consensus, funding), the relationship between science and technology, and the ethical responsibilities of scientists. You should consider both the immense power and the genuine limitations of scientific knowledge.

The prompts in this section will help you engage critically with the natural sciences as an Area of Knowledge. They move beyond the textbook image of science as a simple linear process and explore the philosophical, social, and ethical dimensions of scientific knowledge production.

Prompt 56: The Scientific Method in Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a common oversimplified description of 'the scientific method' (hypothesis, experiment, conclusion) and then show me how real scientific practice often deviates from this model. Give me three specific examples of important scientific discoveries that did not follow the textbook method. Then ask me: does this undermine the reliability of scientific knowledge? Evaluate my response.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding that the scientific method is more complex and varied than the textbook version, and evaluating what this means for the reliability of scientific knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is a common TOK misconception — that science always follows a neat linear process. Being able to discuss the messiness of real science demonstrates sophisticated understanding.

Prompt 57: Falsifiability and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain Karl Popper's concept of falsifiability and its role in distinguishing science from non-science. Then present me with three claims — one clearly falsifiable, one arguably unfalsifiable, and one in a grey area — and ask me to evaluate each using the falsifiability criterion. After I respond, ask me: is falsifiability sufficient as a criterion for scientific knowledge? Present limitations of this view.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and applying the concept of falsifiability while recognising its strengths and limitations as a demarcation criterion.

How to use it well:
Falsifiability is one of the most important concepts for discussing the natural sciences in TOK. Make sure you can explain it clearly and discuss its limitations.

Prompt 58: Paradigm Shifts

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain Thomas Kuhn's concept of a paradigm shift using two historical examples from different natural sciences. Then present me with a current scientific area where a paradigm shift might be occurring or is debated, and ask me to evaluate: what does the existence of paradigm shifts tell us about the nature of scientific knowledge? Is science progressing toward truth or just changing frameworks?

What this helps you practise:
Understanding paradigm shifts and engaging with the philosophical question of whether science progresses toward truth.

How to use it well:
Paradigm shifts are excellent examples for TOK essays about certainty, progress, and the nature of knowledge. Be sure to explain what happens during and after a shift, not just that it occurs.

Prompt 59: Certainty in the Natural Sciences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three scientific knowledge claims of different levels of certainty: a well-established law, a current theory with strong evidence, and a hypothesis at the frontier of research. Ask me to evaluate the degree of certainty we can have in each and to explain what factors contribute to that certainty. Then challenge me: is any scientific knowledge absolutely certain?

What this helps you practise:
Understanding degrees of certainty in science and the factors that contribute to the reliability of scientific knowledge claims.

How to use it well:
Avoid the common extremes of either claiming science is certain or dismissing it as uncertain. The most interesting TOK analysis explores the space between these positions.

Prompt 60: Peer Review and Scientific Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how the peer review process works and its role in validating scientific knowledge. Then present me with a scenario where the peer review process has failed or produced controversial results. Ask me to evaluate: is peer review necessary for knowledge to be scientific, and what are its limitations? Guide me in connecting this to the TOK concepts of justification and consensus.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the social processes of scientific knowledge validation and recognising both the value and limitations of peer review.

How to use it well:
Peer review is an example of how knowledge is socially constructed even in the natural sciences. This challenges the idea that science is purely objective.

Prompt 61: Scientific Models and Reality

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three different scientific models (such as the Bohr model of the atom, plate tectonics, or climate models) and ask me to evaluate: do these models describe reality as it truly is, or are they useful simplifications? What is the relationship between a scientific model and the truth? After I respond, present the instrumentalist and realist positions and ask me to take a side.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the philosophical debate about whether scientific models represent reality and what this means for the nature of scientific knowledge.

How to use it well:
This connects to deep TOK questions about truth and representation. Your position on this question should inform how you discuss the natural sciences in your TOK essay.

Prompt 62: Ethics in Scientific Research

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three ethical dilemmas in the natural sciences: one about the conduct of research (such as animal testing), one about the application of findings (such as nuclear technology), and one about the communication of results (such as publishing research that could be misused). For each, ask me to identify the knowledge question and evaluate whether ethical constraints should limit scientific knowledge production.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the ethical dimensions of natural science and understanding how ethical considerations intersect with knowledge production.

How to use it well:
Ethical analysis in the sciences is often underdeveloped in TOK essays. Addressing it shows examiners that you understand the full knowledge framework.

Prompt 63: Science and Technology Relationship

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the bidirectional relationship between science and technology — how technology enables new scientific knowledge and how science enables new technologies. Give me two specific examples and then ask me to evaluate the knowledge question: does technology drive science, or does science drive technology? Is it possible to separate the two? Challenge simplistic answers.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the interplay between science and technology and evaluating how this relationship affects knowledge production.

How to use it well:
This connects the natural sciences to the Knowledge and Technology theme. Making these cross-theme connections demonstrates breadth in your TOK understanding.

Prompt 64: Consensus and Disagreement in Science

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how scientific consensus is formed and present me with one topic where strong consensus exists and one where significant scientific disagreement remains. Ask me to analyse: what makes scientific consensus a reliable basis for knowledge, and what does ongoing disagreement tell us about the nature of scientific knowledge? Assess whether I distinguish between scientific and public disagreement.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding how consensus functions in science and what scientific disagreement reveals about the process of knowledge production.

How to use it well:
This is highly relevant to current debates about topics like climate science. Be careful to distinguish between genuine scientific disagreement and public misunderstanding.

Prompt 65: Observation and Theory-Ladenness

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the concept of theory-ladenness of observation — the idea that what scientists observe is influenced by their existing theories and expectations. Present me with two examples where theoretical commitments have shaped what scientists saw or measured. Then ask me: if observation is theory-laden, can it serve as an independent check on theory? Explore the implications for scientific objectivity.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the philosophical challenge that observation in science is not purely objective and understanding its implications for scientific knowledge.

How to use it well:
Theory-ladenness is a sophisticated concept that can elevate your TOK analysis significantly. Use it to challenge the common assumption that scientific observation is straightforwardly objective.

Prompt 66: Reductionism and Emergence in Science

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the concepts of reductionism and emergence in the natural sciences. Give me an example where a reductionist approach has been highly successful and an example where emergent properties resist reductionist explanation. Then ask me to evaluate: can all scientific knowledge ultimately be reduced to

physics, or do different levels of description produce different kinds of knowledge?

What this helps you practise:
Understanding different approaches to explanation in the natural sciences and engaging with the debate about the unity of scientific knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is a more advanced topic that shows depth of understanding. Connect it to the broader TOK question of whether all Areas of Knowledge are fundamentally about the same thing.

Section 7
Area of Knowledge: Mathematics

Mathematics holds a unique position among the Areas of Knowledge. It produces knowledge that appears certain, universal, and timeless — mathematical proofs, once established, seem to hold regardless of culture, era, or perspective. Yet this very certainty raises profound knowledge questions: where does mathematical knowledge come from? Is mathematics discovered or invented? How can abstract mathematics describe the physical world so effectively?

Key TOK concepts for this area include the nature of proof and axioms, the relationship between mathematics and reality, the role of beauty and elegance in mathematical knowledge, the distinction between pure and applied mathematics, the certainty of mathematical knowledge compared with other areas, and the question of whether mathematics is a human creation or an independent feature of reality. Godel's incompleteness theorems add a further layer of complexity to the question of certainty.

The prompts in this section are designed to help you engage with these philosophical dimensions of mathematics. They go beyond the mechanics of mathematical problem-solving to explore what it means for mathematics to produce knowledge and what kind of knowledge it produces.

Prompt 67: Proof and Certainty

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain what mathematical proof is and why it is considered a uniquely powerful form of justification. Then present me with a simple proof and a knowledge question: does the certainty of mathematical proof make mathematical knowledge fundamentally different from knowledge in other Areas of Knowledge? Ask me to defend my position with examples and then present a challenge to it.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the nature of mathematical proof and evaluating whether it gives mathematics a special epistemic status among Areas of Knowledge.

How to use it well:
Compare mathematical certainty with the kind of certainty available in history or the human sciences. This comparison is powerful in TOK essays.

Prompt 68: Axioms and Foundations

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain what axioms are in mathematics and why mathematical systems require them. Present me with an example of how choosing different axioms leads to different mathematical systems (such as Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometry). Then ask me: if axioms are assumed rather than proven, does this undermine the certainty of mathematical knowledge? Guide me through the implications.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the foundational role of axioms and engaging with the question of whether unproven

assumptions at the base of mathematics affect its certainty.

How to use it well:
The fact that mathematics rests on unproven axioms is a powerful point for TOK analysis. It shows that even the most certain Area of Knowledge has assumptions at its foundation.

Prompt 69: Invented or Discovered

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the two main philosophical positions on the nature of mathematics: Platonism (mathematics is discovered — mathematical truths exist independently of humans) and formalism/constructivism (mathematics is invented — it is a human creation). Give me two compelling arguments for each side. Then ask me to take a position and defend it. Challenge my position with the strongest counterargument.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with one of the central philosophical debates about mathematics and practising the skill of defending a position against counterarguments.

How to use it well:
This is one of the most common TOK questions about mathematics. Having a well-reasoned position on this debate, supported by specific examples, prepares you for many possible prescribed titles.

Prompt 70: Beauty and Elegance in Mathematics

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how mathematicians use concepts like beauty, elegance, and simplicity to evaluate proofs and theorems. Give me two examples of mathematical results that are considered beautiful and explain why. Then ask me to evaluate: does aesthetic judgement play a genuine role in mathematical knowledge, or is it merely subjective preference? What knowledge questions does this raise?

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the role of aesthetics in mathematics and connecting this to broader TOK questions about the relationship between beauty and knowledge.

How to use it well:
This connects mathematics to the arts in an unexpected way. Using this connection in a TOK essay demonstrates creative and cross-disciplinary thinking.

Prompt 71: Mathematics and the Physical World

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the puzzle known as the 'unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics' — the fact that abstract mathematics developed without any practical purpose often turns out to describe the physical world with remarkable accuracy. Give me two specific examples and ask me to explain why this happens. Then present me with three possible explanations and ask me to evaluate each.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the philosophical puzzle of why mathematics describes reality and evaluating different explanations for this connection.

How to use it well:
This is a profound knowledge question that connects mathematics to the natural sciences. It makes for sophisticated TOK analysis that goes beyond surface-level discussion.

Prompt 72: Godel's Incompleteness Theorems

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain Godel's incompleteness theorems in accessible terms and their significance for the foundations of mathematics. Then ask me to evaluate what Godel's results mean for the certainty and completeness of mathematical knowledge. Guide me away from common oversimplifications and toward a nuanced understanding.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding Godel's theorems and their implications for the limits of mathematical knowledge — a key topic for sophisticated TOK analysis.

How to use it well:
Be careful not to overstate what Godel proved. The AI's guidance on common oversimplifications is valuable — Godel shows limits but does not destroy mathematical certainty.

Prompt 73: Pure vs Applied Mathematics

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the distinction between pure and applied mathematics and present me with an example of a mathematical concept that was initially developed as pure mathematics but later found practical applications. Ask me to evaluate: do pure and applied mathematics produce different kinds of knowledge? Is one more valuable than the other? Challenge my answer.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the relationship between pure and applied mathematics and evaluating what each contributes to knowledge.

How to use it well:
This connects to broader TOK questions about the purpose of knowledge. Does knowledge need to be useful to be valuable? Your position on this has implications across all Areas of Knowledge.

Prompt 74: Mathematics and Language

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the claim that mathematics is a language. In what ways does mathematical notation function like a language, and in what ways does it differ from natural language? Present me with a mathematical concept and ask me to express it first in mathematical notation and then in everyday language. After I attempt this, ask me what is gained and lost in each form of expression.

What this helps you practise:

Exploring the relationship between mathematics and language and understanding how the form of expression affects the knowledge communicated.

How to use it well:
This connects mathematics to the Knowledge and Language theme. It is particularly useful if your TOK essay asks about the role of language in knowledge.

Prompt 75: Computer-Assisted Proofs

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain what computer-assisted proofs are and present me with a famous example (such as the four-colour theorem). Then ask me to evaluate: if a proof is so long that no human can verify it, but a computer has verified it, do we have genuine mathematical knowledge? What does this tell us about the nature of proof and understanding?

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the question of whether knowledge requires human understanding or whether computational verification is sufficient.

How to use it well:
This connects mathematics to the Knowledge and Technology theme. It raises interesting questions about whether knowledge can exist without a human knower who understands it.

Prompt 76: Mathematical Modelling and Certainty

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain how mathematical models are used to represent real-world phenomena (such as population growth, disease spread, or financial markets). Present me with a case where a mathematical model made an accurate prediction and one where it failed significantly. Ask me to evaluate: does mathematical certainty extend to mathematical models of the real world, or is it lost in the modelling process?

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the gap between the certainty of pure mathematics and the uncertainty introduced when mathematics is applied to model reality.

How to use it well:
This is an important nuance: mathematics itself may be certain, but mathematical models of the world may not be. This distinction is valuable for TOK analysis.

Prompt 77: Culture and Mathematics

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with examples from different mathematical traditions (such as Indian, Chinese, Arabic, and European) and ask me to evaluate: is mathematical knowledge culturally influenced, or is it universal? Can the same mathematical truth be expressed differently in different cultures, and if so, what does this tell us about the nature of mathematical knowledge? Challenge oversimplified answers in either direction.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring whether mathematics is culturally neutral and universal or shaped by cultural context,

connecting to broader TOK themes about perspective and knowledge.

How to use it well:
Many students assume mathematics is completely culturally independent. This prompt challenges that assumption and adds nuance to your understanding.

Section 8
Area of Knowledge: The Arts

The arts — including visual arts, music, literature, theatre, film, and dance — represent a distinctive way of knowing that often stands in contrast to the methods and assumptions of other Areas of Knowledge. In TOK, we ask not just what the arts express but how they produce, communicate, and embody knowledge. The arts challenge us to consider whether knowledge must be propositional (expressed in statements) or whether it can also be experiential, emotional, and embodied.

Key concepts for TOK analysis of the arts include the nature of aesthetic judgement, the relationship between intention and interpretation, the question of whether art communicates truth, the role of cultural context in shaping artistic knowledge, the distinction between artistic skill and artistic knowledge, and the way the arts challenge or reinforce existing knowledge. You should consider the methods artists use, the criteria for evaluating art, and the ethical responsibilities of artists.

The prompts in this section are designed to help you engage with the arts as a genuine Area of Knowledge rather than treating them as merely subjective or decorative. They will push you to articulate what kind of knowledge the arts produce and how this knowledge relates to knowledge in other areas.

Prompt 78: What Knowledge Do the Arts Produce?

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three specific artworks from different art forms (visual art, music, and literature) and for each one, ask me to articulate what knowledge it produces or communicates. After I respond, challenge me: is what I described really knowledge, or is it something else (emotion, experience, opinion)? Guide me in distinguishing between knowledge and other responses to art.

What this helps you practise:
Articulating the specific knowledge claims of the arts and defending the idea that art can produce genuine knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is a fundamental question for the arts in TOK. Being able to clearly articulate what knowledge art produces — and defend this claim — is essential.

Prompt 79: Aesthetic Judgement and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with two contrasting aesthetic judgements about the same artwork — one positive and one negative — each supported by different criteria. Ask me to evaluate: is there a correct aesthetic judgement, or is aesthetic evaluation entirely subjective? Guide me through the debate between objectivism and subjectivism in aesthetics and ask me to take a position.

What this helps you practise:
Engaging with the debate about whether aesthetic judgement is objective or subjective and its implications for knowledge in the arts.

How to use it well:
Avoid the easy conclusion that 'art is subjective.' Strong TOK analysis explores the criteria and reasoning behind aesthetic judgements and considers when and why they converge or diverge.

Prompt 80: Intention vs Interpretation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the debate between intentionalism (the meaning of art is what the artist intended) and reception theory (the meaning of art is what the audience interprets). Present me with a specific artwork where the artist's intention and the audience's interpretation diverge significantly. Ask me: whose interpretation produces knowledge — the artist's or the audience's? Evaluate my reasoning.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the tension between artist intention and audience interpretation and evaluating how this affects knowledge in the arts.

How to use it well:
This debate has real implications for how you discuss the arts in TOK. Consider whether the same debate exists in other Areas of Knowledge — for example, does the author's intention matter in interpreting historical documents?

Prompt 81: Art and Truth

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the claim: 'Art can reveal truths that other Areas of Knowledge cannot.' Give me two arguments in favour of this claim and two against it, each supported by specific examples. Then ask me to evaluate the claim and take a position. Challenge my position by asking what kind of truth art reveals and whether it can be verified.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the relationship between art and truth and evaluating whether the arts have a unique epistemic contribution.

How to use it well:
Think about a time when a novel, film, or piece of music gave you an insight you could not have gained from a textbook. Articulate what that insight was and whether it counts as knowledge.

Prompt 82: Cultural Context and Art

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with an artwork that has very different meanings or values in two different cultural contexts. Ask me to analyse whether the knowledge the artwork produces changes depending on the cultural context of the viewer. Then ask: does this mean artistic knowledge is relative, or is there something in the artwork itself that remains constant? Evaluate my analysis.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding how cultural context shapes the knowledge produced by art and engaging with questions of relativism in aesthetic knowledge.

How to use it well:
Use examples from your own cultural background where possible. Personal engagement with cultural context strengthens your TOK analysis.

Prompt 83: The Arts and Ethics

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with three cases where art raises ethical questions: for example, art that depicts violence, art created by morally problematic individuals, or art that appropriates from marginalised cultures. For each case, ask me to identify the knowledge question and evaluate whether ethical considerations should affect how we judge the knowledge value of art. Challenge simplistic positions.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the ethical dimensions of artistic knowledge and evaluating the relationship between moral and aesthetic value.

How to use it well:
Ethics in the arts is a rich but often underdeveloped area in TOK essays. Engaging with it shows breadth of thinking and connects the arts to the broader knowledge framework.

Prompt 84: Skill, Creativity, and Knowledge in Art

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explore the relationship between technical skill, creativity, and knowledge in the arts. Present me with two examples: one where extraordinary technical skill produces art without deep knowledge, and one where conceptual creativity produces knowledge without traditional skill. Ask me to evaluate: which is more important for producing knowledge in the arts? Then complicate my answer.

What this helps you practise:
Distinguishing between skill and knowledge in the arts and understanding how both contribute to artistic knowledge production.

How to use it well:
This connects to the broader TOK question of what counts as knowledge. Think about how skill and knowledge relate in other Areas of Knowledge — for example, in the natural sciences.

Prompt 85: Art as a Way of Knowing

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Make the case that the arts constitute a distinctive way of knowing that is fundamentally different from scientific or mathematical ways of knowing. Then make the opposing case — that the arts are ultimately about expression, not knowledge. Present both arguments with specific examples. Ask me to adjudicate between them and justify my position.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the epistemic status of the arts and defending a position on whether they constitute a genuine way of knowing.

How to use it well:
Your ability to argue both sides of this debate and then take a justified position is exactly what TOK examiners look for. Practise this structure for your essay.

Prompt 86: Art, Representation, and Knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explore how the arts represent reality and what this means for knowledge. Present me with three different approaches to artistic representation: realistic, abstract, and conceptual. For each, ask me to evaluate what kind of knowledge about reality the approach can produce. Then ask: can non-representational art produce knowledge about reality?

What this helps you practise:
Understanding different modes of artistic representation and evaluating how each relates to knowledge about the world.

How to use it well:
This is particularly useful for discussing visual arts and music in TOK. Consider how representation in art compares to representation in science (models, diagrams, theories).

Prompt 87: The Arts and Emotion

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the knowledge question: 'Does the emotional response produced by art constitute a form of knowledge?' Give me a specific example of an artwork that produces a powerful emotional response and ask me to analyse whether this emotional response gives us knowledge that could not be gained through purely rational or empirical means. Assess whether my analysis confuses feeling with knowing.

What this helps you practise:
Exploring the relationship between emotion and knowledge in the arts and evaluating whether emotional understanding can be a form of knowledge.

How to use it well:
This is a nuanced area where many students struggle. The key is to articulate precisely what the emotional response teaches us, not just that it makes us feel something.

Prompt 88: Comparing the Arts with Other AOKs

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a specific topic — such as love, death, war, or justice — and show me how three different Areas of Knowledge (the arts, the human sciences, and history) each produce knowledge about this topic using their own methods. Ask me to compare the three kinds of knowledge produced and evaluate which gives us the deepest understanding. Resist letting me dismiss any one approach.

What this helps you practise:
Making cross-AOK comparisons and evaluating the distinctive contribution of the arts relative to other Areas of Knowledge.

How to use it well:
Cross-AOK comparison is a hallmark of strong TOK essays. This exercise trains you to see how different Areas produce different but complementary knowledge about the same topic.

Section 9
The TOK Essay and Exhibition

The TOK essay and the TOK exhibition are your two assessed pieces of work, and they require quite different skills. The essay (1,600 words maximum, externally assessed) asks you to respond to one of six prescribed titles released by the IB each session. It requires sustained, structured argumentation that draws on Areas of Knowledge and other TOK concepts. The exhibition (950 words maximum, internally assessed) asks you to select three objects from your own experience and link them to one of 35 IA prompts, demonstrating how TOK manifests in the world around you.

For the essay, you need to: unpack the prescribed title, identify the key terms and their possible interpretations, develop a clear line of argumentation with claims and counterclaims, use specific examples from at least two Areas of Knowledge, and arrive at a thoughtful conclusion that acknowledges complexity. For the exhibition, you need to: choose objects that are specific and personal (not generic or famous), write commentaries that clearly link each object to the chosen IA prompt and to broader TOK concepts, and ensure the three objects work together to build a coherent exploration.

The prompts in this section are specifically designed to help you prepare for these two assessment tasks. They cover essay planning and structure, responding to different types of prescribed titles, selecting and linking exhibition objects, writing exhibition

commentaries, and developing the analytical skills that both tasks require.

Prompt 89: Unpacking Prescribed Titles

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a TOK-style prescribed title (or use one I provide). Walk me through how to unpack it step by step: identify the key terms, consider multiple interpretations of each, identify any assumptions embedded in the title, determine which Areas of Knowledge and themes are most relevant, and formulate a preliminary thesis. Ask me to attempt each step before you provide guidance.

What this helps you practise:
The essential first step of essay writing: carefully and thoroughly unpacking a prescribed title before beginning to write.

How to use it well:
Do this exercise with multiple prescribed titles, including past IB titles. The better you get at unpacking titles, the stronger your essay argument will be.

Prompt 90: Developing Claims and Counterclaims

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me a TOK-style thesis statement related to a prescribed title. Ask me to develop one supporting claim with a specific example from an Area of Knowledge, and then a counterclaim that genuinely challenges the first claim (not just a weak objection).

Evaluate the quality of my claim-counterclaim pair and show me how to strengthen it. Repeat with a second pair from a different Area of Knowledge.

What this helps you practise:
Structuring TOK essay arguments with genuine claims and counterclaims, which is the core analytical skill assessed in the essay.

How to use it well:
Weak counterclaims are the most common flaw in TOK essays. Practise making your counterclaims as strong as your claims — the essay should feel like a genuine dialogue, not a straw man argument.

Prompt 91: Using Examples Effectively

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

I want to improve how I use examples in my TOK essay. Give me a thesis statement and ask me to provide two examples from different Areas of Knowledge to support it. After I provide them, evaluate my examples on three criteria: specificity (are they detailed enough?), relevance (do they directly support the point?), and analysis (do I explain how they connect to the argument, or just describe them?). Show me how to improve.

What this helps you practise:
Using examples that are specific, relevant, and analytically connected to the argument — a key differentiator between good and excellent TOK essays.

How to use it well:

Many students describe examples without analysing them. The AI's feedback on analysis will help you develop the habit of always explaining how an example supports your point.

Prompt 92: Essay Structure Workshop

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a TOK prescribed title and ask me to outline a complete essay structure: introduction with thesis, two or three body sections each with a claim, example, analysis, counterclaim, and response, and a conclusion. Evaluate my outline for logical flow, balance, and whether it genuinely responds to the title. Suggest improvements.

What this helps you practise:
Planning a well-structured TOK essay that balances multiple perspectives and maintains a clear line of argumentation throughout.

How to use it well:
Plan your essay thoroughly before writing. A strong outline ensures your essay has a coherent argument rather than being a collection of loosely connected paragraphs.

Prompt 93: Writing Strong Conclusions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with a TOK essay argument (thesis, main claims, and counterclaims) and ask me to write a conclusion. Evaluate my conclusion on whether it: synthesises rather than merely summarises, acknowledges the complexity of the issue, arrives at

a justified position, and potentially opens up further knowledge questions. Show me the difference between a weak and a strong conclusion.

What this helps you practise:
Writing conclusions that synthesise the argument and demonstrate intellectual sophistication rather than simply repeating what has already been said.

How to use it well:
A strong conclusion can elevate an entire essay. Practise writing conclusions that go beyond summary to offer genuine insight.

Prompt 94: Exhibition Object Selection

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Explain the criteria for selecting good TOK exhibition objects: they should be specific (not generic), personal (connected to your own experience), and rich in TOK significance (clearly linked to the IA prompt and broader knowledge questions). Then give me an IA prompt and ask me to propose three objects. Evaluate my choices and suggest improvements if they are too generic or insufficiently connected.

What this helps you practise:
Selecting exhibition objects that meet the IB criteria and demonstrate genuine engagement with how TOK manifests in the world around you.

How to use it well:
The most common mistake in exhibitions is choosing famous or generic objects. Your objects should come

from your own life and experience — a textbook you use, a family photograph, a local sign.

Prompt 95: Exhibition Commentary Writing

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Give me an IA prompt and one exhibition object (or use mine). Walk me through writing an effective commentary: establishing what the object is, explaining its real-world context, linking it explicitly to the IA prompt, connecting it to specific TOK concepts (knowledge questions, perspectives, Areas of Knowledge), and ensuring the commentary contributes to the overall coherence of the exhibition. Ask me to draft a commentary and then critique it.

What this helps you practise:
Writing exhibition commentaries that explicitly link objects to the IA prompt and TOK concepts, which is the core skill assessed in the exhibition.

How to use it well:
Every sentence in your commentary should serve a purpose. The AI's critique will help you identify filler and strengthen the analytical content.

Prompt 96: Linking Three Objects Coherently

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with an IA prompt and ask me to propose three exhibition objects that work together as a coherent set — that is, each one explores a different aspect of the IA prompt, and together they build a progressively deeper understanding.

Evaluate whether my three objects genuinely complement each other or merely repeat the same point three times. Suggest how to improve the coherence.

What this helps you practise:
Ensuring the three exhibition objects work together to create a coherent and progressive exploration of the IA prompt.

How to use it well:
Think of your three objects as telling a story or building an argument. Each should add something new — perhaps different perspectives, different Areas of Knowledge, or different dimensions of the IA prompt.

Prompt 97: Responding to Different Title Types

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

TOK prescribed titles come in different forms: some ask you to evaluate a claim, some ask you to compare Areas of Knowledge, some ask about the relationship between concepts. Give me one example of each type and walk me through how the approach differs for each. Then give me a title and ask me to identify its type and outline an appropriate approach. Assess my strategy.

What this helps you practise:
Recognising different types of prescribed titles and adapting your essay approach accordingly.

How to use it well:
Understanding the type of title helps you structure your response appropriately. A comparison title

requires a different approach from an evaluation title.

Prompt 98: Common Essay Pitfalls

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present me with five common pitfalls in TOK essays: for example, describing rather than analysing, using examples without connecting them to the argument, ignoring the prescribed title, presenting straw man counterclaims, or failing to use TOK terminology. For each pitfall, give me a brief example of what it looks like and ask me to rewrite it as stronger TOK analysis. Evaluate my rewrites.

What this helps you practise:
Identifying and correcting common weaknesses in TOK essay writing through hands-on practice with revision.

How to use it well:
After this exercise, review your own draft essay and check for each of these pitfalls. Being able to self-identify weaknesses is the most valuable revision skill.

Prompt 99: Real-Life Situations Workshop

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Help me practise finding and using real-life situations for TOK. Give me a TOK concept or knowledge question and ask me to come up with three real-life situations that illustrate it — one from current events, one from my own personal experience, and one from an academic discipline.

Evaluate each situation for specificity and relevance, and show me how to move from the situation to the knowledge question and back again.

What this helps you practise:
Finding and using real-life situations effectively, which is essential for both the TOK essay and the exhibition.

How to use it well:
Keep a running list of real-life situations you encounter in your daily life that raise knowledge questions. The best TOK examples come from genuine engagement with the world, not from last-minute searching.

Prompt 100: Self-Assessment and Marking Practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Show me the TOK essay assessment criteria (or ask me to provide them) and explain what each criterion rewards. Then give me a sample TOK essay paragraph and ask me to assess it against the criteria, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. After I attempt the assessment, compare my evaluation with yours and explain where my judgement was accurate and where it could be refined.

What this helps you practise:
Understanding the assessment criteria and developing the ability to self-assess your own work before submission.

How to use it well:

The ability to assess your own work against the criteria is invaluable. After practising with sample paragraphs, apply the same critical eye to your own essay drafts.

Final Closing Note

You have now worked through 100 prompts designed to help you think more clearly, revise more effectively, and prepare more confidently for your GCSE.

Remember: the goal was never to rely on AI for answers. The goal was to use it as a tool to test, challenge, and strengthen your own understanding.

The strongest students are not those who avoid difficulty, but those who engage with it deliberately. Each mistake you identified, each explanation you improved, and each gap you filled has strengthened your thinking.

As you continue your studies, aim to depend less on prompts and more on your own judgement. AI can support you — but your reasoning, clarity, and persistence are what earn marks.
Approach your exams calmly. Think carefully. Write clearly.
You are more prepared than you think.

Using AI Beyond This Book

The prompts in this book are starting points, not final forms.

As you grow more confident, begin modifying them:

- Add constraints (for example, “limit to three key points”).
- Increase difficulty gradually.
- Ask the AI to challenge your reasoning.
- Request alternative explanations.
- Ask it to critique your thinking rather than provide answers.

The most powerful use of AI is not asking it to tell you things — it is asking it to test and refine your thinking.

In the future, those who understand how to use tools intelligently will have an advantage. Treat AI as a tutor, not a shortcut. The skill of asking better questions will continue to matter long after your exams are over.

About the Author

James R. Martin holds an MSci in Physics from the University of Bristol and a PGCE with a Physics focus from the University of Oxford. He has over a decade of experience teaching and tutoring students aged 11–18 across a range of subjects, including Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Economics, and Electronics.

He has worked with multiple syllabi, including GCSE, A-Level, KS3, and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), supporting students of varying abilities to develop clarity, confidence, and exam success.

His work focuses on effective revision strategies, independent thinking, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence as a tool to strengthen — not replace — understanding.

Other Titles in This Series

The *100 AI Prompts for Smarter Revision* series supports students across GCSE, A-Level, and IBDP subjects.

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