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Religious Worlds of New York • Curriculum Development Project

Sharing Stories of Religious Lives: Theory of Knowledge Exhibition Practice

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“there is an element that we call religion to be found in all cultures in all periods.”

– Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion*

Abstract

Everyone has a story. Too often, however, these stories are not heard by a wide audience. For this project, students will interview someone close to them (friend, family, or community member) in an effort to uncover their interviewee’s lived religious life and context and then present that religious life to our class. To do this, they will be using the storycorps.org website and tools to help guide them as they prepare and conduct their interview.

For my International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge (TOK) class, students will also use this interview as a way to practice the Internal Assessment (IA) for the course, called the TOK Exhibition. The TOK exhibition asks students to select three objects from their personal context and use them to explore an IA prompt. For this practice exhibition, however, students will take this interview as their one and only IA object and use it to explore one of the 35 IA prompts (see below). Finally, students will present their interview to the class, using it to speak on their chosen IA prompt.

Materials Required

- [StoryCorps.org](https://www.storycorps.org) and the [storycorps app](#)
- TOK Exhibition Internal Assessment Prompts (see below)
- TOK Exhibit Guidance from the IBO
- Interview Questions
- Presentation Guide

Procedure

1. Introduce [Storycorps.com](https://www.storycorps.com)
2. Review and discuss IA Prompts (see below)
3. Review [TOK Exhibition Instructions](#)
4. Develop Interview Questions (see below)
5. Review Presentation Guide (see below)
6. Conduct interviews
7. Present

StoryCorps Primer



The app guides users through the interview experience from start to finish with easy-to-use tools to help you prepare interview questions, record high-quality conversations on your mobile device, and upload the audio to the Library of Congress and the [new StoryCorps Archive platform](#).

1. Download the [StoryCorps App](#)
2. Log-in - You will need to create a StoryCorps account using an email address.
3. Browse animations
4. Listen to a few interview recordings and familiarize yourself with how others have conducted interviews.
5. Prepare for your interview
 - a. Enter a title for your interview.
 - b. Choose your interviewee.
 - c. Decide where and when you will conduct and record your interview.
 - d. Pick your interview questions.
 - e. Before recording, silence phones and turn off anything noisy (TV, Radios, Fans).
 - f. Hold the phone about one spread out hand away from your interviewee's mouth. Do the same for yourself when asking questions.
 - g. Using the app will mean your interview will be uploaded to the Library of Congress archive - so remember future generations will be listening to your interview. It is important for you to prepare well and ask the questions you have always wanted to ask!
6. Select and add your interview questions to the app - if you are having difficulty, there is a drop down menu with questions related to "Religion and Spirituality". Also, there is a list of 20 possible interview questions included below.
7. Review tips for asking great questions and creating a great conversation [here](#).
8. Conduct and record your interview.

TOK Exhibition - Internal Assessment (IA) Prompts

Click [here for more on TOK Exhibitions](#), and [here for more on the Theory of Knowledge course](#)

1. What counts as knowledge?
2. Are some types of knowledge more useful than others?
3. What features of knowledge impact on its reliability?

4. On what grounds might we doubt a claim?
5. What counts as good evidence for a claim?
6. How does the way that we organise or classify knowledge affect what we know?
7. What are the implications of having or not having knowledge?
8. To what extent is certainty attainable?
9. Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?
10. What challenges are raised by the dissemination and/or communication of knowledge?
11. Can new knowledge change established values or beliefs?
12. Is bias inevitable in the production of knowledge?
13. How can we know that current knowledge is an improvement upon past knowledge?
14. Does some knowledge belong only to particular communities of knowers?
15. What constraints are there on the pursuit of knowledge?
16. Should some knowledge not be sought on ethical grounds?
17. Why do we seek knowledge?
18. Are some things unknowable?
19. What counts as a good justification for a claim?
20. What is the relationship between personal experience and knowledge?
21. What is the relationship between knowledge and culture?
22. What role do experts play in influencing our consumption or acquisition of knowledge?
23. How important are material tools in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
24. How might the context in which knowledge is presented influence whether it is accepted or rejected?
25. How can we distinguish between knowledge, belief and opinion?
26. Does our knowledge depend on our interactions with other knowers?
27. Does all knowledge impose ethical obligations on those who know it?
28. To what extent is objectivity possible in the production or acquisition of knowledge?
29. Who owns knowledge?
30. What role does imagination play in producing knowledge about the world?
31. How can we judge when evidence is adequate?
32. What makes a good explanation?
33. How is current knowledge shaped by its historical development?
34. In what ways do our values affect our acquisition of knowledge?
35. In what ways do values affect the production of knowledge?

Exhibition Guidance and Rubric ([source](#))

The overall assessment objective of the exhibition is to show how Theory of Knowledge manifests itself in the real world. In order to do this, the assessment 'instrument' looks for four different skills that you are expected to demonstrate in your presentation.

Make sure you understand what each strand is, and that you are able to explain how you've included each one. To find out more about each aspect of the exhibition ([IA prompts](#), [objects](#) and [commentary](#)), follow the links that take you to the other pages of the TOK exhibition.

** For this project, your presentation to the class will take the place of the commentary you will complete when completing the actual TOK Exhibition in the Spring. However, this rubric will still apply

1. Interlinking ideas

Your exhibition [commentary](#) (presentation) should clearly explain the links between the interview recording you have chosen, and the [IA prompt](#), and explicit references are made to the selected IA prompt.

2. Justifying ideas

Your exhibition [commentary](#) (presentation) should include a strong justification for why and how your interview is an object that can help you explore your chosen IA prompt. This should be done within the context of the theme of Religion and Knowledge.

3. Using evidence

All the points you make in your [commentary](#) (presentation) should be well-supported by evidence. In other words, all of your ideas and opinions should be supported by real-life situations, or the ideas of key thinkers.

4. Identifying the real-world context

The exhibition commentary (presentation) clearly identifies the specific real-world context of your interview.

Interview Questions ([Source](#))

These are some sample questions to help you choose which questions you would like to use in your interview. In addition to these questions, you are welcome to develop your own. Only select/develop questions that you feel are appropriate for the real world context of your interview and interviewee. For example, question 9 may not be an appropriate question for someone who is not part of any faith community, but can be adjusted to better fit your interviewee's context.

1. What do you think is the most fundamental aspect(s) of your religion?
2. What do you want others to know about your religion?
3. What do you think is the most unique aspect of your religion?
4. What makes you a strong believer in your faith?
5. What are some of your religious traditions, rituals? Which do you favor most?
6. How does observing or performing these rituals affect your daily life?
7. What are some of the symbols of your religion and what do they symbolize?
8. Does your religion provide a guide for your future path?
9. Does your community of faith always stand behind you in a time of need? How?
10. How does your faith handle societal issues such as premarital sex, intermarriage, teen pregnancy and divorce?
11. What do you believe about deity/ies?
12. Describe your feelings about your relationship with deity/ies?
13. Do you have any type of scripture or literature that you read and follow? When were they written?
14. Do you pray? If so, how do you pray?
15. How does your religion react to and/or provide understanding for violence in society (past and present)?
16. What is your view on same-sex marriages or homosexuals?
17. How do you feel about other religions?
18. Is there a reason or explanation as to why people suffer?
19. What do you think will happen to non-believers of your religion after death?
20. How does your religion conflict with science?

Presentation Guide ([source](#)) - adjusted for this project

You're trying to do several things simultaneously when you present your interview. First, you're answering the [IA prompt](#) that you've chosen from the list of 35 options. These all ask a question about the nature of knowledge, and how we use it; make sure your exhibition commentary (presentation) addresses this question.

Second, you are outlining the real-world context of your [object](#) (interview), and justifying how your object (interview) explores the theme of "Knowledge and Religion". How does your object (interview) link to the IA prompt? How does it relate to your personal experiences? What makes it special, or original, or particularly resonant?

Third, you are showing your knowledge of the theme of "Knowledge and Religion" by referring to ideas relevant to this aspect of TOK, key thinkers that you've come across during the course (which may include your interviewee), and real-life situations that have engaged you (may include the interview).

Overall, you are trying to demonstrate how TOK manifests itself in the real world. This means showing how the ideas and concepts that we encounter during our study of religion are relevant to the way in which we lead our lives and the society in which we exist.

Checklist (include all of these elements in a slideshow to use as you present to the class):

- Introductory comments:
 1. Introduce yourself
 2. Introduce your interviewee
 3. Introduce the religion/non religion that you are exploring
 4. Explain your connection to your interviewee and the context in which you conducted the interview.

- Recording - play the recording of your interview (5 minutes max)

- Introduce your IA Prompt and explore it through the lens of this interview
 1. How does this interview link to the IA prompt?
 2. How does this interview relate to your personal experience?
 3. What makes this interview special, original, and/or particularly resonant?

- Discuss how this activity has helped you understand more about how Religion and Knowledge manifest in the real world.

Your entire presentation should be 10 minutes.

TOK Exhibition Practice Rubric

Name: _____

	Object's Real World Context	Links between objects and IA prompt	Justification for object inclusion	Support and Evidence
Excellent 9-10	Clearly identifies the objects' specific real-world contexts.	Clearly makes links between the object and the selected IA prompt.	Strong justification for including the object and contribution it makes to the exhibition.	All points are well-supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.
Good 7-8	Identifies the objects' specific real-world contexts.	Makes links, but they are sometimes unclear	Justification for including the object and contribution it makes to the exhibition.	Many points are well-supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.
Satisfactory 5-6	Objects' specific real-world contexts are vague or imprecise.	Some links are made.	Some justification for including each individual object and contribution it makes to the exhibition.	Some points are well-supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.
Basic 3-4	Objects' specific real-world context is implied, not directly stated.	Links are made, but are unclear.	Some justification for including each individual object and contribution it makes to the exhibition.	A few points are supported by appropriate evidence and explicit references to the selected IA prompt.
Rudimentary 1-2	Object is generic with little real-world contexts.	Links are minimal and confusing.	There is little justification for inclusion of objects.	There is little evidence or reference to IA prompt.
0	Does not reach the standard	Does not reach the standard	Does not reach the standard	Does not reach the standard
Comments:				
				Total: ____ / 40

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