

Annotating Texts in ToK

Homework, in this class, involves reading and thinking about short articles that deal in some fashion with knowledge, how we acquire knowledge and how knowledge works within and across the various areas of knowledge. Each assignment given throughout the year has the following goals:

- To get you to think about how knowledge is constructed,
- To ask you to reflect on how an uncritical understanding of our own knowledge might conceal complexities, contradictions and unexpected consequences, which leads to the necessity of getting you,
- To apply a critical lens to our knowledge using terms and concepts used in ToK (especially the concept of the knowledge question) to better understand what we think we know.

An annotation is generally a single page of notes on a reading. Your notes should be keyed to the document handed out in class (note down where in the document each note applies).

Generally annotations should include the following:

- A. What questions do you have about the document? Are there concepts or ideas that you don't understand?
- B. What passage, quote or idea stands out most to you? Why?
- C. What is the argument being made by the writer and how is this argument supported? Try to identify the parts of the argument and the examples used to demonstrate the writer's point (this section will often make up the bulk of your annotation).

- D. What does the document have to say about the nature of knowledge?
- E. Can you construct a knowledge question progression based on this document?
- F. How might this document, and what it says or implies about knowledge, connect to specific aspects of your subject area classes here at Tracy High School? Try to make this connection with a specific example from one or more of your classes.

This class is about grappling with hard concepts. Don't be discouraged if you read a document and say to yourself, "I don't get it," rather view your annotation as a way to ask series of questions that you think would help you to understand. Every document you read should include at least responses to A, B and C. As the class progresses it should be increasingly easier to address D, E and F as well. Sometimes we will specifically indicate which of the questions we want you to focus on for a given document.

You may format your annotations any way you wish - paragraphs, a series of bullet points, notes keyed to the document or whatever works for you.

When I check annotations I will be looking only for a full page of notes written in a reasonable size, and some evidence of interaction with the document itself (underlining, notes, keyed notes, etc). If all of these things are done, you will receive a 10. If there is something missing you will receive a 7.

Please use the annotations process to help you participate in class discussions and to build a bank of idea and examples that can be used in the two formal papers you will write over the course of this year in ToK.

Remember, the credit you get for each annotation is minor. The real value lies in grappling with, thinking about and exploring philosophical ideas.