Common issues in ToK Papers

- Avoid sentences and paragraphs that say nothing to advance the argument. Nothing should be included to pad the word count. Believe it or not, ToK is an effort to deal substantively with real issues of knowledge, its construction and use. Don't assume a ToK paper is all about blowing smoke or shoveling BS.

- If you use an example, take some time to explain what it is and why it is important to your argument before moving on to other examples.

- Use the asssertion-evidence-analysis model of argumentation

- Paragraphs should contain only one main idea. If you move to another idea, start another paragraph.

- Use topic sentences to establish what a paragraph will be about.

- Depth over breadth. Always.

- Avoid "quoted by." Lead in naturally and smoothly.

- Only use source internet sources that are appropriate for an academic paper. Here is a review of important considerations when using sources

- Avoid ever using "you" in formal writing.

- Make sure to distinguish the author's voice from ideas the author is arguing against. Often, authors will explain the arguments they disagree with so as to more effectively counter them. Make sure you don't mistake the author explaining ideas they disagree with with their own ideas (This happened frequently with Loftus).

- Never include anything in your paper that you don't understand.

- Remember, in ToK, perception means sense perception not opinion or perspective.

- Avoid "in conclusion."

- Avoid a "fruit salad" approach to the WoKs. Work on making a smoothie instead (don't make your paper a discussion of the WoKs in isolation - focus on making a consistent argument throughout the paper.)

Using Sources

Guidelines for careful use of the web: WWICC

One

Establish who or what the source is.

This means identifying both the author and the publication.

Two

Establish what the intent of the source is: persuasive or informative. Persuasive sources need to be read with care for potential bias.

Three

Establish the credibility of the source

1. Is the source from a credible publication? (Is it on the <u>list</u>? If not, what is the reputation of the publication?)

2. What is the author's background/qualifications to write on this/her topic? (are they a reporter, a government official, an expert in the field etc.)

3. For persuasive pieces, what are the author's biases? (often articles will have a biography at the beginning or end, sources can also be Googled and there social media presence examined)

When you are uncertain about an author, their credentials or a site, err on the side of caution (if you are not sure about a source - don't use it!)

Four

Can the information provided by the source be corroborated by other quality sources?

Be careful here. Sometimes false information is simply copied across multiple sources. Make sure corroboration is from a quality source.

Five

Avoid sites that exist to make money off of students trying to cut corners doing research. These sites include, but are not limited to:

- Quora
- about.com
- essays.com
- IB help sites
- Quizlet
- Shmoop, Sparknotes ect.

Five

Avoid citing cites that are crowd sourced (wikis) as sources. If you find something on a crowd sourced cite that seems useful, do the work to confirm the information using a credible source and then cite that source. Some examples of crowd sourced sites include but are not limited to :

wikipedia.org

slideshare.com

prezi.com

Six

Avoid blind Google searches.

Always use the sources made available in class first, then look for sources on the web from sites that are contextually related to what you are looking for.

If you find something from a blind Google search, apply all of the above standards to that source before using it

Seven

The internet is a tool. Use it with purpose. Never think of the internet as a substitute for thinking.