

Class Participation: Theory of Knowledge

Participation FAQs:

Why is class participation a big deal?

*This is a discussion-based course, in order to know that you're really "getting it", I need to hear your voice, gauge your reactions and responses, and know that the discussion as a whole is increasing your learning.

*This course stresses the application of material in a thoughtful, constructive, and appropriate way. Again, your voice (your comments, your expressions, etc.) will help me understand your engagement and understanding of the subject matter.

Why are we rated on our listening skills?

*In listening to your peers, you will get to hear perspectives which might not mirror your own. It gives you a chance to hear and understand different perspectives (a ToK must).

What are the expectations?

*Below you'll see a list of behaviors necessary for effective class participation. Once the behavior list is created it allows for a quick assessment of engagement and involvement. Hopefully, a list of behaviors will set even the most wary (...that would be wary of the subjectivity of a participation grade...) at ease.

Score	Criteria for Grading
0	Absent
1	Present, not disruptive. Tries to respond when called on, but does not offer much. Does not listen to other's perspectives., regularly talks while others speak. Demonstrates infrequent involvement in discussions.
2	Demonstrates adequate preparation & understanding: knows terminology or basic facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret and/or analyze them. Offers straightforward information without elaboration. Or perhaps participation in infrequent. Comments are generally uninformative or not thought through. Heavy reliance upon opinion ("I love it...", "I hate it...", "...is good", "...is bad")
3	Demonstrates good preparation and understanding: knows information well, has thought through them and is aware of implications. Offers interpretations and analysis of the course material (more than just facts) to the class. Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing and thoughtful way: responds to peers points that may differ from their own. Demonstrates consistent on-going engagement.
4	Demonstrates excellent preparation & understanding: analyzes materials well, relates it to readings, current events, and previous class discussions (as well as other coursework/Areas of Knowledge). Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of material (e.g. puts the "pieces" together in discussion to provide a fresh take on the discussion/topic). Contributes in a significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds thoughtfully, suggests alternative ways of approaching a topic,. Demonstrates ongoing, active involvement. Listens attentively when others present material, opinions, perspectives, and/or comments.

So... what does that mean for you?

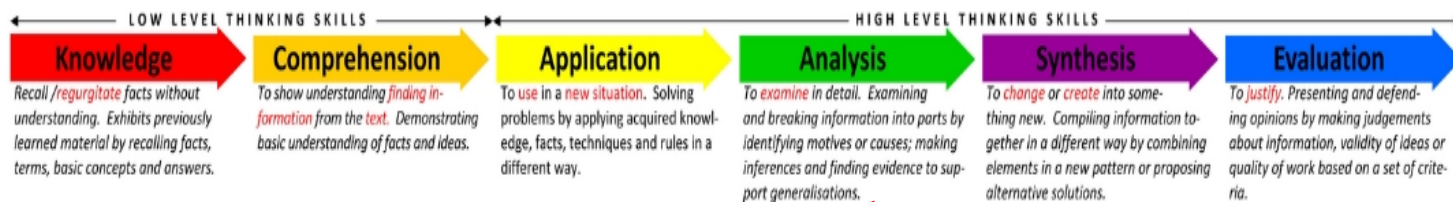
1. You can receive a maximum of 4 points per class period for participation.
2. Some weeks you'll (potentially) have an 8 point total, some weeks you'll have a 12 point total.
3. With a four-point scale, it's really easy for me to sit down after class and give you a quick rating for the day.
4. My intent is to "rate" you after each class. There are some days when that will be impossible... especially with a larger class. This will also allow for me to not penalize you when/if you're absent. However, this will also let me know if I haven't evaluated someone recently. If I haven't observed you in the last three classes, then I'll make a point to engage you (possibly "cold calling" if you're not offering up information/discussion) so that I can rate your performance.
5. I will also offer interim feedback to help support you and your understanding of participation points/grades. My intent is to offer each student feedback around mid-marking period (in email form). This will let you know what your current score is and how/why it is what it is. That will give you time to make improvements (if they are necessary) by marking period's end.

You may positively impact your participation by:

- Becoming more active and/or making more effective comments
- Asking or posing thoughtful questions that enhance discussion
- Listening carefully to others
- Supporting what your peers are saying (in a more meaningful way than, "I agree..")
- Helping to improve the overall learning experience

You may negatively impact your participation by:

- Not regularly attending class
- Doing other coursework during class
- Dominating class discussion
- Making negative, offensive, or disrespectful comments during discussion
- Detracting from the group-dynamic
- Insisting on debate instead of encouraging discussion



You'll notice that the scoring guide uses higher order expectations for grading.

Complete understating in ToK relies heavily upon analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the materials we encounter.