**Priti**

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**Outline Guide For TOK Oral Presentation**

This should be done prior to completing the TOK Presentation Planning Document. After completing this outline, you should be able to copy & paste and/or summarize text written here to that document.

**Introduction:**

               Hello our names are Sabreena Singh, Karina Aguilera, and Priti Prasad and our presentation is on “Immorality”. Our main knowledge issue consists of perception and our secondary knowledge issues develop around emotion and reason. Our linking questions will consist of religion, art, and human sciences. Immorality is recognized as an unethical conduct or quality and is seen as evil. We chose this topic, for we have recognized that immorality is a universal issue that everyone has experienced at one point in their lives, whether they fulfilled the role of the perpetrator or the victim. Immoral behaviors range from minor and subtle forms of oppression to a violent and extreme forms of aggression. Although we have experienced hostility on a minor scale, we wanted to explore this engaging topic of cruelty and identifying the true meaning of immorality through the various ways of knowing rather than the denotations provided in a dictionary. A recent issue influenced us to continue investigating this topic of immorality

*Our real life situation that got us thinking about our main Knowledge Question is:*

This issue took place On March 26th when it was reported that Jayson Kenney’s child, Madden Jenks was hurt while playing in Millennium Park playground. However it was no minor injury like falling down or tripping, but it was an assault that was deliberately executed. Madden on his father’s shoulders goes to the monkey bars where he screams, “ouch,” and his father identifies that his son’s hands are bleeding. After this moment, he encounters that blades had been not only put on the monkey bars, but also on multiple areas of the playground, with an intention to harm children. Jayson pondered what if the blades had sliced his son’s wrists and this compels us to question why would a person conduct such an immoral act. And this leads us to our main knowledge question

*Our main Knowledge Question is:*

How does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel?

**BODY:**

*Main Knowledge Questions:*

**How does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel?**

*Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question:*

1. Perception allows us to understand the side of the victim which aids us to have a thorough understanding of a situation from one perspective.
2. Having the perspective of the perpetrator can cause us to believe that what we are viewing is morally correct therefore influencing us to continue conducting cruel behavior.

*How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/ Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?*

1. **Common Sense Realism(TOK connection)**: “perception is a passive and relatively straightforward process which gives us an accurate picture of reality… our experience of the world is affected not only by what is ‘out there’, but also by the structure of our sense organs and our minds” (87).

**Own Words:**

Our eyes allow us to have a precise depiction of reality. What we observe around us and its effect on our thoughts shapes how we perceive the world.

As I get up in the morning my mom commands me to go wash the dishes, but it I think to myself why should I wash the dishes when I haven’t used them? My mom demands me to go clean my sister’s room, but why should I clean a mess that I haven’t made? And if I did not complete these orders, I would be punished. I would be compelled to quietly listen to my parents as they yelled at me. At times from my point of view I feel that my parents use me as their own personal slave, exploiting me for their needs, and overlooking mine. This makes me recall to the past when owning slaves was appropriate and when African Americans experienced an extreme form of slavery. Frederick Douglas is a slave that we are all familiar with, he is an individual who has witnessed and experienced the brutality of slavery. In his early years he worked in a farm where he was whipped daily and hardly fed, in order to be an asset for his owner. Douglas was manipulated, punished, and initially voiceless for crimes he never committed, for his skin color was not white but it was black. And through his perception we can acknowledge that slavery is a form of punishment and cruelty that no individual should have to face.

1. **Prison of Consistency (TOK connection):** “The point is that once you have taken a position on something, you may find it difficult to change your mind without losing face” (135).

**Own Words:**

Once you’ve began to do something in a way that is understandable to yourself it is difficult to change the perception of trying to do the same job in a different way.

When I get out of my bed, I command my sister to tidy the bed while I go downstairs to watch TV. I tell her to cook and wash the dishes and if she doesn't follow up my commands I complain to my parents. Then she gets yelled at for not listening to me. According to my point of view, I believe my sister following my demands is a way of showing respect to me, because I am older then her. But in the name of respect, she is my slave in a way. I ask her to do chores for me and if she doesn't do it, I complain to my parents to get her in trouble. She stays up late and gets up early to do housework before she goes to work, yet I take away her privilege to enjoy her life and her sleep by giving her my commands to follow. This makes me recall the slave owners in the time period when African Americans were slaves. Being a slave only required the capability of working in the plantation or the given job, but education was not provided. Yet Frederick Douglas knew how to read, and when Mrs. Auld saw Douglas reading, she took away the news paper from him, as he didn’t have any privilege to read. Similar to how I prevent my sister from the privileges, Frederick Douglas’s rights were taken away as well. It is a habit to me to be dominant and to oppress my sister and it is difficult to stop, exactly how slave owners found it difficult to free their slaves

Looking back to our main knowledge question How does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel? We can see that Perception allows for us to see the world differently, so in a sense what I believe to be morally correct may be morally incorrect for another. In the case of the victim, the slaves, they were physically abused up to the point where they were hurt and suffered extremely. This can be seen as morally incorrect as a human is being punished for the color of their skin, even though in all other attributes they are the same to anybody else. As for the aggressor, this may be seen as morally correct in their perspective because they justify their views with religion or tradition, which is a lens they see the world through. They prefer to take advantage of another human being, over having to work themselves. This can relate back to the story of Madden Jenks as his aggressor viewed his actions to be just as he wished to inflict pain upon children which gave him a sense of satisfaction. As stated in previous examples as well and experiences, perception ultimately determined whether the aggressor and the victim viewed the actions taken to be morally correct.

Overall the different perspectives on a single subject matter offer an opportunity to view both sides creating a non-bias lens when viewing the situation at hand. Religion for example would offer an excellent lens because it offers us to have strict instructions and rules upon what is morally correct and what is morally incorrect which would lead us to our linking question which is…

**Linking Question:**

**What is the role of religion in determining what is moral and what is immoral?**

**Free-Will Defense (TOK connection):** “…God gave human beings free-will, and that we have misused our freedom to inflict suffering on one another” (417).

**Own Words:**

The belief that god gave us all free-will which has consequently caused us to become individuals who abuse this freedom by doing malicious deeds and causing suffering on our fellow mankind and this influenced our first claim:

**Claim:**

**-**Parents born in foreign countries have more fear over rape so they prevent us from going outside where their fears become projected upon us.

**Example:**

This is visualized through religion. Meaning parents migrate from another country to the United States of America, even though the country changed, their beliefs stay the same. For example; when Indians migrate to Unites States of America they don’t allow their children to stay out late or hang out with friends much, especially girls. Not to show how strict they are but because they are scared that their daughter will be raped, and this helped develop our next claim:

Claim:

Even though they don’t live in the their country any longer, they still have the same fear, American society is more open to the idea of fighting rape, while our parents fear rape rather than deal with it.

Americans are more open to fight against rape if it occurred where as the Indian family is more likely hide it instead. And to prevent the situation, parents are strict of what their daughter wear and where they go. As an example, my parents prevent me from wearing jeans or cloths that show a lot of skin. d Indian parents not only do that to protect their family honor in the society but also to protect their daughters honor because a daughter is considered the God Laxmi (god of money/success).

**Relation to the Main Situation:**

As we recall our main knowledge question How does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel? We see that Religion offers a gateway for a different perspective upon the situation of Madden Jenks and the pair of examples that were previously shared. Depending on one’s religion, our view of the world may be different due to religious customs or beliefs. Religions are all different in some way, where different beliefs may allow for cruel and immoral behavior to be acceptable. Religion could also possibly shield an individual from cruel acts such as rape, due to beliefs that sharing and speaking about such acts are a sin in themselves. Religion ultimately plays a major role in shaping the way we perceive the world, and what we believe to moral or immoral.

*First Secondary Knowledge Question:*

**How can emotion affect our decisions?**

*Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question:*

1. Intuition can dictate whether we decide to conduct an immoral act.

2. Sympathy only allows us to pity and comprehend the side of the victim and compels us to ignore the aggressor’s motive behinds his/her actions.

*How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/ Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?*

1. **Social-Specific Intuition (TOK connection):**

**Own Words:**

According to Social intuitions our intuitions about the nature of other human beings personas and characters are based upon gut feelings.

If verbal abuse sounded horrid enough, wait till the physical abuse aspect of bullying is told. In the same article where Brook Bliss a 16 year old female was initially verbally abused with vulgar names, the situation escalated to physical abuse where they pushed her into a wall falling off of a weight machine. This caused poor Brook to injure her hip as well as her side. Brook felt as if she began to lose all hope for ever being treated like a civilized human being. I, similar to Brook, suffered physical bullying last year when I was 16. My friend that I had ever since elementary school began to date a guy who I thought was absolutely wrong for her, as he never seemed to care about anything other than himself. An egotistical slob in my opinion. One day as I was walking with my friend, this guy came next to me and punched my shoulder for no reason. I thought it was a friendly slug on the shoulder, so I thought nothing of it. The next day, he came up to me randomly when I was with my friend again and hit my shoulder extremely hard. I felt instant rage come across me, and told him to stop. He continued to punch my arm aggressively till it felt lightly numb as I tried to walk away. I felt powerless. I didn’t want to confront him as I did not want to start a problem between my friend and her boyfriend. I simply sped up and walked away to just roam around where I could be alone. This bullying persisted for almost a month, until my friend and this aggressor broke up. This mentally scarred me, as well as emotionally. I had never felt so meaningless and powerless, where I could be pushed around like a rag doll. Ever since this bullying though, I have grown into a person who can now stand up for themselves, and for what I myself believe to be just.

2. **Emotional Colouring (TOK connection): “**Such emotional colouring can make us aware of some aspects of reality to the exclusion of others” (151).

**Own Words:**

Emotions such as anger, sadness, and happiness make us recognize some parts of reality but then force us to overlook others.

I remember beginning of my school year, the first few weeks were fine but then the sudden verbal abuse began. The aggressor would come to me saying "What am I doing in this class?" as if I don't belong in the class. The abuse did not only occur during the classes, but every time the aggressor saw me around the school. Calling me names out loud and grabbing the students’ attention towards me. To be honest, I was losing my self confidence I began to feel suicidal in just two months of school. But family is what kept me living and they were the reason for which I endured the verbal abuse. But still I wasn't strong enough to tell my family the situation, but I tried to make excuses to stay home. My emotion of sadness overwhelmed me and prevented me from recognizing that I could trust my family, forcing my reality to become dark and lonely. Just like Brooke Bliss, 16 year old girl who was verbally abused during middle school.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate the claims and different perspectives you discuss for this secondary knowledge question?*

-Karina: (physical) Friend’s boyfriend continuously hits me

-Priti: (verbal) Eighth grade classmate verbally abused throughout the year.

* Teen Speaks out after verbal, physical bullying at school (Real life Physical Bullying Incidents)

11/9/11

*How does learning about this second knowledge question help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

Understanding how emotions influence our decisions, allows us to distinguish how emotions influence our perception and what we consider to be morally correct. Based on the environment we have grown up in, we tend to emotionally view various circumstances differently, so in a sense the environment not only effects our emotions but also what we perceive to be cruel.

*How is this secondary Knowledge Question connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

Looking back on our main knowledge question how does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel?" We are able to see that our perception of the world may be influenced by our Emotion determines our actions as well as our moral standing for what we believe to be just or unjust. In the case of the victim when verbal and physical abuse ensues, they feel powerless and even up to the point of feeling suicidal as our emotions engulf us in complete misery or sorrow when we are abused. Emotion may sometimes create a false world where we believe that we are insignificant as our emotions diminish our view of ourselves. In the story of Madden Jenks, he was absolutely horrified to find himself bleeding when his smooth skin was cut by the jagged razor blade. His father was also in tremendous fear as he could not believe that some human being would ever purposely hurt innocent children physically. As stated in our previous examples, our emotions demonstrate our moral standing on whether an action taken is immoral or moral based on our feelings.

Our emotions offer a pathway to determine whether we have sympathy for the aggressor or if we have sympathy for the victim, which dictates our feelings and actions towards either side. These feeling can be surfaced by the observations we receive from various art forms. This brings us to our next linking question which is…

Linking Question: **-How is cruelty portrayed in various art forms and what is its impact on society?**

**The James-Lange Theory (TOK connection):** “[S]uggests a mechanism through which we can come to know and empathize with other people’s feelings. The idea is that when you talk to someone who is, say, feeling depressed, you unconsciously mimic some of the physical expressions of his mood”(148-149).

**Own Words:**

It is not difficult to feel the emotions of those around us. It is said that when you encounter an individual who is happy, sad, or angry, those emotions are displayed on to you and to a certain extent we feel those feelings.

**Claims:**

-Many art forms like television tend to romanticize the sense of cruelty and it has a comical effect on the society, making it seem as if the cruelty is reasonable and acceptable.

Example:

-This is demonstrated through various art forms, for example the popular TV series called Everybody Hates Chris. Here, the main character Chris is constantly bullied and experiences racial discrimination, where these wrong doings are seen as humorous. Ultimately deeming them as acceptable among society which aids in promoting this type of behavior.

- There are works of art such as paintings that show the gruesome view of cruelty. Artwork has the ability to emotionally affect the society viewing it, because it allows them to understand the position of the victim.

Example:

-Other art forms such as paintings, in this case the painting named Execution- Jesus Hangs on the Cross by Andrea Mantegna, demonstrates the true and gruesome reality that exists in the world. This creates emotions to arise within us such as sympathy and sadness. This also reveals that society may be affected by various types or art in either a positive or negative light.

**Relation to the Main Situation:**

Through various art forms such as paintings, emotions may be evoked which impact the way we view society and the actions we choose to take. In the story of Madden Jenks, the aggressor could have been provoked to allow his horrid deeds to ensue through influential art pieces such as paintings to even possibly music which romanticize cruelty. Our previous examples illustrate the possible outcomes that may arise from inappropriate art forms which depict cruelty to be acceptable which cause our emotions to go haywire. As humans we are influenced by our surroundings and our peers, which leaves us incredibly vulnerable to see cruelty as acceptable, creating our emotions to change. Our emotions may control our actions in instances that could possibly damage not only ourselves, but others as well.

***Second Secondary Knowledge Question:***

**How can reason play a role in shaping our actions?**

*Claims/Contrasting Claims/Different Perspectives on First Secondary Knowledge Question:*

1. Reason can allow us to distinguish the differences between what is morally correct or incorrect and allow us to identify the extent ethical principles correctly justify the actions taken.

2. Ethics allows us to see what is considered immoral or moral, but ethics also may diminish our logical reasoning for our actions.

*How is each Claim/Contrasting Claim/ Different Perspective Supported by what we learned in the TOK textbook, classroom materials and activities, and class discussion?*

2. **Moral Relativism (TOK connection):** “[O]ur values are determined by the society we grow up in, and there are no universal values” (367)

**Own Words:**

Moral Relativism is the belief that our environment plays a major role in shaping us as individuals and molding our values, as it is believed that there are no actual universal values that exist.

I remember that day clearly, it was a day when my young, innocent mind was exposed to the darkness that filled this world. I was four years old, attending pre-school and like every day I grabbed a hula hoop and began playing. As I played I glanced around, I saw a girl bigger than me pick up another hula hoop. She walked towards me and my heart beat quickened and I recognized her intentions were not good. She put the hula hoop around me and dragged me into the large green pole of the monkey bars. My eyes watered as I found my mom and when she saw me, her face darkened. She touched my forehead as a bump began to form where I was hit. From the cold look on her face I knew what I had experienced was cruel and dark. And yet as I grew older I recognized that bullying could be taken to a farther extent-Assault. Earlier this year in Texas Michael Corsey requested his girlfriend to bring him a chicken sandwich, however his girlfriend brought him pizza and she was punished. Michael grabbed a knife and stabbed her. From my point of view, I find it difficult to find the reason behind such a minor mistake. My experience with bullying has shaped the way I perceive cruelty, and from taking on the position of the victim, I recognize that immorality is unjust.

**1. Moral Principle (TOK connection):** “When we argue about ethics, we typically appeal to a commonly agreed moral principle and then try to show that a particular action falls under it” (365).

**Own Words:**

All of us have ethical principles and we tend share similar beliefs. Since we have familiar morals standards we tend to classify actions under categories such as cruel or ethical.

In the story of Amanda Todd, she was bullied to the extreme where she sent pornographic images of herself to the aggressor. The aggressor in this case had the motive of self pleasure for acquiring these images. The aggressor was manipulative, where if a girl refused to send more pictures, he would pace the images which were already sent public in order to incriminate the victim and potentially destroy their lives, as it shattered Todd’s reality. The aggressor reasoned with himself of the possible consequences which would accompany his action, where it seems he came up with more positive reasons to perform his actions than negative. Similar to the case of Amanda Todd, I was the aggressor once when I was younger. I was around 6 years old, yet I remember this event in my life vividly and it was also caught on camera in family videos. It was Christmas eve and my cousin and I got our gifts. AS he was older, he received a gift which was larger where I became jealous. This caused me to ponder the idea of performing an act which could be classified as bullying. As my cousin was about to walk out the door, I rushed beside him and pushed him into a wall where he hit his head and fell to the ground. My reasons for hurting my cousin was fueling my emotions which brought me to bully him. My reasons were reassured to be correct as I felt my jealousy fade away, yet I began to feel remorse which argued with my reasoning I initially thought to be correct. This was a turning point in my young life, which demonstrated the extent to which my reasons were blurred by emotions which caused me to become an aggressor.

*What are examples and stories that can help illustrate the claims and different perspectives you discuss for this secondary knowledge question?*

-Sabreena (Victim): Bullied in pre-school

* Wife murdered for bringing her husband pizza not a chicken sandwich

-Karina: (Perpetrator) Bullied little cousin when he was younger

* Amanda Todd Cyberbullying

*How does learning about this second knowledge question help contribute to your understanding the main Knowledge Question and a possible response to it?*

Before we understand how our view of the world effects what we see as cruel, we need to recognize the reasons that allow us to distinguish between immorality and morality. Reason plays a big role in determining how we see the world. If we reason that such actions like bullying and abuse are justified, the world will be a viewed as better place, however if we reason that these actions are immoral, we can confirm that the world is surrounded with cruelty.

*How is this secondary Knowledge Question connected to your Real-Life Situation?*

The main knowledge question how does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel? Allows us to interpret that Reason plays a major role in determining our actions, as it may offer the possibility of fulfilling our drives and desires as far as for the aggressor. While for the victim, reasons for which the aggressor performed such harmful and malicious acts may be completely inappropriate and out of hand. In the case of little Madden Jenks, his father saw no valid reason for which this aggressor would even think of harming small children, as it seems the aggressor only did so for self-pleasure. The aggressor allowed for his emotions to drive his actions which caused him to harm poor Jenks physically. In our previous examples and experiences, we allowed for our emotions to drive our actions, where we either received the immoral action or we conduct it, similar to the story of little Madden Jenks.

Reason may offer a plausible answer to a situation that calls for moral judgment in order to identify what is correct or incorrect. This makes us contemplate whether a perpetrator would have the right grounds of conducting an immoral act on an innocent individual. This leads us to our next linking question which is…

Linking Questions: **What is the psychological effect of aggression on the perpetrator and the victim?**

**Art as Education(TOK connection):** “According to a third theory of the arts, the arts have a moral and educational role. The connection between the arts and ethics is said to derive from the fact that they provoke emotions that influence our behavior” (347).

**Own Words:**

Art has the potential of educating people because it contains the power to change our emotions and our prospective of the world.

-The oppression a victim confronts has the capability of psychologically damaging a person’s mind and their perception of the world.

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Example:

- This is shown through the Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka, a novella where the protagonist has transformed into an insect and is neglected by his family. Gregor before his transformation into an insect was compelled to work in order to pay off his family’s debt, in a sense he was stepped upon by his family. Perhaps by changing into an insect, he physically displayed his feelings of being submissive. After reading this story, I read the biography of Franz Kafka, where I learned his father dominated his life. Kafka’s father oppressed Kafka, and this caused him to create such absurd stories. These stories show that Kafka to some level was psychologically damaged and had a very dark perception of the world, due to his father immoral acts towards him.

-This leads us to our next claim that the aggression that is displayed from the perpetrator is a physical manifestation of their inner emotions and challenges. Several weeks ago it was seen that 10th grader Alex Hribal, attacked students at Franklin Regional High School in Murrysville with two knives. About 25 individuals were assaulted and some were almost murdered. Alex took the role of the perpetrator when he attacked the innocents for no known reason. Students initially recognized Alex as a shy boy and this possibly indicated that perhaps like Kafka, Alex felt that he had no importance and to show his presence and dominance, he attacked people. However unlike Kafka who wrote in order to cope with immoral behavior, Alex was driven to conduct immoral acts. This is similar to the idea presented earlier that cruelty acted upon an individual may lead them to act cruelly towards other, in a sense creating a chain reaction.

**Relation the Main Situation:**

Our main knowledge question how does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel? Lead us to see that aggression not only affects the victim psychologically but the perpetrator as well as depending on our reasons, we may conduct unjust actions. In the case of Madden Jenks, the aggressor weighed out the benefits and consequences over putting the razor blades purposely in the park to hurt children. He preferred the satisfaction of allowing children and their parents to suffer and live in fear, as well as allowing his aggression to become a physical manifestation. This left Jenks potentially physiologically scarred for the rest of his life where he is now aware of the cruelty that exists in the world at an early age. Our previous examples demonstrate the physiological tolls that violent actions had upon both the victim and the perpetrator clearly. Our reason ultimately plays a major role in shaping our actions as it deems whether they are correct or incorrect based upon our view of the world and situation. Our reason may not correspond with morally correct standards at times, which may cause us to damage ourselves and others physiologically due to aggression.

**CONCLUSION:**

*What is your answer to your Main Knowledge Question and what implication does it have for your real-life situation?*

Answering our main knowledge question how does our view of the world influence what we consider to be cruel? We personally believe that when it comes to perception, the role of the environment we have grown up in plays a significant factor of what we view and classify as immoral. This relates back to our real-life situation the environment can determine a person’s psychological stability and how individuals display their decisions and actions on others, in order to cope with their damaged reality. Emotions can overpower and hinder our empathy and our sympathy towards others, as we fail to acknowledge ethical and moral standards. This relates back to the little boy who was harmed by blades put on the monkey bars at Millennium Park. It is recognizable that the individual who put those blades on the playground did not have any ethical or moral standards, for he was unable to have any sympathy or the perception that harming children is immoral and cruel. Perhaps it can be suggested that this man was psychologically damaged or his emotions where heightened to the extent of causing harm to little children. At times we are overwhelmed with the environment around us and our emotions, to the extent of making decisions without thinking about the consequences. If immorality was not dealt with, then our society would become consumed in malicious deeds and diminish any sense of morality. The line we consider between morality and immorality would be corrupted or blurred because of the lack of consideration. If immorality is inevitable, then being moral is just the same. As humans there is always a side of us that craves to inflict pain onto others, yet social norms prevents us from doing so, so immorality lurks in the corners of our being, making itself hidden and subtle, however this is not the case for everyone. So in a sense no matter how hard we strive to become moral, there is always a trace of immorality within us.