

Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

May 2020 examination session

Instructions to candidates

Your theory of knowledge essay for examination must be submitted to your teacher for authentication. It must be written on one of the six titles (questions) provided overleaf. You may choose any title, but are recommended to consult with your teacher. Your essay will be marked according to the assessment instrument published in the **theory of knowledge guide**. The focus of your essay should be on knowledge questions. Where appropriate, refer to other parts of your IB programme and to your experiences as a knower. Always justify your statements and provide relevant examples to illustrate your arguments. Pay attention to the implications of your arguments, and remember to consider what can be said against them. If you use external sources, cite them according to a recognized convention.

Note that statements in quotations in these titles are not necessarily authentic: they present a real point of view but may not be direct quotes. It is appropriate to analyse them but it is unnecessary, even unwise, to spend time on researching a context for them.

Examiners mark essays against the title as set. Respond to the title exactly as given; do not alter it in any way.

Your essay must have a maximum of 1600 words.

1. “Others have seen what is and asked why. I have seen what could be and asked why not” (Pablo Picasso). Explore this distinction with reference to **two** areas of knowledge.
 2. “There is a sharp line between describing something and offering an explanation of it.” To what extent do you agree with this claim?
 3. Does it matter that your personal circumstances influence how seriously your knowledge is taken?
 4. “The role of analogy is to aid understanding rather than to provide justification.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?
 5. “Given that every theory has its limitations, we need to retain a multiplicity of theories to understand the world.” Discuss this claim with reference to **two** areas of knowledge.
 6. “Present knowledge is wholly dependent on past knowledge.” Discuss this claim with reference to **two** areas of knowledge.
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