

# IB Theory of Knowledge (TOK) Summer Assignment (2023-2024)

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(Please email me over the summer with any questions or concerns)

Theory of knowledge (TOK) explores questions about knowledge and the process of knowing. TOK emphasizes comparisons and connections between areas of knowledge and encourages students to become more aware of their own perspectives and the perspectives of others.

The following assignment is a course requirement and is due August 11. After this date, only half credit will be awarded (for up to one week).

## **TOK Seniors**

You will choose one of the “prescribed titles” from the list below and write two pages (500-750 words) in response. Address the topic of your choice exactly as it is—do not modify it. If you use any sources, you must give them credit through proper MLA internal documentation and a works-cited list at the end of the paper.

Please note that the TOK essay engages students in a more formal and sustained piece of writing in response to a title focused on the areas of knowledge. The essay is an external assessment component; it is marked by IB examiners. The final essay must be a maximum of 1,600 words and must be on one of the six prescribed titles issued by the IB for each examination session. Over the summer you will be working with previously assessed topics. **The topics for this year will be released late and we will spend the fall semester working on the TOK essay.**

For more help, please view this high-scoring (full-length) past essay: [TOK Essay Sample](#) (and [Scoring Comments](#))

**Choose ONE from below - (\*\*Remember: You are only writing a practice essay for the summer assignment that is half the size of a normal TOK essay)**

(Reprinted from Theory of Knowledge: Prescribed Essay Titles for May 2017)

1. “It is only knowledge produced with difficulty that we truly value.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?
2. “Facts are needed to establish theories but theories are needed to make sense of facts.” Discuss this statement with reference to two areas of knowledge.
3. Should key events in the historical development of areas of knowledge always be judged by the standards of their time?
4. “In the production of knowledge, traditions of areas of knowledge offer correctives for ways of knowing.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?
5. Given access to the same facts, how is it possible that there can be disagreement between experts in a discipline? Develop your answer with reference to two areas of knowledge.
6. “Humans are pattern-seeking animals and we are adept at finding patterns whether they exist or not” (adapted from Michael Shermer). Discuss knowledge questions raised by this idea in two areas of knowledge. Be sure to remember your guidelines:

## TOK Senior Rubric for Prescribed Topics

Does the student provide a clear, coherent and critical exploration of the essay title?					
<b>Excellent</b> 9-10	<b>Good</b> 7-8	<b>Satisfactory</b> 5-6	<b>Basic</b> 3-4	<b>Rudimentary</b> 1-2	<b>0</b>
<p>The discussion has a sustained focus on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are clear, coherent and effectively supported by specific examples. The implications of arguments are considered.</p> <p>There is clear awareness and evaluation of different points of view.</p>	<p>The discussion is focused on the title and is linked effectively to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are clear, coherent and supported by examples.</p> <p>There is awareness and some evaluation of different points of view.</p>	<p>The discussion is focused on the title and is developed with some links to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Arguments are offered and are supported by examples.</p> <p>There is some awareness of different points of view.</p>	<p>The discussion is connected to the title and makes superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge.</p> <p>The discussion is largely descriptive. Limited arguments are offered but they are unclear and are not supported by effective examples.</p>	<p>The discussion is weakly connected to the title.</p> <p>While there may be links to the areas of knowledge, any relevant points are descriptive or consist only of unsupported assertions.</p>	<p>The discussion does not reach the standard described by the other levels or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles for the correct examination session.</p>
<b>Possible characteristics</b>					
<p>Insightful</p> <p>Convincing</p> <p>Accomplished</p> <p>Lucid</p>	<p>Pertinent</p> <p>Relevant</p> <p>Analytical</p> <p>Organized</p>	<p>Acceptable</p> <p>Mainstream</p> <p>Adequate</p> <p>Competent</p>	<p>Underdeveloped</p> <p>Basic</p> <p>Superficial</p> <p>Limited</p>	<p>Ineffective</p> <p>Descriptive</p> <p>Incoherent</p> <p>Formless</p>	