



International Baccalaureate Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

November 2007 and May 2008

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 ten titles (questions) provided below. You may choose any title, but are recommended to consult with your teacher. Your essay will be marked according to the assessment criteria published in the *Theory of Knowledge* guide. Remember to centre your essay on knowledge issues and, where appropriate, refer to other parts of your IBO 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 have been spoken or written by an actual person. 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 be between 1200 and 1600 words in length.

- 1 Evaluate the role of intuition in different areas of knowledge.
- 2 Are reason and emotion equally necessary in justifying moral decisions?
- 3 “History is always on the move, slowly eroding today’s orthodoxy and making space for yesterday’s heresy.” Discuss the extent to which this claim applies to history and at least one other area of knowledge.
- 4 Does language play roles of equal importance in different areas of knowledge?
- 5 “...we will always learn more about human life and human personality from novels than from scientific psychology.” (Noam Chomsky). To what extent would you agree?
- 6 In areas of knowledge such as the arts and the sciences, do we learn more from work that follows or that breaks with accepted conventions?
- 7 Our senses tell us that a table, for example, is a solid object; science tells us that the table is mostly empty space. Thus two sources of knowledge generate conflicting results. Can we reconcile such conflicts?
- 8 Are some ways of knowing more likely than others to lead to truth?
- 9 Mathematicians have the concept of rigorous proof, which leads to knowing something with complete certainty. Consider the extent to which complete certainty might be achievable in mathematics and at least one other area of knowledge.
- 10 “Context is all” (Margaret Atwood). Does this mean that there is no such thing as truth?