

# Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

November 2010 and May 2011

## Instructions to candidates

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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 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 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. Consider the extent to which knowledge issues in ethics are similar to those in at least one other area of knowledge.
2. How important are the opinions of experts in the search for knowledge?
3. “Doubt is the key to knowledge” (Persian Proverb). To what extent is this true in two areas of knowledge?
4. To what extent do we need evidence to support our beliefs in different areas of knowledge?
5. To what extent are the various areas of knowledge defined by their methodologies rather than their content?
6. “There are no absolute distinctions between what is true and what is false”. Discuss this claim.
7. How can we recognise when we have made progress in the search for knowledge? Consider two contrasting areas of knowledge.
8. “Art is a lie that brings us nearer to the truth” (Pablo Picasso). Evaluate this claim in relation to a specific art form (for example, visual arts, literature, theatre).
9. Discuss the roles of language and reason in history.
10. A model is a simplified representation of some aspect of the world. In what ways may models help or hinder the search for knowledge?