

May 2015 Session

Theory of knowledge specimen titles

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 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. The focus of your essays should be on knowledge issues. 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 be between 1200 and 1600 words in length, double spaced and typed in size 12 font.

1. “None of us is as smart as all of us” (Eric Schmidt). Discuss the extent to which you agree with this claim with reference to personal and shared knowledge.
2. “A map is only useful if it simplifies things.” To what extent does this apply to knowledge?
3. To what extent are areas of knowledge shaped by their past? Consider with reference to two areas of knowledge.
4. “All knowledge depends on the recognition of patterns and anomalies.” Consider the extent to which you agree with this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.
5. “The possession of knowledge confers privilege.” To what extent is this an accurate claim?
6. To what extent do ways of knowing prevent us from deluding ourselves? Justify your answer with reference to at least one area of knowledge.