

ToK 11 Second Semester Paper Practice Prescribed Essay

IB assessment in ToK takes place in the spring of the senior year and involves two components. First, students will write a 1500 word essay on a topic prescribed by IB, then students, possibly working in groups, will make a presentation which explores the KQ arising from a real world situation. Since scoring well on these assessments can help you earn bonus points toward the awarding of the IB diploma, we begin working on skills necessary for both activities during the junior year. The second semester paper will be a practice PE, using a topic that was used by this years' seniors.

Here is the IB Description of the assignment:

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, it must be double spaced and typed in size 12 font. (IBO 2015)

Here are the class requirements for your essays:

- You will write on this topic: "It is only knowledge produced with difficulty that we truly value." To what extent do you agree with this statement.
- The essay should be in standard format - it should have an introduction (with a clear thesis that takes a stand regarding the title), several well-developed body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- The essay should explore the central knowledge question implied by the the topic and subsidiary knowledge questions that arise as a result of this exploration. However, this exploration should not explicitly use the term "knowledge question." Emphasis should be placed on writing a coherent essay not simply a series of questions and answers or a series of unconnected examples.
- Essays should make use of ToK concepts such as the WoKs and AoKs (particularly the WoKs, since they have been our focus this year.)
- The essay needs to be between 1300-1600 words in length, exclusive of works cited page.
- The essay must cite at least four sources that are appropriate for an academic paper. Class lecture does not count as one of these sources.
- The paper must be formatted according to the THSSSWG available on the website

The paper will be graded using the IB ToK PE assessment instrument (provided on the back). Grading using this scale is curved. Last semester 13 was the median score and this eared an 80% for purposes of class scoring.

Here are the due dates relevant to the second semester paper:

- PE planning template March 24
- PE First draft due April 26, drafts with comments returned May 10
- PE Final draft due May 19

TOK essay assessment instrument

Does the student present an appropriate and cogent analysis of knowledge questions in discussing the title?						
Aspect	Level 5 Excellent 9–10	Level 4 Very good 7–8	Level 3 Satisfactory 5–6	Level 2 Basic 3–4	Level 1 Elementary 1–2	Irrelevant 0
Understanding knowledge questions	There is a <i>sustained focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title and are well chosen— developed with <i>investigation of different perspectives</i> and linked effectively to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing .	There is a <i>focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title— developed with <i>acknowledgment of different perspectives</i> and linked to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing .	There is a <i>focus on some knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title—with <i>some development</i> and linking to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing .	<i>Some knowledge questions</i> that are connected to the prescribed title are considered, but the essay is largely <i>descriptive</i> , with <i>superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	The essay has only very limited relevance to the prescribed title—relevant points are <i>descriptive</i> .	The essay does not reach a standard described by levels 1–5 or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles on the list for the current session.
Quality of analysis of knowledge questions	Arguments are <i>clear</i> , supported by real-life examples and are <i>effectively evaluated</i> ; counterclaims are extensively explored; implications are <i>drawn</i> .	Arguments are <i>clear</i> , supported by real-life examples and are <i>evaluated</i> ; some counterclaims are identified and explored.	<i>Some arguments</i> are <i>clear</i> and supported by examples ; some counterclaims are <i>identified</i> .	Arguments are offered but are <i>unclear</i> and/or <i>not supported</i> by effective examples .	Assertions are offered but are <i>not supported</i> .	
Some possible characteristics						
	Cogent Accomplished Discerning Individual Lucid Insightful Compelling	Pertinent Relevant Thoughtful Analytical Organized Credible Coherent	Typical Acceptable Mainstream Adequate Competent	Underdeveloped Basic Superficial Derivative Rudimentary Limited	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent Formless	

