Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

November 2018 examination session

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 overleaf. 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 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.
1. “Existing classification systems steer the acquisition of new knowledge.” Discuss this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.

2. “Technology provides ever-expanding access to shared knowledge. Therefore, the need to assimilate such knowledge personally is relentlessly diminishing.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

3. Are disputes over knowledge claims within a discipline always resolvable? Answer this question by comparing and contrasting disciplines taken from two areas of knowledge.

4. “Those who have knowledge don’t predict. Those who predict don’t have knowledge” (Lao Tzu). Discuss this statement with reference to two areas of knowledge.

5. “Too much relevant knowledge in a field might be a hindrance to the production of knowledge in that field.” Discuss this claim with reference to two areas of knowledge.

6. “The importance of establishing incontrovertible facts is overestimated. Most knowledge deals in ambiguity.” Discuss this statement with reference to two areas of knowledge.