

19/20 Summer Assignment—Theory of Knowledge II—Rising Seniors

TOK 2 will continue to explore the concept of knowledge as a justified true belief with our focus on the external assessment: the TOK essay. In order to elaborate on our understanding, it is important for you to complete the following assignments prior to the first day of school.

Phase 1: Read the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. This book will be instrumental in our discussions throughout the year. This book will be instrumental in our discussions throughout the year. Note and mark interesting anecdotes you feel will be worth referencing in your understanding of how we know what we know.

Phase 2: Choose one of the “prescribed titles” from the list below and **write a complete, original essay** in response. Address the topic of your choice **exactly as it is—do not modify it**. If you use any sources, you must give them credit through proper internal documentation and a works-cited list at the end of the paper.

(Reprinted from Theory of Knowledge: Prescribed Essay Titles for May 2017)

1. “It is only knowledge produced with difficulty that we truly value.”

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

2. “Facts are needed to establish theories but theories are needed to make sense of facts.”

Discuss this statement with reference to two areas of knowledge.

3. Should key events in the historical development of areas of knowledge always be judged by the standards of their time?

4. “In the production of knowledge, traditions of areas of knowledge offer correctives for ways of knowing.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

5. Given access to the same facts, how is it possible that there can be disagreement between experts in a discipline? Develop your answer with reference to two areas of knowledge.

6. “Humans are pattern-seeking animals and we are adept at finding patterns whether they exist or not” (adapted from Michael Shermer). Discuss knowledge questions raised by this idea in two areas of knowledge.

Be sure to remember your guidelines:

* The essay must be typed and double-spaced, in a 12-point conventional font.

* The essay should be 1,200-1,600 words.

* You must submit a hard copy.

* Utilize the rubric found on the IB website (search for TOK 2015 essay rubric).

The following is from the IB Course Guide for ToK:

“The titles ask generic questions about knowledge and are cross-disciplinary in nature. They may be answered with reference to any part or parts of the TOK course, to specific disciplines, or with reference to opinions gained about knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. The titles are not meant to be treated only in the abstract, or on the basis of external authorities. In all cases, essays should express the conclusions reached by students through a sustained consideration of knowledge questions. Claims and counterclaims should be formulated and main ideas should be illustrated with varied and effective examples that show the approach consciously taken by the student. Essays should demonstrate the student’s ability to link knowledge questions to AOKs and WOKs.”