

ToK Essay Name:

Date:

Question:

Criterion A: Understanding knowledge issues This criterion is concerned with the extent to which the essay focuses on knowledge issues relevant to the prescribed title, and with the depth and breadth of the understanding demonstrated in the essay. A *relevant* knowledge issue is one that directly relates to the prescribed title undertaken, or one that the essay has shown is important in relation to it. *Depth of understanding* is often indicated by drawing distinctions within ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, or by connecting several facets of knowledge issues to these. *Breadth of understanding* is often indicated by making comparisons between ways of knowing and areas of knowledge. Since not all prescribed titles lend themselves to an extensive treatment of an equal range of areas of knowledge or ways of knowing, this element in the descriptors should be applied with concern for the particularity of the title.

| | relevance | connections |
|---------|---|---|
| | Does the essay demonstrate understanding of knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title? | Does the essay demonstrate an awareness of the connections between knowledge issues, areas of knowledge and ways of knowing? |
| 9 10 | The essay consistently maintains as its focus knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title. | Effective links and comparisons between areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing are elaborated, so that the essay demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the knowledge issues under consideration. |

Criterion B: Knower's perspective To what extent have the knowledge issues relevant to the prescribed title been connected to the student's own experience as a learner? Does the student show an awareness of his or her own perspective as a knower in relation to other perspectives, such as those that may arise, for example, from academic and philosophical traditions, culture or position in society (gender, age, and so on)? Do the examples chosen show an individual approach consciously taken by the student, rather than mere repetition of standard commonplace cases or the impersonal recounting of sources?

| | independent thinking | self-awareness as a knower | diversity of perspectives | use of examples |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
| 9 10 | The essay shows much evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues related to the prescribed title. | The student has shaped the essay in a way that shows both a personal, reflective exploration of the knowledge issues and significant self-awareness as a knower. | There is serious consideration of different perspectives. | Examples chosen are varied and effectively used. |

Criterion C: Quality of analysis of knowledge issues

This criterion is concerned only with knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title. Analysis of knowledge issues that are not relevant to the prescribed title is not assessed.

| | exploration of knowledge issues | justification of main points | counterclaims | implications and assumptions |
|---------|--|--|---|---|
| | What is the quality of the inquiry into knowledge issues? | Are the main points in the essay justified? Are the arguments coherent and compelling? | Have counterclaims been considered? | Are the implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument identified? |
| 9 10 | The inquiry explores with a high degree of insight, in considerable depth and/or detail, knowledge issues. | All main points are justified and arguments are coherent and compelling. | Counterclaims are explored and evaluated. | Implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument are identified. |

Criterion D: Organization of ideas

An essay that fails to meet the word limit of 1,200–1,600 words will not score above level 4 on this criterion. An essay that has no relevance to the prescribed title will score 0 on this criterion.

| | structure and organisation | clarity and explanation | accuracy | referencing |
|---------|--|--|--|---|
| | Is the essay well organized and relevant to the prescribed title? | Does the use of language assist the reader's understanding and avoid confusion? Are central terms explained or developed clearly in a way that assists comprehension? Note: This task is not a test of "first language" linguistic skills. | When factual information is used or presented, is it accurate and, when necessary, referenced? "Factual information" includes generalizations. | If sources have been used, have they been properly referenced in a way that allows them to be traced (Internet references must include the date on which they were accessed)? Note: Not all essays require sources or references. |
| 9 10 | The essay on the prescribed title is very well structured, with an effective overall organization. | Concepts are used clearly and, where appropriate, refined by helpful explanations. | Factual information used to support arguments is correct. | Sources of information and ideas are acknowledged; all referencing permits tracing of sources. |