



International Baccalaureate Theory of Knowledge prescribed titles

November 2002 and May 2003

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 ten titles (questions) provided below. You may choose any title, but are recommended to consult with your teacher. Your essay will be marked for proficiency in the six domains which are described in the assessment criteria published in the *Theory of Knowledge* guide. Remember to centre your essay on problems of knowledge and, where appropriate, refer to other parts of your IBO 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.

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.

- 1 Should a knower's personal point of view be considered an asset in the pursuit of knowledge, or an obstacle to be overcome?
- 2 "What I tell you three times is true." (Lewis Carroll) Might this formula—or a more sophisticated version of it—actually determine what we believe to be true?
- 3 How can you or your society decide ethically which knowledge should or should not be pursued?
- 4 "We are more likely to be mistaken in our generalizations than in our particular observations." Do you agree?
- 5 "What distinguishes Areas of Knowledge from one another is not how ideas are generated, but how they are evaluated." Do you agree?
- 6 Evaluate the ways in which emotion might enhance and/or undermine reasoning as a Way of Knowing.
- 7 Is it a simple matter to distinguish a scientific argument from a pseudo-scientific argument?
- 8 "God may have separated the heavens from the earth. He did not separate astronomy from marine biology." (Jonathan Levy) To what extent are the classifications separating Areas of Knowledge justified?
- 9 "In science one tries to tell people, in such a way as to be understood by everyone, something that no one ever knew before. But in poetry, it's the exact opposite." (P A M Dirac) Do both the approaches suggested in the quotation enjoy equal success in expanding human knowledge?
- 10 Which sources of knowledge—books, web sites, the media, personal experience, authorities or some other—do you consider most trustworthy, and why?