



# International Baccalaureate

## Theory of Knowledge prescribed titles

November 2003 and May 2004

### Instructions to candidates

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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 If someone says, “I know this music,” how can the claim be evaluated? Compare your answer with the evaluation of claims in Areas of Knowledge other than the Arts.
- 2 If facts by themselves never prove or disprove anything, what else is involved in the proof of a statement?
- 3 Discuss and evaluate the ways in which the beliefs of researchers might count as evidence for or against their results.
- 4 “Different cultures have different truths.” “A truth is that which can be accepted universally.” What are the implications for knowledge of agreeing with these opposing statements?
- 5 “Words are more treacherous and powerful than we think.” Evaluate the extent to which the characteristics Sartre claims for words affect—negatively or positively—different Areas of Knowledge.
- 6 “This rubber tree won’t yield latex—the biologist blames the sapling, the geologist blames the soil, the contractor blames the unskilled labourer and the owner says it is fighting back at being controlled.” (Amitav Ghosh) If different Ways of Knowing or Areas of Knowledge yield contradictory statements about the world, on what basis do we choose among them?
- 7 “In order to find out how things really are, one must understand the filters through which one perceives the world.” Discuss and evaluate this claim.
- 8 “The arts deal in the particular, the individual and the personal while the sciences deal in the general, the universal and the collective.” To what extent does this statement obscure the nature of both Areas of Knowledge?
- 9 Can we know something that has not yet been proven true?
- 10 “Our technologies establish the truth of many of our scientific laws.” Is there any comparable means of establishing moral rules and norms?