



# International Baccalaureate Theory of knowledge prescribed titles

November 2006 and May 2007

## 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 that 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.

Note that statements in quotations in these titles are not necessarily authentic: they present a real point of view but may not have been spoken or written by an actual person. 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 be between 1200 and 1600 words in length.

- 1 When mathematicians, historians and scientists say that they have explained something, are they using the word 'explain' in the same way?
- 2 It is often claimed that scientific results must be replicable. Is this possible or desirable in other Areas of Knowledge?
- 3 If someone claims that both the division of knowledge into disciplines and the division of the world into countries on a map are artificial, what does this mean? What is the nature of the boundaries between Areas of Knowledge, in your view?
- 4 Is it an oversimplification to claim that some Ways of Knowing give us facts while others provide interpretations?
- 5 Can literature "tell the truth" better than other Arts or Areas of Knowledge?
- 6 Compare the roles played by reason and imagination in at least two Areas of Knowledge.
- 7 Discuss the ways in which value judgments should and should not be used in different Areas of Knowledge.
- 8 Some experts (athletes, dancers, musicians, visual artists, cabinet makers, lab technicians, mechanics, surgeons, etc.) may have acquired knowledge that is difficult to describe in words. Does this mean that other Ways of Knowing play a more important role than language in knowing how to do something?
- 9 Can a machine know?
- 10 Belief has been described as "certainty about what cannot be seen". Does this statement hold true in any, some or all Areas of Knowledge?