

# Theory of Knowledge prescribed titles

## November 2004 and May 2005

*(From the International Baccalaureate Organization Vade Mecum manual)*

### 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 For some people science is the supreme form of all knowledge. Is this view reasonable or does it involve a misunderstanding of science or of knowledge?
- 2 “For it is in the long run that, somehow, truth may survive —through the decay of untruth.” (John Lukacs) To what extent is this the case in different Areas of Knowledge and in your own experience?
- 3 “All of the other Ways of Knowing are controlled by language.” What does this statement mean and do you think it is a fair representation of the relationship between perception, emotion, reason and language?
- 4 One definition of knowledge is true belief based on strong evidence. What makes evidence “strong” enough and how can this limit be established?
- 5 “Doing the right things starts with knowing the right things.” In what ways does responsible action depend on sound, critical thinking?
- 6 What are the differences between “I am certain” and “it is certain”, and is passionate conviction ever sufficient for justifying knowledge?
- 7 To what extent may the subjective nature of perception be regarded as an advantage for artists but an obstacle to be overcome for scientists?
- 8 Which is the more important attribute of the historian: the ability to analyse evidence scientifically, or the ability to develop interpretations of evidence using creative imagination?
- 9 “All ethical statements are relative.” By examining the justifications for—and implications of—making this claim, decide whether or not you agree with it.
- 10 Is knowledge in mathematics and other Areas of Knowledge dependent on culture to the same degree and in the same ways?