

## Writing a TOK Essay

It is important that you examine what the question is asking of you to do this you must understand each part of the question Thus one of the first stages of writing a TOK essay is to “unpack the title.” Complete the table below regarding your essay question:

### *Unpacking the Essay Title:*

Question title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<b>Essay Type:</b> What is the essay asking you to do?	
<b>Key words and phrases:</b>	
<b>Contestable concepts:</b>	
<b>Ambiguous terms:</b>	
<b>Action terms:</b>	
<b>Assumptions in the title:</b>	
<b>Rephrase the title in your words to check your understanding:</b>	
<b>Identify the knowledge question:</b>	

<p><b>Which AoK and/or WoK and/or facts about knower(s) will you consider?</b></p>	
<p><b>How will you examine the implications of the knowledge question(s) and challenge the assumptions in the question?</b></p>	
<p><b>Analyse and argue: provide effective counterclaims, counter-arguments and counter-examples to support them. What different perspectives will you consider?</b></p>	
<p><b>What conclusion does all the above mean you come to?</b></p>	

## Examining the Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criterion	Ideas to address this criterion (Examine page 18-20 of TOK: approach your assessment the IB way to assist you).
<p><b>Understanding Knowledge Questions:</b> This aspect is concerned with the extent to which the essay focuses on knowledge questions relevant to the prescribed title, and with depth and breadth of the understanding demonstrated in the essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the essay demonstrate understanding of knowledge questions that are relevant to the prescribed title?</li> <li>• Does the essay demonstrate an awareness of the connections between knowledge questions, AOKs and WOKs?</li> <li>• 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)?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Quality of analysis of knowledge questions:</b> This aspect is concerned only with knowledge questions that are relevant to the prescribed title.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the quality of the inquiry?</li> <li>• Are the main points in the essay justified?</li> <li>• Are the arguments coherent and compelling?</li> <li>• Have counterclaims been considered?</li> <li>• Are the implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument identified?</li> <li>• Are the arguments effectively evaluated?</li> </ul> <p>Analysis of a knowledge question that is not relevant to the prescribed title will not be assessed.</p>	

# **Suggested TOK Essay Format**

## **Introduction**

Use the introduction to provide an overview of your essay and to provide clarity regarding the central knowledge questions as well as an indication of your response to the knowledge question.



## **Body**

Introduce each new section of your essay with a paragraph that clearly sets out and addresses the knowledge questions and relate TOK concepts such as WoK's or AoK's.

Provide authentic examples that you are able to analyse in detail, revealing how it throws light on the knowledge question.

Develop breadth of understanding in your discussion of knowledge questions by making comparisons between WoK's and AoK's.

Examine all of the implications of the knowledge question.

Arguments are strengthened by considering claims and counterclaim in relation to an example: always look for the possibility of a counterclaim to any claim or example given regarding knowledge questions.



## **Conclusion**

The conclusion refers back to the knowledge question expressed in the title. The main argument and conclusions are summarized, accompanied by evaluation of the central argument and provides an opportunity for you to briefly reflect and evaluate the manner in which you have approached the knowledge question.



## **Bibliography**

Ensure that you have in-texted referenced where appropriate in your essay and you provide a bibliography in the correct format.