

IB-Required Assessments
General Guidelines for the External Assessment
ToK Essay

The ToK Essay is assessed on a 10-point scale according to the predetermined assessment criteria (see curriculum guide); It accounts for 67% of the final ToK score.

Read carefully and choose ONE essay from among the six ToK Prescribed Titles designated for same session of your year of graduation. IBO publishes these titles in September of the beginning of your senior year, so be careful that you are picking from the list titled for May of the following year (your graduating class year), and not for November. Also, read for detailed explanations of the essay requirements in the most recent ToK Curriculum Guide; what follows are my own suggestions and guidelines based on the information in the guide and from experience.

PREPARING THE ESSAY---GENERAL TIPS:

- 1) Make your introduction clear; define key terms and identify knowledge questions and consider carefully how you want to discuss these questions. Lay out a roadmap of what you plan to take the reader in your argument. Sometimes, restating the title (especially if it is short) in the introduction focuses the readers thinking, so consider do this.
- 2) Include a counter-argument in the opening paragraph specifically, and ideally, consider counter-arguments throughout the essay in order to more effectively discuss your argument.
- 3) Use examples that clearly make a link between abstract ToK ideas/concepts learned in class to concrete examples in the real world. Where an example you discuss involves specific information that should be attributed to an author, cite the work parenthetically and include the citation in a bibliography at the end of the essay.
- 4) **Use the first person pronoun (“I”)** and try to make connections with things read and discussed in ToK class or your other classes, as you see its relevance to the prompt.
- 5) Your conclusion should bring together the ideas discussed in your argument and suggest broader analysis and implications for future discourse related to the topic.
- 6) Re-read and revise your essay more than twice. Discuss it with your family and friends; they are a great source of ideas. They can also tell you whether or not your essay's arguments are clear and your examples are relevant. Check the ToK essay assessment instrument in the Curriculum Guide to see how you might score.

A CHECKLIST FOR THE REVISION PROCESS:

- 1) Read the introduction. Do the opening sentences make you engage the prompt immediately? Are the primary knowledge questions identified clearly?
- 2) Is there a counter-argument in the introduction? Are there counter-arguments throughout the essay?
- 3) Are knowledge questions & ToK concepts identified and discussed explicitly throughout the body of the essay?
- 4) Are the examples clear and relevant to your argument? Are the examples factually accurate and have you cited where necessary? Is any information assumed?
- 5) Are there illustrative examples that relate ToK ideas and subjects on the ToK diagram to concrete, real life situations related to the prompt?
- 6) Does the conclusion give you a sense of summary? Does it consider the most reasonable angles/perspectives from which to discuss the implications of the prompt?

A CHECKLIST FOR THE EDITING PROCESS:

- 1) Is the prescribed title exactly stated as given, with its corresponding number?
- 2) Do you have page numbers on the header or footer of each page except the first one?
- 3) Is the essay double-spaced?
- 4) Does it have a standard font? Is it a 12-point size?
- 5) Have you written between 1200-1600 words? Have you included the word count on the paper?
- 6) Is the bibliography (if you have one) organized in a standard format?
- 7) Do all quotes and published author-attributed ideas (even paraphrased) have parenthetical citation (Last name of author, page number of source) and, of course, is the source properly cited in your bibliography?
- 8) Are all paragraphs indented? Also, there should be no skipped lines in between paragraphs.
- 9) Did you use spell-check? Read over the paper again to catch the mistakes spell-check cannot.
- 10) Did you check for obvious grammar mistakes, especially those that make it difficult to make sense of what you are saying? Beware of run-on sentences and improper capitalization/punctuation as well.

AFTER REVISIONS/EDITING & THE ESSAY IS COMPLETE:

- 1) Save the essay using this file naming protocol:
Lastname_Firstname-M16Title#.docx
(i.e. *Collazo_William-M16Title#5.docx*—if you wrote title number 5)
- 2) Send a DIGITAL COPY of your final paper as an e-mail attachment to Mr. Collazo at dbhssensei@gmail.com.