



International Baccalaureate®  
Baccalauréat International  
Bachillerato Internacional

**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE**  
**DIPLOMA PROGRAMME**



TOK HANDBOOK

2019-21

*THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE*

REVIEWED IN MAY 2018

REVIEWED IN MAY 2019

# IB Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through inter-cultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and life-long learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

# Sanskar Mission Statement

*Sanskar School aims to:*

- Equip its pupil with a critical and global outlook which will make them committed citizens of the world.
- Recognize and channelize the potential of the pupil and develop thinking, communication, social, scientific and inter-personal skills.
- Foster cognitive, affective and psycho-motor development and enable the pupil to make connections with the acquired knowledge in his/her everyday life.

# IBO LEARNER PROFILE



Resource:  
[www.ibo.org](http://www.ibo.org)

# IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

## IB learners of TOK strive to be:

<p><b>Inquirer</b></p>  <p>I ask questions to learn about many things.</p>	<p>They develop themselves into active and independent learners for life time.</p>
<p><b>Knowledgeable</b></p>  <p>I try to learn many things.</p>	<p>They acquire in depth knowledge and understanding by solving local and global issues.</p>

<h1>Thinker</h1>  <p>I try to connect things I know</p>	<p>They use their critical and creative thinking skills to solve problems.</p>
<h1>Communicator</h1>  <p>I share my ideas with others.</p>	<p>They are confident and effective in expressing their ideas in multiple languages.</p>
<h1>Principled</h1>  <p>I try to do what is right</p>	<p>They grow to become responsible, accountable, fair and honest individuals.</p>
<h1>Open-minded</h1>  <p>I accept other points of view</p>	<p>They learn and grow from diverse cultures, giving respect to the perspectives of people not belonging to their cultures or thoughts.</p>

<h1>Caring</h1>  <p>I try to help where I can.</p>	<p>They empathize with others and try to bring a positive change in their lives.</p>
<h1>Risk-Taker</h1>  <p>I try new things!</p>	<p>They learn how to handle an unknown and unplanned situation in a confident and strategic manner.</p>
<h1>Balanced</h1>  <p>I work and play hard.</p>	<p>They understand the importance of intellectual, physical and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.</p>
<h1>Reflective</h1>  <p>I think about how I can improve</p>	<p>They are able to consider their strengths and limitations in order to support personal development.</p>

# THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE:

- Theory of knowledge is unlike other Diploma courses, and probably unlike anything you have done before in school.
- TOK is all about wondering.
- It is unique in the sense that it draws together all the knowledge learned in other courses and questions the validity of what we think we know.
- It helps the students to discover the richness of knowledge, and helps them to examine how knowledge is built up, examined, and evaluated by individuals and societies.
- To make us understand the way we learn.
- To make us understand that there are multiple ways of learning.
- To reinforce the idea that there are many different ways of thinking and perspectives, and assumptions we have because our cultural and individual positions may obscure the way we see the world.
- To suggest some of the responsibilities that may come with knowledge.
- The TOK course is designed as a comprehensive two-year curriculum.
- It allows the students to meet the requirements of different national educational institutions.

- Theory of Knowledge plays an important part in the IB Diploma Programme by providing an opportunity for the students to reflect on knowledge.
- During the TOK discussions links may be made between knowledge gained in other subjects.
- The core of TOK is Knowledge questions.
- Discussions form the backbone of TOK, where students will collaborate to develop and evaluate knowledge.

## **ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS OF TOK**

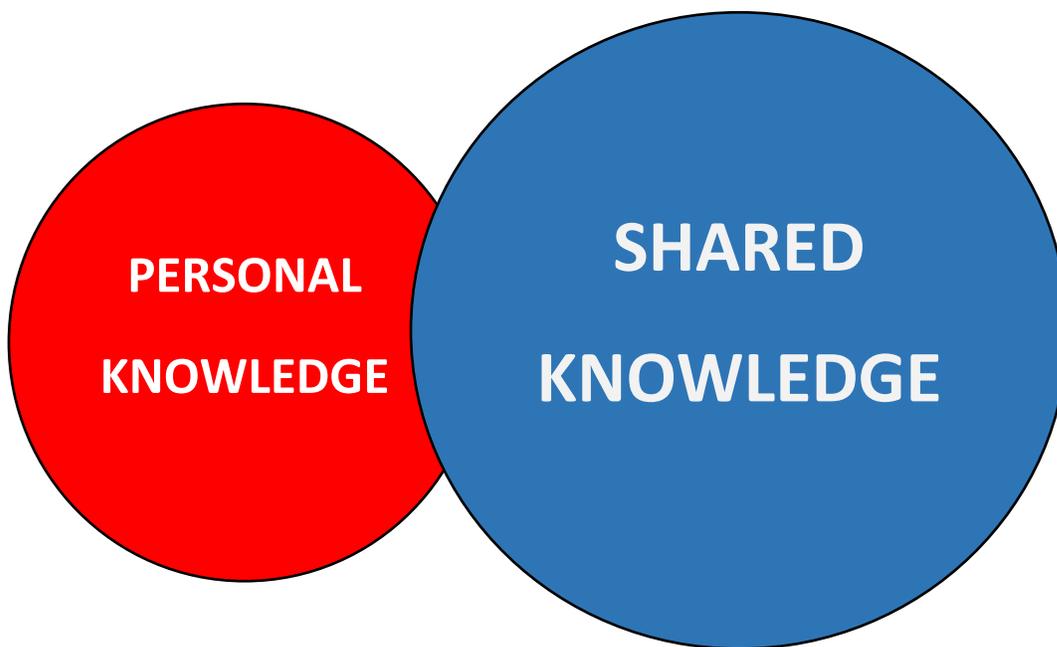
- What does the concept of knowledge imply?
- How does knowledge develop?
- What are the limitations of human cognitive abilities, the ways of knowing and the knowledge itself?
- What is the knowledgeable personality like?

## **WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?**

- We use the word “know” all the time, but what does it mean?
- We feel that we know a concept, but providing a more rigorous analysis of it is difficult.
- According to Plato, Knowledge is justified, true belief.

- According to Wikipedia, Knowledge is familiarity with someone or something, which can include facts, information, descriptions, or skills acquired through experience or education.

## **KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK**

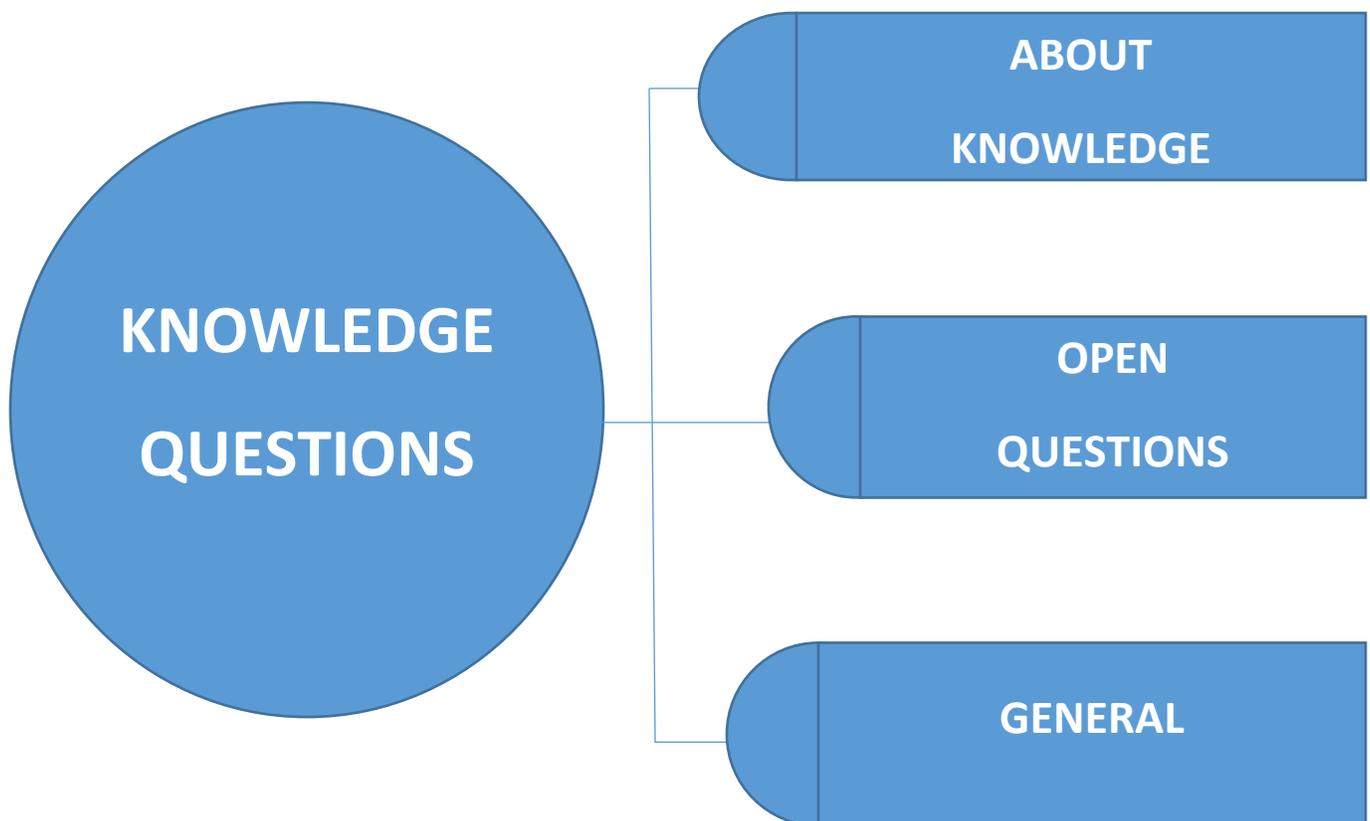


## **TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE**

- Knowledge can be perceived as a production of work of an individual or of a group of people.
- TOK in IB differentiates knowledge as Personal Knowledge and Shared Knowledge.

- Personal knowledge depends on the experiences of a particular individual gained through experience, practice and personal involvement.
- Shared knowledge is systematic in its nature and is the product of one or more individuals.
- TOK must maintain a balance between Shared and Personal Knowledge.

## KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS



- Knowledge questions are questions about knowledge.
- They focus on how knowledge is constructed and evaluated.
- They are open in nature and have many right answers to them.
- Should be expressed in general terms rather than subject specific terms.

## WAYS OF KNOWING



# AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE

**MATHEMATICS**

**NATURAL SCIENCES**

**HUMAN SCIENCES**

**HISTORY**

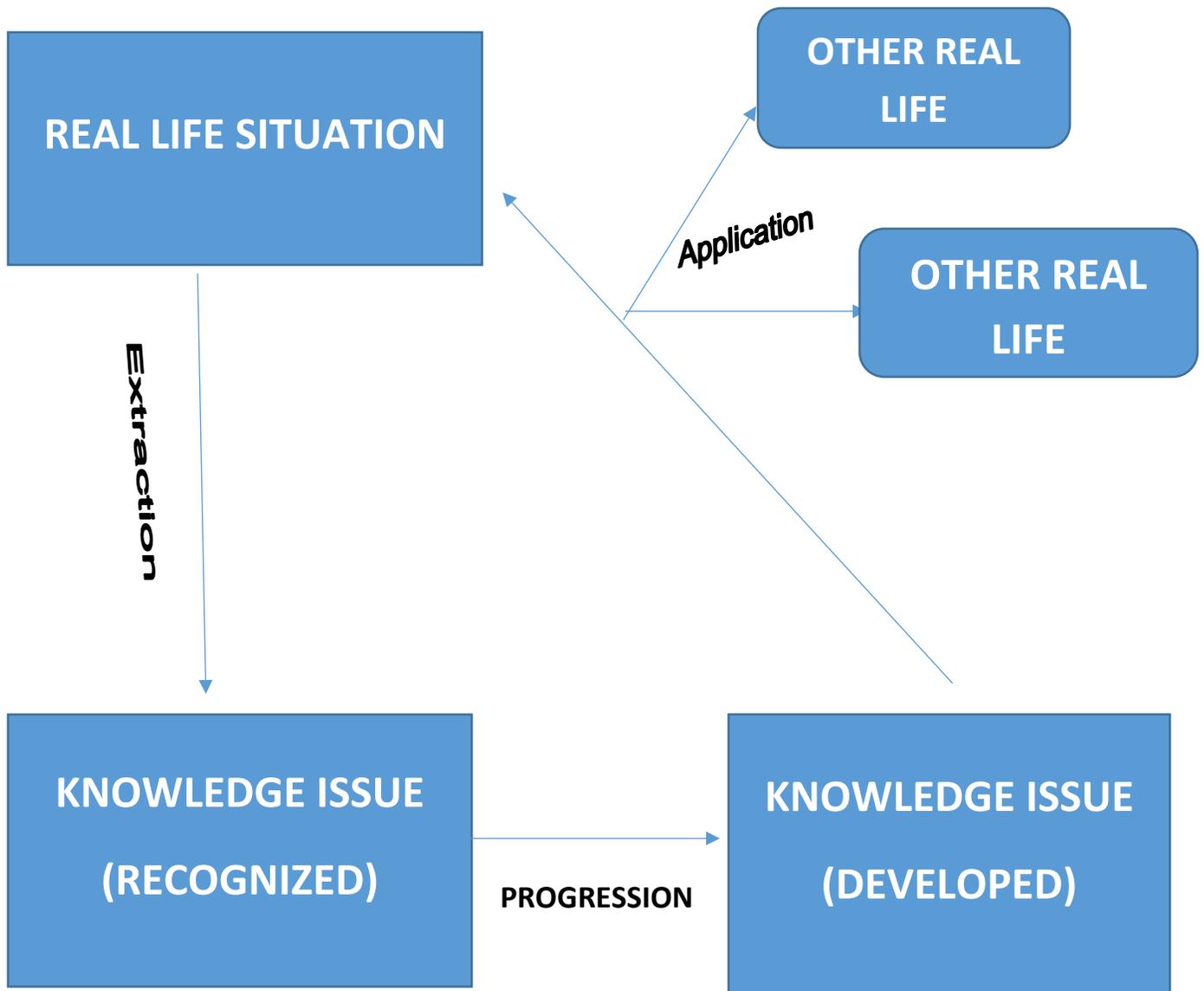
**ARTS**

**ETHICS**

**RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE  
SYSTEM**

**INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE  
SYSTEM**

# THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE: (PRESENTATION STRUCTURE)



# **ASSESSMENT**

**Number of Hours Required:-100 Hrs**

**TOK Essay:-67%**

- The student has to write one essay on a title chosen from a list of six titles prescribed by the IB for each examination session.
- The maximum length for the essay is 1,600 words.
- All essays are externally assessed by the IB.

**TOK Presentation: -33%**

- Each student/ group of students will give one presentation to the class.
- The presentation will be of approximately 10 minutes per student.
- One written presentation planning document for each student.

## **TOK standards of assessment**

- Excellent – **A**
- Good – **B**
- Satisfactory – **C**
- Mediocre – **D**
- Elementary – **E**
- Not submitted - **N**

## **The role of the teacher in relation to the TOK Essay**

- The teacher supports the student in the writing of the essay.
- The teacher provides the student with guidance about the skills needed.
- The teacher completes the coversheet.
- The teacher is encouraged to discuss the prescribed titles with the students. However, the students should be allowed to make the final choice of a title and to develop their own ideas.
- The teacher may comment on only one preliminary draft, but is not permitted to edit it for the student.
- In general, teachers' comments should be about the essay as a whole, although it is acceptable to comment upon a particular paragraph.
- Where a student is writing in a second or third language, the teacher may indicate that a particular sentence or word is wrong.

- It is the student's, not the teacher's, responsibility to correct mistakes and make improvements. The teacher is required to ensure that the essay is the student's own work. If there is doubt, authenticity should be checked by a discussion with the student about the content of the essay submitted and a scrutiny of one or more of the following:
  - The student's initial proposal and outline
  - The first draft of the essay
  - The student's references and bibliography for the essay, where necessary.
  - The style of the writing, which may reveal obvious discrepancies.
  
- The teacher should make it clear to students that they will be required to sign a written declaration when submitting the essay, to confirm that it is their own work.
  
- The students must be made aware that their teachers will also be required to verify the claim made in the declaration.

## **Assessment criteria**

- The method of assessing the TOK essay and the presentation judge each in relation to identified assessment criteria.
  
- There are **four** assessment criteria (A–D) for the essay on a prescribed title, and **four** (A–D) for the presentation.
- Only whole numbers are used, not partial points such as fractions or decimals.
- The highest descriptors do not imply faultless performance
- Descriptors are not to be considered as marks
- A student who attains a particular achievement level in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain similar achievement levels in relation to the others.

# Assessment criteria

## Essay assessment

### A) Understanding knowledge issues

This criterion is aimed to answer the question to what extent the essay focuses on knowledge issues relevant to the prescribed title, and with the depth and breadth of the understanding demonstrated in the essay.

A **relevant** knowledge issue is one that directly relates to the prescribed title undertaken, or one that the essay has shown is important in relation to it.

**Depth of understanding** is often indicated by drawing distinctions within ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, or by connecting several facets of knowledge issues to these.

**Breadth of understanding** is often indicated by making comparisons between ways of knowing and areas of knowledge.

- Does the essay demonstrate understanding of knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title?
- Does the essay demonstrate an awareness of the connections between knowledge issues, areas of knowledge and ways of knowing?

### Achievement level descriptors

**0** - Level 1 is not achieved.

**1–2** - The essay includes very **little treatment of knowledge issues** and demonstrates **little understanding** of them. If present, areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing are merely mentioned.

**3–4** - The essay includes **some treatment of knowledge issues** that are relevant to the prescribed title and demonstrates a **rudimentary understanding** of the knowledge issues. Some links to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing are present but they are largely ineffective.

**5–6** - The essay treats knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title, and demonstrates **some understanding** of them. **Some effective links** are drawn between areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing.

**7–8** - The essay **consistently maintains knowledge issues** that are relevant to the prescribed title.

- **Effective links** and some comparisons between areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing are present
- The essay demonstrates a **good understanding** of the knowledge issues.

**9–10** - The essay **consistently maintains** knowledge issues that are relevant to the prescribed title.

- **Effective links and comparisons** between areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing are elaborated
- The essay demonstrates a **sophisticated understanding** of the knowledge issues

## **B) Knower's perspective**

- To what extent have the knowledge issues been connected to the student's own experience as a learner?
- Does the student show an awareness of his or her own perspective as a knower in relation to the perspectives of people coming from other academic and philosophical traditions, cultures or of a different social status, gender, age?

- Do the examples chosen show an individual approach consciously taken by the student, rather than mere repetition of standard commonplace cases or the impersonal recounting of sources?

## **Achievement level descriptors**

**0-** Level 1 is not achieved.

**1–2** - The essay shows no evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues related to the prescribed title.

**3–4** - The essay shows very little evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues related to the prescribed title.

- There is some personal engagement with the knowledge issues.
- Different perspectives may be mentioned but there is no attempt to explore them.
- Examples chosen are sometimes appropriate.

**5–6** - The essay shows some evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues.

- There is some personal engagement with the knowledge issues.
- There is an awareness that different perspectives may exist, although there may be little attempt to explore these.
- Examples chosen are appropriate, although there may be little variety in their sources.

**7–8** - The essay shows adequate evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues.

- There is a thoughtful, personal engagement with the knowledge issues and some self-awareness as a knower.
- There is an acknowledgment of different perspectives and some attempt to explore these.
- Examples chosen are effective, with some variety.

**9–10** - The essay shows much evidence of independent thinking about the knowledge issues.

- There is personal, reflective exploration of the knowledge issues and significant self-awareness as a knower.
- There is serious consideration of different perspectives.
- Examples chosen are varied and effectively used.

## **C) Quality of analysis of knowledge issues**

- What is the quality of the inquiry into knowledge issues?
- Are the main points in the essay justified? Are the arguments coherent and compelling?
- Have counterclaims been considered?
- Are the implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument identified?

## **Achievement level Descriptor**

**0-** Level 1 is not achieved.

**1–2** - There is no inquiry into knowledge issues, only description.

- There are very few attempts at justifying the main points of the essay.
- There is very little evidence of any awareness of counterclaims.

**3–4** - The inquiry partly explores, but largely describes, knowledge issues.

- There is some justification of main points and some coherent arguments.
- Counterclaims are implicitly identified.

**5–6** - The inquiry explores knowledge issues.

- Most points are justified; most arguments are coherent.
- Some counterclaims are considered.

**7–8** - The inquiry explores with some insight, in some depth and/or detail, knowledge issues.

- All, or nearly all, main points are justified and arguments are coherent.
- Counterclaims are explored. Implications of the essay's argument are identified.

**9–10** - The inquiry explores with a high degree of insight, in considerable depth and/or detail, knowledge issues.

- All main points are justified and arguments are coherent and compelling.
- Counterclaims are explored and evaluated.
- Implications and underlying assumptions of the essay's argument are identified.

## **D) Organization of ideas**

- Is the essay well organized and relevant to the prescribed title?
- Does the use of language assist the reader's understanding and avoid confusion?

Are central terms explained or developed clearly in a way that assists comprehension?

No account should be taken of minor errors unless they significantly impede communication.

- When factual information is used or presented, is it accurate and, when necessary, referenced?
- If sources have been used, have they been properly referenced in a way that allows them to be traced?
  - Internet references must include the date on which they were accessed
  - Not all essays require sources or references
  - An essay that fails to meet the word limit of 1,200–1,600 words will not score above level 4 on criterion D.
  - An essay that has no relevance to the prescribed title will score 0 on this criterion D.

## **Achievement level descriptors**

**0-** Level 1 is not achieved.

**1–2** - The essay on the prescribed title is very poorly structured, with little overall organization.

- It is difficult to understand what the writer intends.
- Factual information used to support arguments may contain significant inaccuracies.
- Sources of information and ideas may not be acknowledged and there is no attempt at referencing.

**3–4** - The essay on the prescribed title is poorly structured, with limited overall organization.

- It is sometimes difficult to understand what the writer intends.
- There may be some attempt to explain or explore the meaning of terms but this contributes little to conceptual clarity.
- Factual information used to support arguments is not always reliable
- There is some attempt at referencing but it is not complete, nor sufficiently precise to permit tracing of sources.

**5–6** - The essay on the prescribed title is satisfactorily structured, with adequate overall organization.

- Concepts are used clearly: if concepts are explained, explanations are generally adequate.
- Factual information used to support arguments is mostly correct.
- Most sources of information and ideas are acknowledged; although some precision may be lacking.
- The word limit has been met.

**7–8** - The essay on the prescribed title is well structured, with a clear overall organization

- Concepts are used or developed clearly: some explanations are included, where appropriate.
- Factual information used to support arguments is correct.

- Sources of information and ideas are acknowledged.
- . - The word limit has been met.

**9–10** - The essay on the prescribed title is very well structured, with an effective overall organization.

- Concepts are used clearly and, where appropriate, refined by helpful explanations.
- Factual information used to support arguments is correct.
- Sources of information and ideas are acknowledged; all referencing permits tracing of sources.
- The word limit has been met.

## **Comment**

- In general, more emphasis is placed on the larger issues (organization and clarity) and less on the more minor ones (factual accuracy and sourcing).
- Meticulous acknowledgment of sources cannot improve the organization of a poorly structured essay.

## **Presentation assessment**

### **A) Identification of knowledge issue**

- Did the presentation identify a relevant knowledge issue involved, implicit or embedded in a real-life situation?

### **Achievement level descriptors**

**0** - Level 1 was not achieved.

**1–2** - The presentation referred to a knowledge issue but it was irrelevant to the real-life situation under consideration.

**3–4** - The presentation identified a knowledge issue that was in some ways relevant to the real-life situation under consideration.

**5** - The presentation identified a knowledge issue that was clearly relevant to the real-life situation under consideration.

## **B) Treatment of knowledge issues**

- Did the presentation show a good understanding of knowledge issues, in the context of the real-life situation?

### **Achievement level descriptors**

**0** - Level 1 was not achieved.

**1–2** - The presentation showed some understanding of knowledge issues.

**3–4** - The presentation showed an adequate understanding of knowledge issues.

**5** - The presentation showed a good understanding of knowledge issues.

## **C) Knower's perspective**

- Did the presentation, particularly in the use of arguments and examples, show an individual approach and demonstrate the significance of the topic?

### **Achievement level descriptors**

**0** - Level 1 was not achieved.

**1–2** - The presentation, in its use of arguments and examples or otherwise, showed limited personal involvement and did not demonstrate the significance of the topic.

**3–4** - The presentation, in its use of arguments and examples or otherwise, showed some personal involvement and adequately demonstrated the significance of the topic.

**5** - The presentation, in its distinctively personal use of arguments and examples showed clear personal involvement and fully demonstrated the significance of the topic.

## **D) Connections**

- Is there a balanced account of how the topic could be approached from different perspectives?
- Did the presentation show how the positions taken would have implications in related areas?
- In awarding the higher achievement levels, the emphasis should be more on the quality of the consideration of connections than on the quantity of connections mentioned.

### **Achievement level descriptors**

**0** - Level 1 was not achieved.

**1–2** - The presentation explored at least two different perspectives to some extent.

**3–4** - The presentation gave a satisfactory account of how the question could be approached from different perspectives, and began to explore their similarities and differences.

**5** - The presentation gave a clear account of how the question could be approached from different perspectives and considered their implications in related areas.

## **References**

*Theory of Knowledge guide* by International Baccalaureate Organization 2014.

*Program Standards and Practices* by International Baccalaureate Organization 2009, published January 2014.

*Handbook of procedures for the diploma programme 2015* by International Baccalaureate Organization 2009.