

Presentation moderators will similarly endeavour to reach a holistic judgment based on the responses of the student(s) and teacher on the TK/PPD form.

The markbands for each assessment task in effect represent a single holistic criterion applied to the piece of work, which is judged as a whole. The highest descriptor levels do not imply faultless performance and examiners and teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.

## Part 1: Essay on a prescribed title

The following diagram shows the question underpinning a global impression judgment of the TOK essay. This question is to shape the reading and assessing of TOK essays.

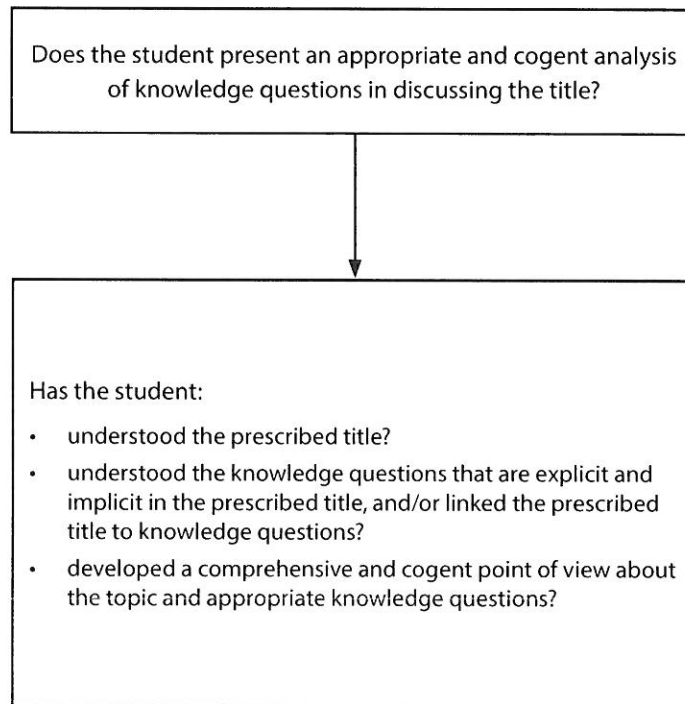


Figure 20

The judgment about the TOK essay is to be made on the basis of the following two aspects:

### 1. Understanding knowledge questions

This aspect is concerned with the extent to which the essay focuses on knowledge questions relevant to the prescribed title, and with the depth and breadth of the understanding demonstrated in the essay.

Knowledge questions addressed in the essay should be shown to have a direct connection to the chosen prescribed title, or to be important in relation to it.

Depth of understanding is often indicated by drawing distinctions within WOKs and AOKs, or by connecting several facets of knowledge questions to these.

Breadth of understanding is often indicated by making comparisons between WOKs and AOKs. Since not all prescribed titles lend themselves to an extensive treatment of an equal range of AOKs or WOKs, this element in the descriptors should be applied with concern for the particularity of the title.

Relevant questions to be considered include the following.

- Does the essay demonstrate understanding of knowledge questions that are relevant to the prescribed title?
- Does the essay demonstrate an awareness of the connections between knowledge questions, AOKs and WOKs?
- 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)?

## 2. Quality of analysis of knowledge questions

This aspect is concerned only with knowledge questions that are relevant to the prescribed title.

Relevant questions to be considered include the following.

- What is the quality of the inquiry into knowledge questions?
- 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?
- Are the arguments effectively evaluated?

Analysis of a knowledge question that is not relevant to the prescribed title will not be assessed.

**Note:** The TOK essay is not an assessment of first or second language literacy. Students should have properly edited their work, but whether they have done so is not in itself a matter for assessment. While the two are usually highly correlated, assessors will be wary of taking linguistic fluency for substantive understanding and analysis of knowledge questions. A fluent and stylish rendition of different knowledge questions does not in itself amount to analysis or argument. Discussion of knowledge questions must be clearly related and appropriately linked to a set title. Equally, an essay written with minor mechanical and grammatical errors can still be an excellent essay and examiners will not take these errors into consideration when marking the essay. It is only when these errors become major and impede the comprehension of the essay that they will be taken into account.

## TOK essay assessment instrument

Does the student present an appropriate and cogent analysis of knowledge questions in discussing the title?						
Aspect	Level 5 9–10	Level 4 7–8	Level 3 5–6	Level 2 3–4	Level 1 1–2	0
Understanding knowledge questions	There is a <i>sustained focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title— <b>developed</b> with <i>investigation of different perspectives and linked effectively to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	There is a <i>focus on knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title— <b>developed</b> with <i>acknowledgment of different perspectives and linked to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	There is a <i>focus on some knowledge questions</i> connected to the prescribed title—with <i>some development and linking to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	Some <b>knowledge questions</b> that are connected to the prescribed title are considered, but the essay is largely <i>descriptive, with superficial or limited links to areas of knowledge and/or ways of knowing</i> .	<b>Knowledge questions</b> , where connected to the prescribed title—the essay is <i>descriptive</i> .	The essay does not reach a standard described by levels 1–5 or is not a response to one of the prescribed titles on the list for the current session.
Quality of analysis of knowledge questions	<b>Arguments</b> are <i>clear, supported by real-life examples</i> and are <i>effectively evaluated</i> ; <b>counterclaims</b> are <i>extensively explored</i> ; <b>implications</b> are <i>drawn</i> .	Arguments are <i>clear, supported by real-life examples</i> and are <i>evaluated</i> ; some <b>counterclaims</b> are <i>identified and explored</i> .	Some <b>arguments</b> are <i>clear and supported by examples</i> ; some <b>counterclaims</b> are <i>identified</i> .	Arguments are offered but are <i>unclear and/or not supported</i> by <b>effective examples</b> .	<b>Assertions</b> are offered but are <i>not supported</i> .	
<b>Some possible characteristics</b>						
	Cogent Accomplished Discerning Individual Lucid Insightful Compelling	Pertinent Relevant Thoughtful Analytical Organized Credible Coherent	Typical Acceptable Mainstream Adequate Competent	Underdeveloped Basic Superficial Derivative Rudimentary Limited	Ineffective Descriptive Incoherent Formless	