**Essay on a prescribed title  
 (1,200–1,600 words)  
General**  
All students must submit for external assessment an essay on any one of the ten titles prescribed by the IBO for each examination session. The titles ask generic questions about knowledge and are cross-disciplinary in nature. They may be answered with reference to any part or parts of the TOK course, to specific disciplines, or with reference to opinions gained about knowledge both inside and outside the classroom. The titles are not meant to be treated only in the abstract, or on the basis of external authorities. In all cases, essays should express the conclusions reached by students through a sustained consideration of knowledge issues; claims and counterclaims should be formulated and main ideas should be illustrated with varied and effective examples that show the approach consciously taken by the student. Essays should demonstrate the student’s ability to link knowledge issues to areas of knowledge and ways of knowing. The chosen title must be used exactly as given; it must not be altered in any way. Students who modify the titles may gain very few or no points, since the knowledge issues that essays treat must be relevant to the titles in their prescribed formulation.

The essay must be well presented, clearly legible, and, where appropriate, include references and a bibliography. Students are expected to acknowledge fully and in detail the work, thoughts or ideas of another person if incorporated in work submitted for assessment, and to ensure that their own work is never given to another student, either in the form of hard copy or by electronic means, knowing that it might be submitted for assessment as the work of that other student. Factual claims that may be considered common knowledge (for example, “The second world war ended in 1945”) do not need to be referenced.

Guidance is available in the Diploma Programme Extended Essay guide or on reputable web sites, for example http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/Documentation.html.

**Bibliography**  
The TOK essay is not a research paper but, if specific sources are used, they must be acknowledged in a  
bibliography. The bibliography should include only those works (such as books, journals, magazines and online sources) consulted by the student. As appropriate, the bibliography should specify:  
• author(s), title, date and place of publication  
• the name of the publisher or URL (http://….)  
• the date when the web page was accessed, adhering to one standard method of listing sources.

**Essay length**  
The essay on the prescribed title must be between 1,200 and 1,600 words in length. Extended notes or appendices are not appropriate to a TOK essay and may not be read. The word count includes:  
• the main part of the essay  
• any quotations.  
The word count does not include:  
• any acknowledgments  
• the references (whether given in footnotes or endnotes)  
• any maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations and tables  
• the bibliography.  
Students are required to indicate the number of words.