**A Step By Step Approach to Writing the TOK Essay**

**Your #1 priority is answering the prescribed title**. If you somehow follow this method, but don't answer the question you won't score well. So make sure you keep linking back to the question as you go.

**Second, choose 2 AOKs and 1-2 WOKs**

* Consult the Knowledge Framework for each AOK
* Use the “cookbook” file on our webpage

**As you’re exploring 2 AOKs in the main body of your essay**include a few insights into WOKs around the edges.

**Introduction (150-200 words)**

## Paragraph 1

-**Say two interesting things** about the prescribed title. Example: Many people find Mathematics and Natural Science very convincing. However, many of these same people would say that they don't have a strong understanding of either of these two fields. Both of these fields rely on rigorous methodologies.

Define the key terms in the title.

Here I might define **Mathematics** and **Natural** Science. (I would also look up the term "**convincing**". I might not include that definition in my essay, but I would like to know whether there are any conflicting definitions. That might help me say interesting things later on in the essay--for example in the conclusion.)

-**Narrow in** on one aspect which is particularly interesting. "This essay with focus on the link between replicability of results, as a source of reliability."

-**State your thesis**. What is your short answer to the prescribed title, your thesis. (You might decide, by the end of your essay, that your initial thinking was wrong, but you should know the point your claims are going to be supporting).

-**Give us a roadmap**, a sentence that gives us a preview. This shows us what you’re going to do in your body paragraphs (your "developments"). Tell us AOKs you're going to use and which WOKs you will be focused on most. This will make it easy for the marker to know what to look for. An example: “Mathematics can be seen as more reliable because it uses reason. Natural science can be less reliable because it relies on observation. ”

**Next write your first development. Two paragraphs totaling 600 words. Use your first AOK.**

## Paragraph 2

-**Claim**. A claim a topic sen­tence that outlines your argument about the prescribed title. For example you could claim that, “Mathematics can be relied on because it is a purely logical system.”

-**Explain**. Elaborate and clarify your claim. “Mathematics is axiomatic and independent of subjective experience.“

-**RLS/Example**. A real life example, to clar­ify and sup­port the claim from your own experience. Examples should be personal, specific, precise and real. Did something happen in your Science class? Did you have a conversation with your or hear a story from your grandfather? These are evidence from your own life rather than examples from Darwin or Lincoln. So you could talk about how, “In mathematics we learned that the inside angles of a triangle, in Euclidian space, sum up to 180 degrees.”

## Paragraph 3

-**Counter-claim.** Argue against your claim above. “However, it is possible to come to different conclusions using different systems of mathematics.”

-**RLS/xample**. An example that supports your counter claim. “There are different It is not possible to demonstrate that the interior angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees in Euclidian space, this cannot be proven within other systems, such as spherical geometry or hyperbolic geometry.”

-**Link to prescribed title**. Quickly sum up the (complicated) insights of this section. “It is therefore clear that mathematics is reliable to an extent, but often it can only show something to be true within one fixed system or approach.”

**Now, write another two body paragraphs, looking at your second AOK. Use the same approach you saw in paragraphs 2 and 3. 600 words**

## Paragraph 4

-**Claim**.

-**Explain**.

-**RLS/Example**.

## Paragraph 5

-**Counter-claim**.

-**RLS/Example.**

-**Link to prescribed title.**

Finally, write your 'conclusion'. Two paragraphs, totaling 200-250 words

## Paragraph 6

-**Your conclusion**. Explain what big, general insights have come out of this--your conclusion.

**Implications and significance**. Also tell us why it's important that we know this. When and how does it matter that we understand this lesson?

## Paragraph 7

-**Perspectives and extensions**. If you can, try to pull in a very different perspective, on your conclusion. Perhaps you can recognize a very different way of approaching the question, which could have resulted in quite different insights than those you included in your essay. Or you could also mention one or two unresolved questions that this essay has revealed. You could also think of this as explaining some "limitations" or weaknesses of your essay, but it's also about showing that the conversation isn't over yet. There is more to the question than you've had the room to explore.