

Theory of Knowledge Summer Assignment  
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Welcome to Theory of Knowledge (ToK), an International Baccalaureate class originally designed for IB diploma candidates. The course challenges students (and teachers) to reflect on diverse ways of knowing and areas of knowledge, asking them to become aware of themselves as thinkers, and to consider the complexity of knowledge and the role knowledge plays in a global society. As a thoughtful and purposeful enquiry into different ways of knowing, ToK is composed almost entirely of questions, both ageless questions on which thinkers have been reflecting for centuries, and new ones posed by contemporary life. The course aims to encourage students to gain and apply their own knowledge with greater awareness and responsibility.

Your assignment for the summer is to check out from the school library (or better yet purchase) and read *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig. This is an extremely complex and difficult text, so it would behoove you to not wait until the last minute to start on it. As you read, I want you to familiarize yourself with some of Pirsig's most important elements by describing them *in terms of the novel*. Therefore I am asking you to write a brief paragraph (50-100 concise words) on each of the following: classical vs. romantic understanding; knife; Quality; and objectivity vs. subjectivity.

Theory of Knowledge meets Monday evenings from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. and Wednesday mornings from 7:00 to 7:43 a.m. Components include a 1200-1600 word externally moderated essay and a 10 to 30 minute internally moderated oral presentation; there is no formal Theory of Knowledge examination. Grading will be determined by formal essays on various knowledge subjects, essay examinations, and required class participation.

Aside from this, I hope you have a great summer and genuinely look forward to seeing you in August.

Sincerely,

Matt SKeahan