# THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE TNeal Winter 2017

## “Expert” How To Essay

**Due: Thursda, February 2 -- Bring 3 copies to class**

### Assignment: Write an essay describing something you know how to do better than the majority of your peers and better than all but maybe a couple of people in your TOK class. The point of this assignment is NOT to prove you are the expert. The purpose is for you to analyze how you know what you know and to attempt to make your ***personal*** knowledge ***shared*** knowledge.

### Objectives:

1. to encourage you to find and/or practice using your personal writing voice—and in using the pronoun *I* in your essay
2. to provide an opportunity to a) share personal knowledge and b) demonstrate your writing skills
3. to carefully analyze *how to* skills that you may take for granted and to consider how you know what you “know” and to make the unconscious knowledge more conscious.
4. to determine the difference between the skill of *knowing how* to do something and the *description* of *knowing that* something is done a certain way.
5. to realize the difficulties of putting *personal* knowledge into language that can become *shared* knowledge.

### How to Proceed:

* Consider what you know you know how to do well.
* Decide whether this is an ability you have that most of your classmates do not have.
* Go through the process of how to do what you do well. Break it down into a series of steps. What materials do you need? What do you do first? What do you do next? And so on.
* Determine which process would work best for your activity:
  + *Directional process analysis:*  You want to teach us how to follow your steps in a manner that would allow us to duplicate the process ourselves (as in how to make pizza). Note, however, that this essay is to focus on personal knowledge, not shared group knowledge that is already simply laid out in terms of a recipe or rules to a game.
  + *Informational process analysis:* You do not expect us to duplicate your process, but you wish to explain to us how you do the activity so that we can better understand and appreciate what you do and why you can do it so well (such as how you master a particularly difficult piece of music, or how you perform some specialized athletic skill).
* Organize your essay based on this series of steps.
* Your thesis should simply be that you know how to do the activity well and that it is worth becoming “shared” knowledge. (Note: This is not an argumentative piece to convince us you are the expert, so please don’t state that you are an expert because . . . Instead, let us know why we would want to know how this activity or skill is done.)
* **Address knowledge quetions.** Are there various perspectives to completing a certain step or skill that different people might approach in different ways? Is your perspective of how to do this activity different from other “experts” in the field? What are the limitations to just anyone being able to know/do to this activity?
* Keep in mind that your classmates are your audience. How can you best explain the process to them within your essay? While you are required to write the essay using sentences and paragraphs (rather than bullet points or outline), would it help to **insert diagrams or other visuals**?
* Do not hesitate to **use first person (I) or second person (you)** point of view. In fact, for this assignment, you will be required to use first person *I*. If I am explaining how I do something, I need to be able to use the word *I*. If you are asking your audience to imitate how you do something, you need to be able to use the word *you*. (This is not a literary analysis; it is a personal essay, so it is perfectly legitimate to use the words *I* and/or *you.)* However, do not use the generic *you* to indicate what people do in general. Use *you* only to address your audience directly. For instance, you would use *you* for a directional process analysis but probably would not use it for an informational process analysis.
* **Conclude** with an **analysis of the difficulties of putting this activity/skill into words**. Consider how language used to write and read this essay creates/suggests knowledge questions of its own. What did you learn about the **differences between *knowing how* and *knowing that.*** How do differing perspectives impact how this activity or skill is carried out? What knowledge issues (limitations, biases, uncertainties, values, justification or verification methods) influence how you describe the process?

### **General Essay Requirements:**

* Written assignments are to be word processed, double-spaced, 11-12 point font of a standard, easy-to-read style such as Times or Cambria.
* Recommended length for each essay is around 750-1200 words (approximately three to four pages, double-spaced).
* Remember to add a TOK analysis at least within the conclusion—if not throughout the essay.
* **Turn in three copies** of your assigned essays (one for the instructor and two for peer evaluations}

# Essays will be evaluated on how well you achieve the following:

* Effective fulfillment of assignment objectives listed above.
* Insightful conclusion which shows critical thinking of the knowledge claims and questions inherent in this *how to* essay.
* Evidence of critical thinking—Do you include all the necessary steps and suggest possible missteps to avoid? Do you carefully analyze what may have been unconscious or intuitive knowledge?
* Acknowledgement of **differing perspectives**? For example, can a certain step be done different ways depending on individual variables or different perspectives? Point out when and where different options might be taken.
* Confident, interesting writing style
* Strong, relevant details—Supporting examples/details are extremely important in all essays. In this essay, descriptive details are necessary to help your reader understand and follow each step of the process.
* Clear sense of organization
* Unified, effective paragraphing. Shorter paragraphs are preferred in instructional writing.
* Mature, varied sentence structure
* Appropriate diction—Have you used appropriate language and most effective wording?
* Proper use of mechanics (spelling, punctuation, usage, etc.)
* Consistent use of verb tense