

Essay Sample A Marks and Comments

In many ways this is a typical essay in the middle of the mark range. While many of the knowledge questions identified by the candidate can be linked to the title, such links are rarely explicitly stated. On the whole the essay lacks depth of analysis – the candidate is content to refer the reader to external sources rather than make the arguments himself.

The development of the essay is not well signalled at the outset and it takes more than a page to get going. The use of external source material for definitions is helpful in the essay as a whole given that there was no subsequent reference to them.

There is little unpacking of the central idea of discarding knowledge (in some cases the student seems to interpret this as modifying existing ideas in others outright removal of them). The essay generally lacks a discussion of the actual mechanics of any of the areas of knowledge considered. This applies both to the discussion of history and of the natural sciences. The reader is left wondering about the purpose of the AIDS example or that of World War I. This problem is particularly acute when the discussion turns to the replacement (modification?) of Newton's laws by those of General Relativity. The failure to address the question of how physics produces such knowledge causes some serious misunderstandings of the nature of physical law. There is not a jot about inference or axiom. Likewise the personal example about reproduction. It does nothing to advance the essay. There is a lot of muddled description and very little support.

Nevertheless the essay does answer the question in its own clumsy way. The candidate has been distracted by undigested external material but still manages to deal with the question at a general level. There is some development and the examples, although standard and not analysed very well, do serve the essay in some way. A good word to characterise this essay is 'adequate'. A fairly typical level 3 response

The correct answer is: 5