

Essay Sample C Marks and Comments

An accomplished essay that maintains its focus on knowledge questions that are demonstrably connected to the prescribed title. It is compelling, insightful, lucid and sophisticated. It is a good example of a response at the top of level 5. Although there are some points where the argument is thinner or the treatment less than effective the essay earns a straight 10/10 demonstrating clearly that a response does not have to be flawless to achieve this grade.

The opening of the essay unpacks the quotation well and sets up a clear thesis. The candidate is in good control of the structure of the whole argument and gives a good roadmap of the entire essay in the first paragraph.

The treatment of examples is very effective on the whole. Unlike many essays that draw upon this example, the discussion of Rutherford and Bohr is good and well evaluated. That of the multiverse explores a counterclaim to the central thesis and this idea is extended to the Copernicus example. While this is an excellent example (and its ubiquity in ToK essays does not diminish this fact) it is not so effectively analysed. The move to heliocentrism is well supported by observational evidence in the sense that it provides a good explanation of the naked eye observations of the movements of the planets.

The subsidiary knowledge question whether absence of evidence can be taken as evidence of absence is connected well to the prescribed title and handled with real sophistication. It forms the basis for the discussion of religion as an area of knowledge and the introduction of the notion of 'burden of proof' is masterly.

Perhaps it is unduly picky to criticise the discussion about reasonableness counting in favour of a belief but more is needed here and the essay misses a golden opportunity to reflect on what might be the difference between 'reasonableness' and 'reason'. But this comment does not detract one bit from the effectiveness of the essay in general. It is pleasing to see a line or two specifically devoted to the implications of the analysis.

This piece of work demonstrates excellent analysis, good control over the development of the argument and surprisingly deep level of discussion.

The correct answer is: 10