

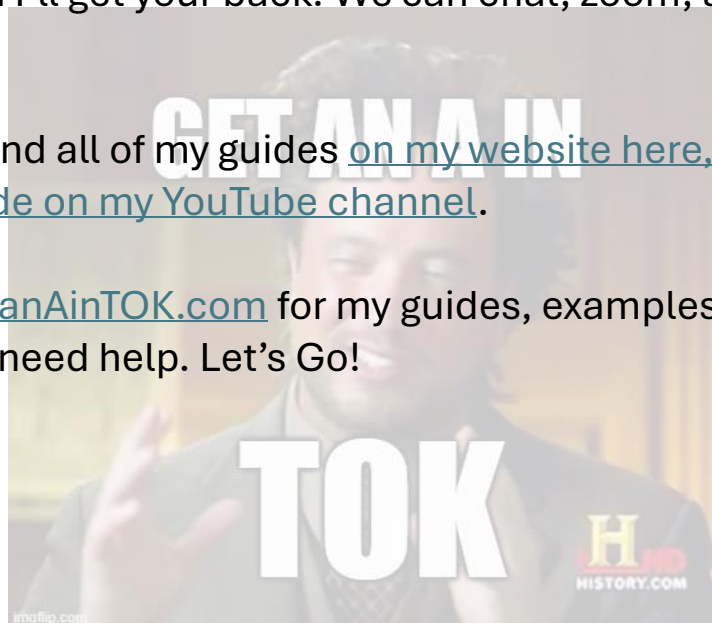
## Get an A in TOK Essay Conclusion Guide & Examples!

**Thanks for checking out my channel and resources. You can do this! And I can help!** Conclusions are often one of the most neglected parts of an essay. As a teacher, I find myself skipping them because they all sound the same and include the same language! These examples below can actually *raise* your grade in your final 100-200 words!

If you need extra help (and I know you do!) [click here](#) to send me your essay and I'll get your back! We can chat, zoom, and work together!

Make sure to find all of my guides [on my website here](#), and every title will have a [guide on my YouTube channel](#).

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## My Thoughts on Conclusions

**Make it Count** - 1,600 words for an essay with a title like these is incredibly short. It's essential to make each word count towards something on the rubric. A conclusion that doesn't help you analyze, evaluate, or demonstrate critical thinking is a waste of words. Summary and recap won't lower your grade, but it won't raise it.

**Make it Work** – Not every conclusion approach below works for every title. And they may not work for what you learn in through your research. Don't pick your favorite approach below, pick the one that is the most effective for your title.

**What Matters Most** – overall, you want your conclusion to leave the examiner with an insight or takeaway that *you* learned as a result of your research. That is a real conclusion. I learned this, and this, and this, so I conclude ***THIS!***

**What to Avoid** – Almost every conclusion I read uses phrases like “nuanced approach,” “balanced perspective,” or some other IB buzzwords. Avoid this, as it is pandering to your examiner, and we can easily see through it.

**Take a Stand** – Most TOK Essay titles from any year can be answered with a “maybe,” “sometimes,” or “yes *and* no.” That's obvious. Instead of giving a middle-of-the-road answer, take a stand and choose a side. Then, tell your reader *why* you took that side. What made your answer the most persuasive, and why? You can do this with most of the approaches below.



## Approach 1: Evaluate Your Arguments

Use this option to make it clear which side of the title you are on. This is good because it stands out by not being in the middle – “I agree with the title, but not always.” To use this conclusion, first, state your position towards the title.

*After discussing both sides of the argument, it is clear our most revered knowledge is more fragile than we assume it to be.*

Then, after making this statement (which should agree with your thesis), give the reasons why you believe this by evaluating (not summarizing) your evidence. Tell your reader why the evidence in one side is stronger. Don't summarize. Also, don't summarize.

**Title #2:** Is our most revered knowledge more fragile than we assume it to be? Discuss with reference to the arts **and one other** area of knowledge.

*After discussing both sides of the argument, it is clear our most revered knowledge is more fragile than we assume it to be. Though some might say that certain kinds of knowledge, such as empirical and experiential knowledge, are not fragile, the discussed evidence has shown that even the strongest held beliefs lack the complete certainty that is often assumed. For example, experiential knowledge can often be at the mercy of memory or interpretation. And empirical evidence may also be fragile because of the necessity for experts to be involved in the interpretative process. Instead of believing that revered knowledge can and will hold up to intense scrutiny, it has been demonstrated that there is a stronger case to be made by acknowledging that all knowledge, regardless of the way that it is justified, has some kind of hole in it. By understanding that*

*even the most revered knowledge may have some hole in it, we can approach all knowledge with a healthy skepticism. With regards to this title, that means that we can both understand the implications of the knowledge while identifying, and evaluating, the holes that may make it appear (or truly be) fragile.*

**Title 1:** Do historians and human scientists have an ethical obligation to follow the directive: do not ignore contradictory evidence”? Discuss with reference to history and the human sciences.

*Though evidence can be seen to demonstrate both sides of the title, it is clear that historians and human scientists do not have an ethical obligation to not ignore contradictory evidence. Though some might say that the need to appear impartial means that these experts must acknowledge and study all contradictory evidence, the sheer vastness of potential outliers makes this an impossible task. The magnitude of the proposed directive would cause researchers to spend all of their time in defense of a single theory or discovery rather than doing what they should be doing: creating new knowledge. While impartiality is a virtuous goal, and should always be strived for, the impossibility of a completely impartial interpretation also means that this cannot always be accomplished. In a perfect world, all evidence would be seen as it is. Instead, humans must interpret all data. Because of this interpretation problem, and the vastness of potential contradictory evidence, it can be understood that this directive is, while important, not an ethical obligation.*

## Approach 2: Personal Approach

Though top scores rarely write in the first person, I encourage you to do so in the introduction and conclusion if you engage in the personal approaches in these paragraphs. There are many ways that you can engage upon this approach, and it may be similar to Approach 3: Application & Lesson. What you want to do here is think about a way that the knowledge you have gained in your research has helped you grow as a person, change in your thinking, or something like these. Please note, here is what you don't want to do:

*In conclusion, models are all wrong, but they are almost always useful. By understanding this, we can become effective knowers who utilize the shared knowledge of the world together. Rather than be focused on only our own problems, we want to be risk-takers and global citizens that evaluate all perspectives in an empathetic and equitable way. When I use a model, I want to make sure that I am able to change the world and invest in under-served populations. To make sure that my dream comes true, I know that critical thinking skills, such as the ones taught in TOK and other IB courses, are the key to being a well-educated lifelong learner. Something something something nuanced approach.*

This paragraph did nothing but concept-drop things that students think examiners want to hear. Instead, try to find a real, authentic, and tangible way that the thinking you did in the essay affected your life.

**Title #3:** How can we reconcile the relentless drive to pursue knowledge with the finite resources we have available? Discuss with reference to the natural sciences **and one other** area of knowledge.

*There are many ways in which we can reconcile the drive to pursue knowledge with our limited resources. As discussed, there are many different kinds of limited resources that can affect knowledge acquisition. Whether it is money, time, goodwill, physical space, or man-power, there are always going to be limits to what we can explore. Researching for and exploring this title has allowed me to understand more that time, rather than money or physical resources, is the most valuable resource that we have. While this is universally understood, I didn't fully grasp this truth until I researched the example about the scientists at Berkeley. Though they had a huge budget, the pressure to publish at a deadline meant that they didn't have enough time as they wanted. This seems logical, of course, as all scientists need to publish their work. But this affected me on a personal level, as I often complain about deadlines in my academic work. Understanding that time, as a limited resource, is limited for all scientists, it helped me to come to the realization that reconciling the demands of time and knowledge-production is something that is a life-long struggle. I'm not a great scientist, yet I am experiencing the same restraints as some of the best in the world. Instead of complaining about what I have to do by a certain date, I should reconcile this demand by acknowledging this universal challenge and remember that it is something that even the best scientists in the world have to reconcile, as well!*

### Approach 3: Application/Lesson

Similar to Option 2, this option seeks to find an application that may be broader and more universal in scope. With that said, still seek to find tangible and specific ways that this lesson is both true and course-changing. While the lesson or application doesn't have to be a wild new approach towards living, show the examiner that the time that you spent writing was well worth it; show them that you actually benefitted from this awful experience called IB and TOK.

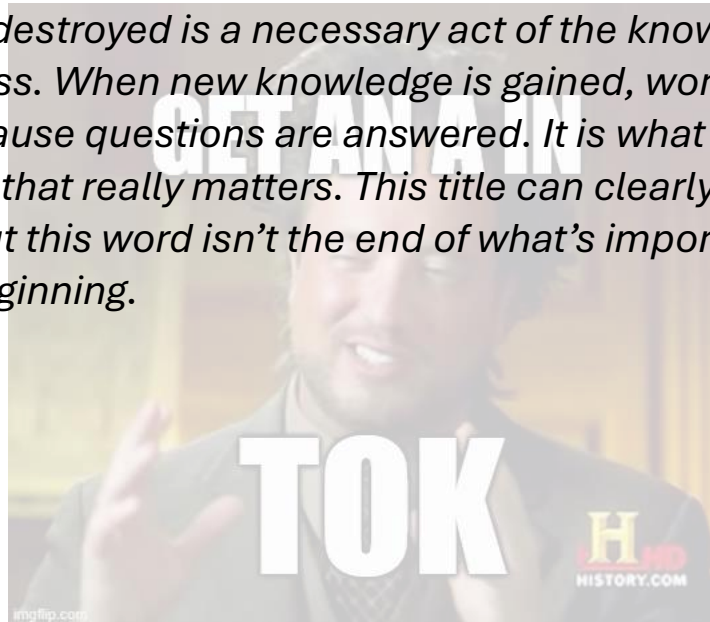
**Title #5:** To what extent do you agree with the claim “all models are wrong, but some are useful” (attributed to George Box)? Discuss with reference to mathematics **and one other** area of knowledge.

*I fully agree with Box's statement, though I do acknowledge that he speaks with some hyperbole (as the word “all” seems a bit extreme). As I have learned while researching for this essay, the purpose of models is not to find or uncover truth. Instead, it is to help everyone, both experts, novices, and IB students, move closer towards the truth in a quick and efficient way. The initial shock in Box's quote can easily be grasped by coming to the understanding that no model is trying to be true. Instead, it is a tool for learning, teaching, and simplifying. Models can help us estimate so that we can move quickly. They can be representative of larger (or smaller) things. And only by understand that they are wrong can we fully embrace the practicality that they offer. The best way to use a model is when speed is required. If accuracy is more important, then a model may not be the best way to proceed.*

**Title #6:** Does acquiring knowledge destroy our sense of wonder? Discuss with reference to **two** areas of knowledge.



*After conducting the research necessary to explore the title, I can confidently say that it is quite common for wonder to be destroyed when gaining or learning new insights and knowledge. But what I have learned is that this is not necessarily a bad thing. When I first read the title, I assumed that the destruction of wonder was a negative thing. And, in other areas of life, destruction is usually bad. But when I look at the examples above, I have learned that when wonder is destroyed, it can be replaced by many other things: things like a new sense of wonder, new questions, or even new artworks! Wonder being destroyed is a necessary act of the knowledge-creation process. When new knowledge is gained, wonder is destroyed because questions are answered. It is what we do with those answers that really matters. This title can clearly be answered with a “yes,” but this word isn’t the end of what’s important. It’s actually the beginning.*



## Approach 4: The Comparison

I just started recommending this conclusion because many titles open the door to different conclusions for each AOK. Also, comparing *anything* demonstrates the kind of high-level thinking that TOK examiners are looking for. Though not every title will prompt a conclusion with different answers for each AOK, you can still find something to compare about different points or takeaways. To compare, bring up both points, identify the difference, and then tell your reader what we can learn about the difference.

**Title #4:** Do the ever-improving tools of an area of knowledge always result in improved knowledge? Discuss with reference to **two** areas of knowledge.

Though the answer to the title is clearly not always, the frequency to which an improved tool results in improved knowledge ultimately depends on the nature of the tool. Improved physical tools, such as technology used in the Natural Sciences to learn about the universe or molecular structure, will very frequently result in improved knowledge. This is because the difference between the old and new technology is quite clear. New technologies are created only to fix the limitations of the older ones. For this reason, the tools are directly linked to improved knowledge and what kind of knowledge is gained. Non-tangible tools, however, do not have as clear of a correlation to improved knowledge. Because human interpretation, bias, and levels of expertise are all required to use “soft” tools in the Human Sciences, it is not as guaranteed that improved knowledge will occur at the same rate as when compared to improved physical tools and technology. In comparing these two types of tools, and their correlation with improving knowledge, it is possible that physical tools more often lead to improved knowledge

because they are more specifically designed and have more limited uses than “soft” tools. Whereas the James Webb Telescope has really one purpose, a “soft” tool like an algorithm may be used for purposes for which it was not created. Ultimately, a tool with one specific purpose may be more correlated with improved knowledge, whereas a tool that has wide-ranging uses, features, and possibilities, may be correlated less with the level to which it improves knowledge.



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