**TOK Essay Planner**

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| Write out the **title** exactly:  **Title 3: “Do good explanations have to be true.”** |

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| **Analyse** (Unpack) the title . Define any key terms but mainly focus on the meaning(s) of the title overall  - *What does it mean? What are the assumptions/implications of the title?*  The title first of all implies that not all good explanations have to be true, for that one would initially assume good explanations to be true.  Definitions  Good: to be desired or approved of; useful, advantageous, or beneficial in effect. (Note that good is relative, it is meaningless without comparison)  True: In accordance with fact or reality; Accurate or exact.  Knowledge: Facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education and the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject.  What **Knowledge Issues/Questions** does it raise?  - *Does the title imply a claim about knowledge? Does it suggest the opposite is false? How do we know if it is true? If we agree/disagree with the title, what does this mean for our knowledge*  What defines a good explanation?  Unpacking the definition of good, a good explanation needs to be both valid and comprehensible. A valid explanation agrees with most if not all available facts. A comprehensible explanation is coherent in logic and easy to follow.  What makes an explanation true?  Bearing in mind that there is not “ultimate truth”, a true explanation has to be falsifiable.  What role does explanations play in the production of knowledge?  Explanation is an essential way of promoting understanding, hence it plays an integral part in the transfer of knowledge. |

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| **State your thesis**. Write a ONE sentence responseto the essay title. *Address it directly giving your main, overall answer (e.g. do you agree/disagree with the title? agree with reservations?)*  Being true is one of the defining criterion for a good explanation, but good explanations don’t always have to be true. The pursuit of better explanation drives the production of knowledge through the approach of truth. |

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| **Developments**  **Claim 1:** *What is your claim? From what perspective?*  It would be reasonable to initially assume that good explanations are true, as it is essential for the WOK of logic and reasoning with reference to the definition of a good explanation.  Real-life, important, personal example  Logic and reasoning is essential in natural science. The best explanation is usually the one accepted as true before a better one comes up.  Eg. Einstein vs. quantum physics, relativity vs. Newtonian physics  How does your example link to the title and back up your claim?  This shows that better explanation is a measure of if an understanding is true, the better the explanation, the more true the understanding.  **Counterclaim 1:** *What are the limitations of your claim? In what circumstances would your claim be unsustainable? From what perspective?*  The measure of how good a explanation is not quantifiable and subjective. Conflicting understandings of a single truth usually both have good explanations as perceived by different groups people. This means that one of the good explanation has to be false.  Real-life, important, personal example  Creationist vs. evolutionist Debate.  How does your example link to the title and back up your claim?  This shows that good explanations does not have to be true.  **Counter-counter claim**  However, it can be argued that the perception of what is true is also subjective. The better explanation out of all conflicting ones perceive by an individual will be true for him, although it might not be the case for another individual.  Eg. Train track problem  “I saved five people(fact) , it is ethical” (true for some)  “I killed one person(fact) , it is unethical” (true for some) |

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| **Claim 2:** *What is your claim? From what perspective?*  Since there is no “ultimate truth”, the pursuit for better explanation is the pursuit for more in-depth truth.  Real-life, important, personal example  Evolution of the atomic model. Different atomic model taught in primary schools and high schools (personal experience).Talk about the conflict between validity and comprehensibility.  How does your example link to the title and back up your claim?  Given that better explanations are generally accepted over worse explanations as the truth, it can be said that most good explanations are true.  **Counterclaim 2:** *What are the limitations of your claim? In what circumstances would your claim be unsustainable? From what perspective?*  The assumption that good explanation are true hinders the production of better explanation, and hence hinders the production of knowledge. Whether an explanation is good or not is dynamic as new facts are discovered. Hence the very concept of “good explanation” cannot exist in isolation, there can only be better explanations. As we can never get to the absolute truth, we can only talk I terms of which explanation is closer to the truth.  Real-life, important, personal example  Heliocentrism vs. Geocentrism (Geocentrism was considered to be a good enough explanation before the invention of the telescope).  How does your example link to the title and back up your claim?  “Good explanation” is relative. Better explanations are closer to the truth as they falsify previous explanations. Hence we can only say better explanations are closer to the truth. |

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| **Conclusion:** *What important insights about the title will you emphasize?*  Everything is relative. Good explanations only exist relative to others, while one can only try to get closer to the truth by offering better explanations. Hence Goode explanations do not have to be true, but better explanations by the criteria of validity will be closer to the truth, while better explanations in terms of comprehensibility will help an individual to get closer to the truth. |