

The following shows some parts of a TOK essay that got an "A". I added comments in bold print. Underlined parts should show you that the person always talked about the title question ("patterns") and TOK aspects and did not deviate off topic.

"Humans are pattern-seeking animals and we are adept at finding patterns whether they exist or not" (adapt from Michael Shermer) Discuss knowledge questions raised by this idea in two areas of knowledge.

Introduction - Humans are pattern-seeking animals, whether they exist or not. **Definition of terms (not dictionary definition):** A pattern may be defined as a repeated form of fulfilling a certain task in everyday life for humans. These patterns are either taught in the process of growing up or are later established for oneself. In this essay, several knowledge issues will be discussed in relation to the areas of knowledge Arts and Mathematics, linked to the ways of knowing memory, intuition, reason and imagination. **Answer of title question:** One of the knowledge questions is concerned with the fact that patterns have either positive or negative effects on the acquisition of knowledge. **More specific answer, more specific definition:** In the arts, patterns are linked to personally established methods, which are unconsciously applied to one's artistic work. Similarly, patterns in mathematics are formed through prior knowledge about the way mathematical problems should be solved... etc.

Start of next Paragraph - Answer of question: One might argue that the natural tendency to see patterns hinders natural pursuit of knowledge in the arts. **Definition of terms:** A pattern seen in an artwork can be defined as a personally biased interpretation of an artwork. **Example (general):** For example, finding patterns in the arts might make the audience see a different pattern than what the artist intends to show. **Example more specific and personal:** An exemplary experience of the audience seeing a different pattern than the artist was at the IB Theatre Arts Solo Performances, which I had been part of. An audience member said that she perceived that only two of the 11 performances, namely the ones where the performers had talked were real performances, the other ones which only involved movement and no talking did not belong into a Theatre Arts Higher Level performance according to her. **Interpretation of the example:** By saying this, she unconsciously applied the way of knowing reason to her argument, as she formed her reasoning out of her existing knowledge (**WOK memory**). As theatre for her represents a performance which involves realist elements of talking and acting instead of other different elements of theatre, like dance and technological elements, she sees a pattern in the realist performances. This pattern results from her accustom of seeing realist elements on stage. **Counter argument or limitation:** However, this knowledge issue caused by using patterns might result in disagreement. **TOK theory (personal knowledge):** As patterns derive from very personal experiences (=personal knowledge) that have been made, people are restricted to the own patterns when considering whether the artwork right in front of them is an artwork for them or not. Therefore, a pattern in the arts limits one's open-mindedness and restricts from gaining more impressions on new things.

Start of next Paragraph - Answer of question: Patterns are perceived as positive in the arts when learning how to play a musical instrument and are strongly connected to intuition and memory. **Example:** For example, to be able to learn how to play the recorder flute, the function of a pattern is needed to enable the student to develop a technique for playing. ... etc.

Start of next Paragraph - Answer of question: The natural tendency of seeing patterns also positively affects the knowledge in the mathematics. **Definition of terms:** A pattern in the mathematics can be described as a certain way of finding a solution by applying a "recipe", a certain step-by-step rule on how to solve a mathematical problem. **Example:** For example, these "recipes"..... etc.

Start of next Paragraph - Answer of question: Natural tendency to see patterns hinders natural pursuit of knowledge in mathematics. Patterns negatively impact not only students, but everyone occupying him- or herself with mathematics. **Example:** For example, everyone who sticks to the pattern too much, but would be able to understand the concept of the mathematical theory without following the pattern, could be restricted in their **WOK:** imagination, ... etc.