

The TOK essay: informal to formal language converter

When writing essays, it is important to know how to write in an appropriately academic and **formal** way. This is not only for TOK, but for all your IB Diploma subjects.

Here's an activity to help you convert some informal language to formal language.

- 1 Look at the words and phrases on the left-hand side of the grid below. Think about what language might be appropriate (or formal) alternatives for an essay.

Put the correct formal alternatives into the right-hand side of the grid. You should only use each word or phrase once. (The first one has been filled in for you, as an example.)

Formal alternatives:

is made more prominent

This essay will

creates

annoying

regardless

Informal word or phrase	Formal word or phrase
anyways	<i>regardless</i>
sets off	
pissing off	
comes out more	
In this essay I will	

Now it's your turn!

- 2 Put words or phrases from your first draft of your essay that your teacher has highlighted as 'informal' into the left-hand boxes below.

Use a thesaurus, or ask a friend, to help you fill in a more formal alternative on the right-hand side.

Informal words or phrases	Formal alternatives

Need an extra challenge?

- 3 Read an academic paper on a subject that interests you from open-access platform www.core.ac.uk. Make a list of formal phrases from that paper that you can use in your own writing.

Reflection

- 4 How well do I write formally at the moment?

Circle a number below (where 1 = not at all, 5 = very well) to show how well you think you write formally.

1 2 3 4 5

Need an extra challenge?

Google 'university guide for written assignments'.

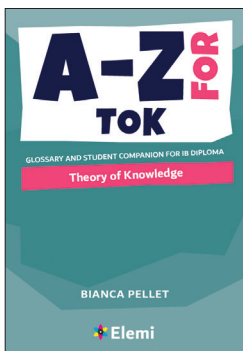
Read some of the university style guides that appear in the search results.

What else is needed to write a successful essay? Create a checklist that can be used by you and other students for your TOK essay.

Reflection

How do we know if a word or phrase is formal or informal?

This worksheet has been written by **Bianca Pellet** (the author of *A-Z for Theory of Knowledge* published by Elemi International School Publishers Ltd). It is intended to support educators and learners with practical ideas to help them achieve their best in their IB Diploma. Although this worksheet is standalone, if you find it helpful you may also like *A-Z for Theory of Knowledge*, a glossary and student companion for IB Diploma.



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