Rationale
I can promise you one thing about Theory of Knowledge (T.O.K.) – it will be unlike any class that you have ever taken!!  TOK is the centerpiece of the IB program and serves as the starting point for all of your other classes.

Over the course of the next two years, we will delve into two fascinating questions

1.  “What can you know?”
2.  “How can you know it?”

These questions are far more difficult to answer than they might seem at first glance. One of the first steps to truly answering them, is to first determine “What do we think that we know but actually do not?” The paradox of this question is that the things that we hear the most often and “believe” the most fervently are often the things that we actually know and think the least about. In other words, the things that are most difficult to understand are the ideas that surround us every day.

Assignment
David Foster Wallace, an award-winning American thinker and novelist, gave an extraordinarily insightful commencement speech in 2005 to Kenyon College regarding exactly these “problems of knowledge.” The speech has since been called the “This is Water” speech. So here is your assignment:

1) Watch the video of the speech at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhhC_N6Bm_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhhC_N6Bm_s)
   a. The speech is also posted in the classroom.
   b. This is a fun but very dense speech – you will need to listen to it at least 3 times.
   c. Take notes!
2) Using the “Describe” template in the TOK Google Classroom write an essay that describes “water.”
   a. Okay, so you are not exactly describing water, but the analogy that Wallace is positing between water and knowledge.
      i. What are the “essential” qualities of “water as fish experience it” that are analogous to the human ability to obtain knowledge about their worlds?
      ii. Consider thoroughly the most precise and concise phrases to “fill in the blanks” in the template!
   b. My email is sgambale@mhrd.org

This assignment is due to the Google Classroom by the end of the day on July 31, 2019. During the summer assignment meeting, Mr. Gambale will share with you how to access the Google Classroom.
“Describe” Template

The essential characteristics of <<topic>> can be summarized as follows.

Firstly, <<essential element 1>> must be considered. This is important because <<reason 1>>.

<<Transition 1>>, <<essential element 2>> must be considered. This is important because <<reason 2>>.

<<Transition 2>>, <<essential element 3>> must be considered. This is important because <<reason 3>>. This paper will take each of these elements in turn and discuss why each is essential to our understanding of <<topic>>.