**Big Question 2: What is the purpose of knowledge, and how can we assess its value?**

**1. Previous essay questions related to purpose and value of knowledge**

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### “The whole point of knowledge is to produce both meaning and purpose in our personal lives.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? (Q.6 May 2015)

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### “The main reason knowledge is produced is to solve problems.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? (Q.1 Nov 2015)

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### “Without application in the world, the value of knowledge is greatly diminished.” Consider this claim with respect to two areas of knowledge. (Q.4 May 2016)

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### “It is only knowledge produced with difficulty that we truly value.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? (Q.1 May 2017)

**3. Key terms**

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| **Indigenous knowledge systems**   * Globalization * Non-dominant * Bioindicators * Biopiracy * Positivism * Metaphysical * Epistemological pluralism * Observer effect * Representational knowledge * Songlines * Global tongues * Shaman * Symbiotic * Hunter-gatherers * Materialism * Biodiversity | **Natural sciences**   * Applied vs. pure science * Confirmation bias * Deductivism & inductivism * Empiricism & rationalism * Falsification * Logical-positivism * Models * Open access * Paradigm shifts * Provisional * Pseudoscience * Qualitative & quantitative data * Scientific method |

**4. Key thinkers**

* Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC)
* Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543)
* Albert Einstein (1879-1955)
* Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)
* Thomas Kuhn (1922-1996)
* Karl Popper (1902-1994)
* Bertrand Russell (1872-1970)

**5. Knowledge questions**

* What criteria can we use to assess the value of knowledge?
* Can any one criteria be used to determine the value of all types of knowledge?
* What is science?
* What is the importance of science in an industrial society?
* What is the purpose of the scientific method?
* How effective is the scientific method in creating knowledge?
* How does the purpose of knowledge differ in industrialized and indigenous societies?
* How might bias affect assessments of the value of indigenous knowledge?
* Can the scientific and indigenous and scientific approaches to knowledge by reconciled?