Knowledge and Reality

The Definition of Knowledge
Is the concept of knowledge definable in terms of more basic concepts?

Essential Reading

Additional Reading

Even More Additional Reading
I prefer to approach this topic through the classic articles above. Once you have done that, however, you may like to see how the debate subsequently developed (perhaps when you come to revise this topic later). Here are some suggested post-1990 readings.

- Williamson, Timothy, Knowledge and Its Limits, Oxford: University Press, pp. 1-20

Past Paper Questions
- “Knowledge should not be analysed in terms of belief, since belief is not relevant to knowing how.” Discuss. (2001, 2)
- Is the concept of knowledge definable in terms of more basic concepts? (2002, 4)
• Could one dispense with the concept of knowledge and replace it with justified belief? (2003, 3)
• “Attempts to analyse knowledge inevitably lead to a dead end.” Discuss. (2005, 6)
• Is knowledge a natural kind? (2006, 1)
• Are there arguments that establish that knowledge is indefinable? (2008, 5)
• Is knowledge just a true belief that is “safe from error”? (2009, 5a)
• Is knowledge just a belief that in Nozick’s sense “tracks the truth”? (2009, 5b)
• Suppose that I would still believe P, were P false. Does it follow that I do not in fact know that P? (2010, 1b)
• “Propositional knowledge does not reduce to the conjunction of other conditions.” Discuss. (2011, 1)
• “Any episode of belief-formation is an instance of countless processes, some reliable and some unreliable.” Does this observation doom reliabilism? (2013, 3b)
• “It’s too easy to come up with counterexamples to putative analyses of knowledge in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, so we should abandon the attempt to construct such analyses.” Is this a compelling argument? And should we give up the project of analysing knowledge? (2014, 4)