

EXTENDED ESSAY HANDBOOK
FOR STUDENTS
IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

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What is an Extended Essay?

- It is a 4000 word piece of independent research/investigation on a topic chosen by the student in cooperation with a supervisor
- It is accompanied by a reflection form of no more than 500 words
- It is the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student
- It is supported by a supervision process recommended to be 3-5 hours, which includes three mandatory reflection sessions. The third and final mandatory reflection session is the viva voce, which is a concluding interview with the supervising teacher
- It is compulsory for all IB Diploma Programme students
- It is externally assessed
- With TOK, it can contribute up to 3 points to the total score for the IB diploma
- It facilitates the transition from school to university.

Is writing an Extended Essay compulsory?

Yes. If you do not complete your Extended Essay (or if it does not meet the minimum standards), you will not receive your Diploma.

What is the nature of the Extended Essay?

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a topic chosen from one of the subjects offered in the IB Diploma Programme. Its purpose is to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity expected by universities. It provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor. Emphasis is placed on the process of engaging in personal research, on the communication of ideas and information in a logical and coherent manner, and on the overall presentation of the extended essay in compliance with these guidelines.

What are the aims?

The aims of the extended essay are for students to:

- engage in independent research with intellectual initiative and rigour
- develop research, thinking, self-management and communication skills
- reflect on what has been learned throughout the research and writing process.

What are the assessment objectives?

In working on the extended essay, students are expected to achieve the following assessment objectives.

| Assessment objectives | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Knowledge and understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the topic chosen and the research question posed. • To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of subject specific terminology and/or concepts. • To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant and/or appropriate research sources and/or methods used to gather information. |
| Application and analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To select and apply research that is relevant and appropriate to the research question. • To analyse the research effectively and focus on the research question. |
| Synthesis and evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to discuss the research in terms of a clear and coherent reasoned argument in relation to the research question. • To be able to critically evaluate the arguments presented in the essay. • To be able to reflect on and evaluate the research process. |
| A variety of (research) skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to present information in an appropriate academic format. • To understand and demonstrate academic integrity. |

The supervisor

The supervisor–student working relationship is probably the most important one in the extended essay process.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that students are familiar with the requirements of the extended essay. Supervisors and students must discuss:

- the nature of the extended essay
- their chosen subject, topic and research question
- the most appropriate research methods to be used given the subject for which the student is submitting their essay
- the formal requirements for the completion of the task.

Supervisors are **required** to:

- undertake three mandatory reflection sessions with each student they are supervising
- sign and date each reflection summarized on the *Reflections on planning and progress form* and provide comments at the end of the process. If the form and essay are submitted via the e-Coursework system, then it is deemed signed and authenticated. A blank or unsubmitted RPPF will score a 0 for criterion E.
- provide students with advice and guidance in the skills of undertaking research
- encourage and support students throughout the research and writing of the extended essay
- discuss the choice of topic with each student and, in particular, help to formulate a well-focused research question which is suitable to the subject of registration and ensure that the chosen research question satisfies appropriate legal and ethical standards with regard to health and safety, confidentiality, human rights, animal welfare and environmental issues
- is familiar with the regulations governing the extended essay and the assessment criteria, and gives copies of these to students
- monitor the progress of the extended essay to offer guidance and to ensure that the essay is the student's own work (this may include presenting a section of the essay for supervisor comment)
- ensure students plan their work and no delays occur
- read and comment on one draft only of the extended essay (but do **not** edit the draft); this should take place after the interim reflection session, but before the final reflection session, the *viva voce*
- ensure that the final version of the essay is handed in before the final reflection session (*viva voce*) takes place, and that no changes are made to it subsequently
- read the final version and, in conjunction with the *viva voce*, confirm its authenticity.

The student

As the extended essay is an important component of the Diploma Programme, and a substantial piece of work, students need to ensure that they understand the expectations of the task and manage their time and workload effectively. The following suggestions are given as guidance to help with the process.

Students are **strongly** recommended to:

- develop a Researcher's reflection space as a planning tool
- use the Researcher's reflection space to prepare for reflection sessions
- share excerpts from the Researcher's reflection space with the supervisor during the reflection sessions
- choose a subject, followed by a topic, and then think carefully about the research question for their essay
- plan how, when and where they will find material and sources for their essay before deciding on the final topic and research question
- plan a schedule for both the researching and writing of their extended essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as their research progresses using their Researcher's reflection space rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end
- make the most of their supervision and reflection sessions by arriving prepared to discuss their work
- have a clear structure for the essay before beginning to write
- check and proofread the final version of their extended essay

- make sure that the version they submit for assessment is the final version with all sources correctly and consistently referenced
- ensure that all requirements are met.

Quick glance: the role of the student

| ✓ Do: | ✗ Do not: |
|--|--|
| choose a subject and then topic that interests you and allows you to develop and demonstrate your understanding, creativity and/or originality | choose a topic or research question that you have seen in exemplars and that have been done too many times before |
| develop a Researcher's reflection space that will facilitate planning and preparation for reflection sessions | overlook the importance of planning and how this can contribute to success in your extended essay |
| make the most of your supervisor's availability to guide you in the process | try to construct a list of references at the end of the process—be aware of the implications of poor/inadequate referencing. |
| prepare for reflection sessions appropriately | |
| meet all internal deadlines | |
| maintain a reference list as you work | |
| familiarize yourself with relevant policies. | |

What is researcher's reflection space?

Student reflection in the extended essay is critical. Effective reflection highlights the engagement of the student in an intellectual and personal process and how this has changed the student as a learner and affected the completion of that individual's essay. The IB considers this to be a central component of a successful research process as it:

- supports student learning, thinking and critical analysis throughout the research process
- helps to stimulate discussions between the student and supervisor
- aids the reflection process.

The student-supervisor relationship

Students can use the RRS to prepare for their reflection sessions with their supervisors.

| Reflection session | Description |
|------------------------------|---|
| The first reflection session | Students are encouraged to include in their RRS examples of initial topic exploration, possible sources and methods, preliminary research questions and their personal reactions to the issues. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | In attending their first reflection session with their supervisor, students can use notes made in the RRS as the basis for discussion as well as to demonstrate the progress students have made in the research process. |
| The interim reflection session | As their RRS develops, students can demonstrate the progress of their thinking, the development of their argument and raise any questions they may have with their supervisor. At this stage the RRS may include reactions to readings, progress in the timeline for completion of the extended essay, a possible outline of arguments, challenges encountered and the strategies used to overcome them. |
| The final reflection session— <i>viva voce</i> | During the <i>viva voce</i> , which takes place at the completion of the extended essay process, the RRS can form the basis for discussion about the process of completing the essay. Students can show what they have learned about the topic, the research process followed, their own learning, as well as outlining new questions they have uncovered. Most importantly, during the <i>viva voce</i> the RRS may help to highlight the personal significance of the work to the student and ultimately contribute to the supervisor's report. |

How to develop a research question?

Choose a subject and topic that is of interest.

Deciding on a subject and topic that is of interest and in which the student is personally invested is important if their motivation is to be sustained throughout the process. The student should be able to identify, in a broad sense, what it is that they are interested in and why.

Carry out preliminary reading.

After deciding on a topic of interest students, should undertake some general reading around the issue. Questions they must consider at this stage are:

- What has already been written about this topic?
- Was it easy to find sources of information?
- Is there a range of different sources available?
- Is there a range of views or perspectives on the topic?
- What interesting questions have started to emerge from this reading?

Consider the emerging questions.

The student should now begin posing open-ended questions about their general topic. These questions will usually be framed using the terms “how”, “why” or “to what extent”.

Evaluate the question.

Once possible research questions have been posed they should be evaluated. This evaluation should be based on whether the research question is clear, focused, and arguable.

Clear: Will the reader understand the nature of my research? Will it direct the research being undertaken?

Focused: Will the research question be specific enough to allow for exploration within the scope of the task (that is, the number of words and time available)?

Arguable: Does the research question allow for analysis, evaluation and the development of a reasoned argument?

What is the structure of the essay?

The structure of the essay is very important. It helps students to organize the argument, making the best use of the evidence collected.

Six required elements of the extended essay:

1. Title page
2. Contents page
3. Introduction
4. Body of the essay
5. Conclusion
6. References and bibliography

Title page

The title page should include **only** the following information:

- the title of the essay
- the research question
- the subject for which the essay is registered (if it is a language essay also state which category it falls into; if a world studies essay also state the theme and the two subjects utilized)
- word count.

The title of your essay should be a clear, focused summative statement of your research, which gives the reader an indication of your research topic. It should **not** be phrased as a research question.

| Title | Research question |
|--|--|
| Negative externalities of consumption: Australian policy on cigarette packaging | How effective has the Australian policy of plain cigarette packaging been in reducing the negative |

| | |
|---|---|
| | externalities associated with the consumption of cigarettes in X? |
| Commodification and the body—an ethnographic study of social representations about the human body with relation to organ donation | To what extent can we interpret the negative attitude from laymen towards organ donation as an act of resistance towards the demands of the hegemonic medical model? The case of organ donation in Argentina. |
| An exploration of evil as a motivating force in drama | How effectively does Christopher Marlowe present his view of evil in <i>Dr Faustus</i> ? |
| The feasibility of wireless networking in a city-wide context | To what extent is wireless networking a feasible alternative to cabled networking within a whole-city context? |

Contents page

A contents page must be provided at the beginning of the extended essay and all pages should be numbered. Please note that an index page is not required and if included will be treated as if it is not present.

Introduction

The introduction should tell the reader what to expect in the essay. The introduction should make clear to the reader the focus of the essay, the scope of the research, in particular an indication of the sources to be used, and an insight into the line of argument to be taken.

While students should have a sense of the direction and key focus of their essay, it is sometimes advisable to finalize the introduction once the body of the essay is complete.

Body of the essay (research, analysis, discussion and evaluation)

The main task is writing the body of the essay, which should be presented in the form of a reasoned argument. The form of this varies with the subject of the essay but as the argument develops it should be clear to the reader what relevant evidence has been discovered, where/how it has been discovered and how it supports the argument. In some subjects, for example, the sciences, sub-headings within the main body of the essay will help the reader to understand the argument (and will also help the student to keep on track). In structuring their extended essay, students must take into consideration the expected conventions of the subject in which their extended essay is registered.

Once the main body of the essay is complete, it is possible to finalize the introduction (which tells the reader what to expect) and the conclusion (which says what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved).

Any information that is important to the argument **must not** be included in appendices or footnotes/endnotes. The examiner **will not** read notes or appendices, so an essay that is not complete in itself will be compromised across the assessment criteria.

Conclusion

The conclusion says what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved. While students might draw conclusions throughout the essay based on their findings, it is important that there is a final, summative conclusion at the end. This conclusion(s) must relate to the research question posed.

References and bibliography

Students should use their chosen style of academic referencing as soon as they start writing. That way they are less likely to forget to include a citation. It is also easier than trying to add references at a later stage. For more information on this, refer to the guidelines in the IB document *Effective citing and referencing*.

Writing the essay takes time but if students have used their Researcher's reflection space and reflection sessions in a meaningful way they should be well prepared to develop their arguments.

Presentation

The extended essay should be written in a clear, correct and formal academic style, appropriate to the subject from which the topic is drawn. Given that the extended essay is a formally written research paper, it should strive to maintain a professional, academic look.

To help achieve this, the following formatting is **required**:

- the use of 12-point, readable font
- double spacing
- page numbering
- no candidate or school name on the title page or page headers.

Submitting the extended essay in the required format will help set the tone of the essay and will aid readability for on-screen assessment by examiners

Word counts

The upper limit is 4,000 words for all extended essays.

Please refer to the following guidance on what content should be included in the word count.

|  Included in the word count |  Not included in the word count |
|---|---|
| The introduction | The contents page |
| The main body | Maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations |
| The conclusion | Tables |

| | |
|---|---|
| Quotations | Equations, formulas and calculations |
| Footnotes and/or endnotes that are not references | Citations/references (whether parenthetical, numbered, footnotes or endnotes) |
| | The bibliography |
| | <i>The Reflections on planning and progress form</i> |

Essays containing more than 4,000 words are subject to penalties and examiners are not required to read material in excess of the word limit.

Examples:

Biology

Title: The effectiveness of commercial antibacterial cleaning agents
 Research question: *Are commercially available antibacterial cleaning agents effective at controlling the growth of E. coli on nutrient agar under laboratory conditions?*

Geography

Title: Changes in population structure in the Czech Republic
 Research question: *How has the fall of communism changed the population structure of the Czech Republic and what will be the social and economic effects of this?*

Physics

Title: Black hole at the centre of Milky Way
 Research question: *Is it possible to determine the presence of a black hole at the centre of the Milky Way?*

Mathematics

Title: The geometry of navigation
 Research question: *What was the role of mathematics, and geometry in particular, in navigation when we relied on the stars? Does it still play a part now we have man-made satellites?*

Illustrations, maps, charts, diagrams

Presentation and overall neatness are important, and it is essential that illustrative material, if included, is well set out and used effectively. Graphs, diagrams, tables and maps are effective only if they are well labelled and can be easily read. This must be directly related to the text and acknowledged where appropriate. The use of photographs and postcards is acceptable only if they are captioned and/or annotated and are used to illustrate a specific point made in the extended essay.

Bibliography, references and citations

The direct or indirect use of the words of another person, written, oral or electronic, as well as any materials or ideas that are not yours and have been used in any way, must be acknowledged appropriately, as must visual material in the essay, derived from another source. Failure to do this will be viewed as plagiarism.

What is a bibliography?

Bibliography is a list, in alphabetical order, of the authors (last name first), whose words and works have been cited in the work.

The bibliography or list of references should only include those works, such as books and journals, that have been consulted by you.

Each work consulted, regardless of whether or not it has already been cited as a reference, must be listed in the bibliography. The bibliography should specify the following: author(s), title, date and place of publication, and the name of the publisher following consistently one standard method of listing sources.

The following are examples of acceptable documentation styles.

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Chicago/Turabian
- Council of Biology Editors (CBE)
- Harvard citation and referencing guide
- Modern Language Association (MLA)

What is a reference?

A reference is a way of indicating to the reader, in an orderly form, where information has been obtained. A reference provides all the information needed to find the source material. References must be cited because they acknowledge the sources used, and enable the reader to consult the work and verify the data that has been presented.

References must be given whenever someone else's work is quoted or summarized.

References can come from many different sources, including books, magazines, journals, newspapers, emails, internet sites and interviews.

Internet references should include the title of the extract used as well as the website address, the date it was accessed and, if possible, the author. Caution should be exercised with information on websites that do not give references or that cannot be cross-checked against other sources. The more important a particular point is to the essay, the more the quality of its source needs to be evaluated.

Any references to interviews should state the name of the interviewer, the name of the interviewee, the date and the place of the interview.

Every reference should be given a citation in the text. If you have looked at a source but not mentioned or cited it in the text, then you do not include it as a reference.

Examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| A book | Abel, R. 2004. <i>The eye care revolution: prevent and reverse common vision problems</i> . New York: Kensington Books. |
| A journal article or its electronic equivalent | Ang, L. and Taylor, B. 2005. Managing customer profitability using portfolio matrices. <i>Journal of Database Marketing and Customer Strategy Management</i> 12(5), pp. 298-304. |
| Electronic journal article if it is available only online | Royce, J. 1995. <i>Reading Matters: Words, words, words</i> . Available at: http://read2live.info/read2.htm . Accessed 30 November 2013 |
| Newspaper article | Benoit, B. 2007. G8 faces impasse on global warming. <i>Financial Times</i> 29 May 2007, p. 9. |
| Web page | http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf . Accessed 30 November 2013 |
| Online video clip | IB (International Baccalaureate). May 2010. <i>Education for a Better World: the IB Middle Years Programme</i> (video). http://blogs.ibo.org/ibtv/?p=327 . Accessed 30 November 2013 |
| Social media | Swanner, I. 21 November 2013. "I can vouch for that ..." comment on "Study shows IB graduates are more confident ...". The International Baccalaureate Facebook status update. https://www.facebook.com/IBO.org . Accessed 30 November 2013. |
| | IB (International Baccalaureate). November 2012. <i>The IB Diploma Programme Statistical Bulletin, May 2012 Examination Session</i> . https://www.ibo.org/facts/statbulletin/dpstats/documents/may_2012_statistical_bulletin.pdf . |

What is a citation?

A citation is an indication in the body of an essay that this material is not yours, that you have "borrowed" it (as a direct quote, paraphrase or summary) from someone or somewhere else. The citation in the text can be:

- in the form of an introductory phrase, or
- at the end of the statement, or
- indicated by a superscript or bracketed number that leads to a similarly numbered footnote or endnote.

Every citation should be given a full reference that enables the reader to locate the exact source used.

Examples:
Source material

Some attempts to gain unfair advantages involve deliberate breaches of the rules. Learners who take devices into examinations, gain unauthorized access to assessment questions, or who hire an impersonator are clearly being dishonest. Because of developments in communication technology, smaller devices can be smuggled in to examination rooms, impersonators are easier to recruit, and hacked questions are more easily available.

However, deliberate breaches form a relatively small proportion of dishonesty cases whereas up to 80% in most years involve misuse of others' work through plagiarism or collusion. In these cases, determining whether a learner has acted dishonestly is much more problematic and the role of technology and networked communications in encouraging misuse is also more complex.

Reference:

Carroll, J. July 2012. *Academic honesty in the IB*. IB Position Paper.
<http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf>.

Examples of citation:

Carroll points out that “deliberate breaches form a relatively small proportion of dishonesty cases whereas up to 80% in most years involve misuse of others' work through plagiarism or collusion” (2).

or,

Carroll reminds us that “deliberate breaches form a relatively small proportion of dishonesty cases whereas up to 80% in most years involve misuse of others' work through plagiarism or collusion” (2012: 2).

or,

As Carroll has noted, “deliberate breaches form a relatively small proportion of dishonesty cases whereas up to 80% in most years involve misuse of others' work through plagiarism or collusion”.¹

¹Carroll, J. July 2012. *Academic honesty in the IB*. IB Position Paper.
<http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf>.

What is a paraphrase ?

In writing an essay, we often use our own words to put over someone else's thoughts and ideas. While there are some words that we cannot change (especially the names of people, places, chemicals, and so on), we should use our own words for as much as we can of the rest of the passage. We should also aim to change the structure of the passage, perhaps by reordering the thoughts and ideas.

When we paraphrase, we need to make it very clear where the original author's ideas start and where they finish. If we include our own examples, we should make it clear that these are our thoughts and not those of the original author.

Examples:

Source material:

Some attempts to gain unfair advantages involve deliberate breaches of the rules. Learners who take devices into examinations, gain unauthorized access to assessment questions, or who hire an impersonator are clearly being dishonest. Because of developments in communication technology, smaller devices can be smuggled in to examination rooms, impersonators are easier to recruit, and hacked questions are more easily available.

However, deliberate breaches form a relatively small proportion of dishonesty cases whereas up to 80% in most years involve misuse of others' work through plagiarism or collusion. In these cases, determining whether a learner has acted dishonestly is much more problematic and the role of technology and networked communications in encouraging misuse is also more complex

Reference:

Carroll, J. July 2012. *Academic honesty in the IB*. IB Position Paper.
<http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf>

Examples of paraphrase:

While some students still try to bring unauthorized materials into examination rooms with a clear intention to cheat, the vast majority of breaches (80%) relate to plagiarism and collusion; establishing responsibility and intent in such cases is not always easy (Carroll 2).

or

Carroll (2012: 2) notes that while some students still try to bring unauthorized materials into examination rooms with a clear intention to cheat, the vast majority of breaches (80%) relate to plagiarism and collusion; establishing responsibility and intent in such cases is not always easy.

or,

While some students still try to bring unauthorized materials into examination rooms with a clear intention to cheat, the vast majority of breaches (80%) relate to plagiarism and collusion; establishing responsibility and intent in such cases is not always easy.¹

¹Carroll, J. July 2012. *Academic honesty in the IB*. IB Position Paper.
<http://blogs.ibo.org/positionpapers/files/2013/02/Academic-honesty-in-the-IB.pdf>

Appendices, footnotes and endnotes

Appendices, footnotes and endnotes are not an essential section of the extended essay and examiners are not required to read them, so care should be taken to include all information of direct relevance to the analysis and argument in the main body of the essay. An essay that attempts to evade the word limit by including important material in notes or appendices risks losing marks under several criteria.

Unless considered essential, complete lists of raw data should not be included in the extended essay.

You should not constantly refer to material presented in an appendix as this may disrupt the continuity of the essay.

What is academic honesty?

You are responsible for ensuring that your extended essay is authentic, with the work or ideas of others fully and correctly acknowledged. Additionally, it is the responsibility of your supervisor to confirm that, to the best of his or her knowledge, the version of the extended essay submitted for assessment is your authentic work.

Both plagiarism and collusion are forms of malpractice that incur a penalty.

How is the Extended Essay assessed?

Overview

| Criterion A: focus and method | Criterion B: knowledge and understanding | Criterion C: critical thinking | Criterion D: presentation | Criterion E: engagement |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic • Research question • Methodology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context • Subject-specific terminology and concepts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Analysis • Discussion and evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure • Layout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process • Research focus |
| Marks | Marks | Marks | Marks | Marks |
| 6 | 6 | 12 | 4 | 6 |

Total marks available: 34

General Assessment Criteria

Criterion A: Focus and method

This criterion focuses on the topic, the research question and the methodology. It assesses the explanation of the focus of the research (this includes the topic and the research question), how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.

| Level | Descriptor of strands and indicators |
|-------|---|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | <p>The topic is communicated unclearly and incompletely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and explanation of the topic is limited; the purpose and focus of the research is unclear, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered. <p>The research question is stated but not clearly expressed or too broad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research question is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit and requirements of the task, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered. • The intent of the research question is understood but has not been clearly expressed and/or the discussion of the essay is not focused on the research question. <p>Methodology of the research is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are limited in range given the topic and research question. • There is limited evidence that their selection was informed. |
| 3–4 | <p>The topic is communicated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and explanation of the research topic is communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is adequately clear, but only partially appropriate. <p>The research question is clearly stated but only partially focused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research question is clear but the discussion in the essay is only partially focused and connected to the research question. <p>Methodology of the research is mostly complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are generally relevant and appropriate given the topic and research question. • There is some evidence that their selection(s) was informed. <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p> |

| | |
|-----|---|
| 5-6 | <p>The topic is communicated accurately and effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and explanation of the research topic is effectively communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is clear and appropriate. <p>The research question is clearly stated and focused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research question is clear and addresses an issue of research that is appropriately connected to the discussion in the essay. <p>Methodology of the research is complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An appropriate range of relevant source(s) and/or method(s) have been applied in relation to the topic and research question. • There is evidence of effective and informed selection of sources and/or methods. |
|-----|---|

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

This criterion assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, the issue addressed and the two disciplinary perspectives applied, and additionally the way in which this knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.

| Level | Descriptor of strands and indicators |
|-------|---|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below. |
| 1-2 | <p>Knowledge and understanding is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of source material has limited relevance and is only partially appropriate to the research question. • Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is anecdotal, unstructured and mostly descriptive with sources not effectively being used. <p>Use of terminology and concepts is unclear and limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject-specific terminology and/or concepts are either missing or inaccurate, demonstrating limited knowledge and understanding. |
| 3-4 | <p>Knowledge and understanding is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of source material is mostly relevant and appropriate to the research question. • Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear; there is an understanding of |

| | |
|-----|---|
| | <p>the sources used but their application is only partially effective.</p> <p>Use of terminology and concepts is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is mostly accurate, demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding. <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p> |
| 5–6 | <p>Knowledge and understanding is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The selection of source materials is clearly relevant and appropriate to the research question. Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear and coherent and sources are used effectively and with understanding. <p>Use of terminology and concepts is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is accurate and consistent, demonstrating effective knowledge and understanding. |

Criterion C: Critical thinking

This criterion assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.

| Level | Descriptor of strands and indicators |
|-------|--|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below. |
| 1–3 | <p>The research is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research presented is limited and its application is not clearly relevant to the RQ. <p>Analysis is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited analysis. Where there are conclusions to individual points of analysis these are limited and not consistent with the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An argument is outlined but this is limited, incomplete, descriptive or narrative in nature. The construction of an argument is unclear and/or incoherent in structure |

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| | <p>hindering understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is a final conclusion, it is limited and not consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. • There is an attempt to evaluate the research, but this is superficial. <p>If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion.</p> |
| 4–6 | <p>The research is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some research presented is appropriate and its application is partially relevant to the Research question. <p>Analysis is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is analysis but this is only partially relevant to the research question; the inclusion of irrelevant research detracts from the quality of the argument. • Any conclusions to individual points of analysis are only partially supported by the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is adequate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An argument explains the research but the reasoning contains inconsistencies. • The argument may lack clarity and coherence but this does not significantly hinder understanding. • Where there is a final or summative conclusion, this is only partially consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. • The research has been evaluated but not critically. |
| 7–9 | <p>The research is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the research is appropriate and its application is clearly relevant to the research question. <p>Analysis is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research rarely detracts from the quality of the overall analysis. • Conclusions to individual points of analysis are supported by the evidence but there are some minor inconsistencies. <p>Discussion/evaluation is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective reasoned argument is developed from the research, with a conclusion supported by the evidence presented. • This reasoned argument is clearly structured and coherent and supported by a |

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| | <p>final or summative conclusion; minor inconsistencies may hinder the strength of the overall argument.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research has been evaluated, and this is partially critical. |
| 10–12 | <p>The research is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research is appropriate to the research question and its application is consistently relevant. <p>Analysis is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research is analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research does not significantly detract from the quality of the overall analysis. Conclusions to individual points of analysis are effectively supported by the evidence. <p>Discussion/evaluation is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective and focused reasoned argument is developed from the research with a conclusion reflective of the evidence presented. This reasoned argument is well structured and coherent; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument or the final or summative conclusion. The research has been critically evaluated. |

Criterion D: Presentation

This criterion assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.

| Level | Descriptor of strands and indicators |
|-------|--|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below. |
| 1–2 | <p>Presentation is acceptable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the essay is generally appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, argument and subject in which the essay is registered. Some layout considerations may be missing or applied incorrectly. Weaknesses in the structure and/or layout do not significantly impact the reading, understanding or evaluation of the extended essay. |
| 3–4 | <p>Presentation is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure of the essay clearly is appropriate in terms of the expected |

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| | <p>conventions for the topic, the argument and subject in which the essay is registered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layout considerations are present and applied correctly. • The structure and layout support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the extended essay. |
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Criterion E: Engagement

This criterion assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, and is based solely on the candidate's reflections as detailed on the RPPF, with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context.

| Level | Descriptor of strands and indicators |
|-------|---|
| 0 | The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors or a RPPF has not been submitted. |
| 1-2 | <p>Engagement is limited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on decision-making and planning are mostly descriptive. • These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the research focus and/or research process. |
| 3-4 | <p>Engagement is good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on decision-making and planning are analytical and include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development. • These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative. |
| 5-6 | <p>Engagement is excellent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflections on decision-making and planning are evaluative and include reference to the student's capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to challenges experienced in the research process. • These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creative approach in the student voice. |

Assessment grade descriptors for the extended essay

Effective May 2018

Grade descriptors

The extended essay is externally assessed, and as such, supervisors are not expected to mark the essays or arrive at a number to translate into a grade. Predicted grades for all subjects should be based on the **qualitative** grade descriptors for the subject in question. These descriptors are what will be used by senior examiners to set the boundaries for the extended essay in May 2018, and so schools are advised to use them in the same way.

| Grade A |
|---|
| <p>Demonstrates effective research skills resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; the effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts further supporting this; consistent and relevant conclusions that are proficiently analysed; sustained reasoned argumentation supported effectively by evidence; critically evaluated research; excellent presentation of the essay, whereby coherence and consistency further supports the reading of the essay; and present and correctly applied structural and layout elements.</p> <p>Engagement with the process is conceptual and personal, key decision-making during the research process is documented, and personal reflections are evidenced, including those that are forward-thinking.</p> |
| Grade B |
| <p>Demonstrates appropriate research skills resulting in a research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; reasonably effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources; good knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; a reasonably effective application of source material and use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts; consistent conclusions that are accurately analysed; reasoned argumentation often supported by evidence; research that at times evidences critical evaluation; and a clear presentation of all structural and layout elements, which further supports the reading of the essay.</p> <p>Engagement with the process is generally evidenced by the reflections and key decision-making during the research process is documented.</p> |
| Grade C |
| <p>Demonstrates evidence of research undertaken, which has led to a research question that is not necessarily expressed in a way that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic; partially effective engagement with mostly appropriate research areas, methods and sources—however, there are some discrepancies in those processes, although these do not interfere with the planning and approach; some knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which is mostly relevant; the attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; an attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis; conclusions partly supported by the evidence; discussion that is descriptive rather than analytical; attempted evaluation; satisfactory presentation of the essay, with weaknesses that do not hinder the reading of the essay; and</p> |

some structural and layout elements that are missing or are incorrectly applied.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but shows mostly factual information, with personal reflection mostly limited to procedural issues.

Grade D

Demonstrates a lack of research, resulting in unsatisfactory focus and a research question that is not answerable within the scope of the chosen topic; at times engagement with appropriate research, methods and sources, but discrepancies in those processes that occasionally interfere with the planning and approach; some relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, which are at times irrelevant; the attempted application of source material, but with inaccuracies in the use of, or underuse of, terminology and/or concepts; irrelevant analysis and inconsistent conclusions as a result of a descriptive discussion; a lack of evaluation; presentation of the essay that at times is illogical and hinders the reading; and structural and layout elements that are missing.

Engagement with the process is evidenced but is superficial, with personal reflections that are solely narrative and concerned with procedural elements.

Grade E (failing condition)

Demonstrates an unclear nature of the essay; a generally unsystematic approach and resulting unfocused research question; limited engagement with limited research and sources; generally limited and only partially accurate knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline; ineffective connections in the application of source material and inaccuracies in the terminology and/or concepts used; a summarizing of results of research with inconsistent analysis; an attempted outline of an argument, but one that is generally descriptive in nature; and a layout that generally lacks or incorrectly applies several layout and structural elements.

Engagement with the process is limited, with limited factual or decision-making information and no personal reflection on the process.