



Oakleaf School
Extended Essay
Student Guide
2026-2028 Academic Years

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The Aim of the Extended Essay

The key aims of the Extended Essay are:

- To engage students in an in-depth study of a focused topic.
- To develop research and academic writing skills.
- To foster independent inquiry and develop critical thinking/creativity.
- To take part in a systematic research process suitable for the subject.
- To experience the excitement of intellectual discovery.
- To think about what has been learned during the research and writing process.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for the Extended Essay are:

- Formulation of focused research questions: Identification of clear research issues in the field of subject.
- Examination of independent research: the ability to collect relevant and reliable data from different sources.
- Resource evaluation: the ability to critically assess the quality and relevance of resources.
- Creating a structured, cohesive argument: the ability to organize and present findings logically and scientifically.
- Using knowledge of research methods: the ability to use suitable methods for discipline, including citations and reference techniques.
- Participation in the area of the subject: the ability to prove understanding and insight into the subject.

Overview of the Extended Essay

The Extended Essay is a 4,000-word independent research project that provides students the opportunity to explore a specific area of interest in detail. The Extended Essay is a mandatory course for all DP students.

The process consists of:

- The student must reach class D or higher to obtain a diploma.
- It is expected to complete 40 hours.
- Extended essay is externally evaluated and, in combination with class theory Knowledge, contributes up to three points to the overall score for the IB diploma. (A

total of 45 points, 42 comes from six groups of subjects - each graded on a scale of 1 to 7 - And another 3 points from the extended essay and the theory of knowledge.

- A piece of independent research/investigation on the topic.
- Selected you and your supervisor.
- The depth of structured writing in which thoughts and findings are communicated clearly with detailed reasons suitable for the selected object.
- The following third and last compulsory reflective session is the viva voce that is a final interview with a supervisor teacher.
- Assessed based on common criteria associated with each subject.

The Extended Essay and the IB Learner Profile

The Diploma programme aims to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will be needed to meet the goals of IB as expressed in the statement of the mission of the organization and student profile. Teaching and learning in the Diploma programme represent the reality of daily practice educational philosophy of the organization. The table below shows some links between extended essays and student profile attributes.

Inquirers	The essay encourages students to become independent scientists and ask critical and raising questions. Throughout the process, students develop skills to explore personal interest topics, formulate a focused research question and seek relevant information. This approach based on an investigation supports thinking about curiosity and helps students dive deeper into their subject.
Knowledgeable	EE requires students to show a deep understanding in a particular area of their chosen entity. Through the examination of their topic, students are involved in

	existing knowledge, build on this foundation and contribute to understanding the topic. They expand their knowledge through in -depth research and critical analysis and become experts in their specific field of study.
Thinkers	Critical thinking is the core of the process of the extended essay. Students are asked to analyze and evaluate information, critically think about resources and draw connections between different parts of data. This process encourages students to address their research question from various perspectives, made well justified decisions and develop logical conclusions. This increases their abilities to solve problems and decision-making.
Communicators	Writing augmented essay requires clear, structured and coherent communication. Students must effectively convey complex ideas and research in writing and ensure that their argument is well supported and easy to follow. EE also emphasizes the importance of proper legacy and quotation and helps students develop skills in academic writing and formal communication.
Principled	The process of completing the extended essay includes monitoring ethical research procedures. Students must maintain academic honesty with the right

	recognition of their resources and avoiding plagiarism. This is in accordance with the "principled" attribute of the pupil's profile, because the students are expected to observe high standards of integrity, responsibility and justice during their research and writing.
Open-minded	Research often involves involvement in various sources and aspects. The widespread essay encourages students to consider different perspectives and approach their theme with an open mind. Whether you are exploring competitive theories or analyzing contradictory data, students learn to appreciate the diverse aspects and develop a broader understanding of their subject.
Caring	Completion of the extended essay requires students to effectively manage their time, resources and well-being. It also promotes responsibility to their work and their supervisors. Thinking about their learning process and challenges facing, students develop a sense of personal responsibility and care for production of high quality, meaningful work.
Risk-takers	Extended essay forces students to explore new ideas, undergo intellectual risks and engage in an unknown territory. Whether they are exploring a new research methodology or are investigating an insufficiently explored

	topic, students are invited to get out of their comfort zones and approach their work with confidence and curiosity.
Balanced	The extended essay is a long-term project that requires students to balance their academic responsibilities. It is necessary to effectively manage time and ensure that the research and writing process integrated into other courses and extracurricular activities. Students learn to maintain a healthy balance between their academic commitments, personal interests and comfort.
Reflective	The processing process of widespread essay requires regular reflection. Students must critically think about their progress, evaluate their research question and revise their work on the basis of feedback from their supervisor. In addition, Viva Voce, the oral reflection of their essay, provides the opportunity to think about their classroom. This continuing reflection helps students to assess their strengths and areas for growth.

Your Responsibilities

As a student, you have several key duties during the extended essay process:

- **Select the Subject:** Choose the subject you are interested in and is feasible for research.
- **Elaborate research question:** Create a clear and focused question that will conduct your investigation.
- **Research:** Collect and analyze information from reliable academic sources.

- Write an essay: Effectively structure your essay and present your findings.
- Manage your time: follow the terms and carefully plan your research and writing.
- Follow ethical instructions: Confirm all resources and avoid plagiarism.
- Get to know your supervisor: regularly communicate with your supervisors about feedback and guidance.

It is **strongly recommended**:

- Start working early.
- Think very carefully about the research question.
- Plan how, when, and where you will find the material.
- Plan a schedule for research and writing essays.
- Sources record how your research progresses.
- Keep a clear structure for the essay itself before writing.
- Carefully check and correct the final version.

Stages of the Extended Essay

STAGE ONE: Choosing a Subject and topic/question

✓ **Tasks for this stage:**

- You will need to write a description and assessment of:
 - The reasons for your choice of topic.
 - Your preliminary reading (list the details of the books and other sources you used).
 - The questions/hypothesis you have chosen to investigate.

STAGE TWO: Feasibility Study

✓ **Tasks for this stage:**

- Draw up an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY listing of all the available resources and how they relate to your study.
- Divide your bibliography into Secondary and Primary sources.
- List the following into your bibliography: Author, Title, Year of Publication, Publisher. See APA Handbook or a similar referencing convention for details.

STAGE THREE: Collecting the Information

✓ Tasks for this stage:

- Go to the library and RESEARCH!
Collect your notes (which may be used as a basis for discussions with your EE Supervisor)
- Write up and consider a DESCRIPTION and ASSESSMENT of the methods you used in compiling information, showing your thoughts and reflections on your PLANNING and PURSUING of the enquiry.

STAGE FOUR: Writing Up the Research

Focus on analysis: this deals with questions of explanation, relationship and meaning. This is the most demanding form of writing but will gain the most points on the Extended Essay.

Things to keep in mind:

- Length – Upper limit of 4000 words, typed or word-processed.
Consult Appendix One for specific areas that are assessed. Note these when writing.
- The 4000 words only include the introduction, main body, conclusion, and quotations. It does not include abstract, acknowledgments, contents page, maps, charts, illustrations, footnotes/references, bibliography, and appendices.

STAGE FIVE: Viva voce Interview with the supervisor

The viva voce is a short interview (10-15 minutes) between the student and the supervisor which serves the following purposes:

- A check on plagiarism and malpractice in general.
- An opportunity to reflect on successes and difficulties in the research process.
An opportunity to reflect on what has been learned.

Tips and Advice for Successful Completion of the Essay

If you want to succeed in your essay, it is important to concentrate, carefully plan, and effectively manage your time. The following manual combines key advice to access research, write and complete your essay, along with things that avoid to ensure a high-quality result.

Before you start an extended essay:

- Read the evaluation criteria: Meet the criteria used to assess your essay. This will help you understand what the examiner is looking for and ensure that all requirements are met.
- Reviews of previous essays: Read past widespread essays and identify strengths and common pitfalls. Learning from the experience of others can lead you to avoid mistakes and improve your own work.
- Create a clear research question: A good research question should be focused and responsible at the time and limits of words (40 hours/4,000 words). He should ask something worth examining, and there should be clear evidence that you can gather in the answer to the question. Make sure the research question is specific enough to be manageable but not so narrow that it limits the amount of evidence available.
- Develop a structure: Plan how to organize your essay from the beginning. A strong structure will help you keep your focus and increase the writing process.

During the research and writing process:

- Focus: Keep your research question specific and manageable. Avoid too wide themes as they can be too complex and difficult to explore in depth.
- Plan carefully: Start your research in time and add enough time for each phase - research, writing and revision. Stick to the deadlines to avoid the last-minute pressure.
- Use reliable sources: Make sure all your resources are trustworthy, academic, and directly relevant to your research question. The quality of your resources will significantly affect the quality of your essay.
- Keep a formal academic tone: follow the academic writing conventions, including clear language, the right grammar, and the objective formal tone.
- Follow the evaluation criteria: they constantly apply to the evaluation criteria and ensure that your essay meets all the required components.
- Look for regular feedback: Keep open communication with your supervisor and often look for their feedback.
- Check your progress regularly and adjust your approach if necessary.
- Create a clear argument: Your argument should always apply back to your research question.

- Avoid simply describing the topic - critically analyze the evidence you have collected to support your work.
- Ask the library for help: librarians can help you find reliable resources and offer tips for effective research strategies.
- Sources of recording as you walk: Watch your resources at the beginning of the process to avoid mixing and collect links at the end. This will help you maintain accuracy and avoid plagiarism.
- Having an emergency plan: If you encounter problems with your original topic or research question, select a new question to answer with available sources and evidence.
- Use suitable language for the subject: The language and tone of your essay should reflect the convention of the subject area in which you work (e.g. scientific, historical, literary).

After completing the essay:

- Check and correct: Carefully check your final concept to make sure it is without errors. Correction is essential to improve the clarity and professionalism of your work.

Things that need to be avoided:

Do not work with the research question that is:

- Too wide because it makes it difficult to focus your research.
- Too vague or unclear because it may not give a clear direction for your investigation.
- Too narrow because it may not leave enough material for analysis.
- Too difficult because it can be beyond your current skills or available resources.
- Inappropriate or irrelevant for the subject of the subject.
- If you do not know what evidence is needed or you cannot collect such evidence, you will not be able to answer this question effectively.

Say No:

- Ignore the evaluation criteria. The criteria are necessary to know what you have to achieve.
- Forget to analyze your research question and constantly assess how your findings contribute to it.

- Collect irrelevant material that does not support your research question.
- Use the Internet without evaluating the credibility of your resources. Ensure your resources are academic and reliable.
- Plagiarize. Always provide your resources with the appropriate credit to avoid academic dishonesty.
- Briefly describe your research. Your essay should include a critical analysis of evidence to support your argument.
- Repeat your introduction to the end. Each part of your essay should serve a specific purpose and avoid redundancy.
- Quote sources that are not used. They only include resources that have contributed to your argument or analysis.
- At the end of the process, try to create a list of links. Be diligent when recovering references to avoid mistakes in quotations and references.

You and Your Supervisor

- Make three mandatory reflective sessions with a student.
- Ensure students fill in the considerations of planning and progress the initial form and the date of the form after each student's record.
- Provide a supervisory comment that is used to contextualize the student's reflections.

Your supervisor will advise you during the planning phase and when performing and Writing your research.

You will discuss:

- The nature of the extended essay.
- The best research methods to be used.
- Formal (including evaluation) requirements to complete the essay.

It is up to you to organize meetings with your supervisors and get advice and information. The supervisor can comment on the final proposal of your essay, which can be discussed at a

meeting. This is the last time the supervisor sees your essay before it is finally sent. Your supervisor's comment should be open and not include text editing.

Your supervisor cannot:

- Repair spelling and punctuation.
- Repair experimental work or mathematics.
- Rewrite any part of the essay.
- Indicate where the whole part of the essay could be better placed.
- Correct the essay about errors.
- Correct bibliography or quotes.

Verification

All the work submitted to the IB for assessment must be verified by the teacher and must not include any known cases of academic misconduct. Once you are officially sent The final version of your supervisor's work (or coordinator) for assessment and confirmation.

Authenticity of work, cannot be inserted. Work that is submitted but does not meet expectations and requirements stated in the IB publication on academic honesty will be considered a case of academic misconduct.

Researching the Extended Essay

When examining the extended essay, students should perform the following:

1. Select the subject of the diploma for an extended essay.
 - About to read the evaluation criteria and the appropriate subject instructions (your supervisor will have it).
2. Choose a topic.
3. Create a well-focused research question.
4. Plan the process of investigation and writing.
 - Identify how and where you collect information.

- Identify which academic link system you will use that is suitable for the subject of the essay.
 - Determine the deadlines for yourself that will allow you to meet those schools.
5. Plan the structure for the essay. This may change with the development of the investigation but it is useful to have a direction.
6. Start reading.
- If you find that it will not be possible to obtain the necessary evidence, research the question should be changed. Go back to Phase 3, 2, or 1 and select a new research question that you can answer.
7. Perform the investigation.
- The collected material should be assembled logically and associated with the essay structure. Only then do you know if you have enough evidence for each phase of the essay.
 - About to get ready for things to go wrong. Can you discover something later in the investigation that changes your ideas so your plan will need to be modified.

Your Researcher's Reflection Space

The reflection of students in the extended essay is critical. Effective reflection emphasizes the involvement of a student in an intellectual and personal process and how it changed the student as a student and influenced the completion of the essay of this individual. Those students who have completed a medium-year programme can be compared to the Research Officer (RRS) Process Journal. IB considers this a central part of a successful research process as follows:

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

Initial Guidance on Research and Writing

Students should follow the following steps:

1	Begin by selecting the Diploma Programme (DP) you're enrolled in or aiming for. This will guide the subjects and research materials you'll need to focus on. Ensure you understand the requirements and structure of the DP in which you are participating.
2	Each subject within the Diploma Programme has its own set of requirements, focusing on the particular skills and knowledge. Make sure to read these subject-specific materials carefully to ensure that your work aligns with the expectations for your chosen area.
3	Prepare to engage in a researcher's reflection, which involves regular notes or a journal about your progress, difficulties, and decisions made during the research process. This reflection helps track your growth and provides insight into your approach to solving problems and advancing your research.
4	Choose a topic that interests you and fits within the scope of your subject. Ensure the topic is researchable and narrow enough to be covered effectively within the constraints of the programme. It should also allow you to demonstrate your understanding and analytical skills.
5	Based on your topic, create a clear and focused research question. Your research question should guide your investigation, ensuring that your work stays on track and remains relevant to the subject-specific criteria.
6	Develop a detailed plan outlining how you will approach the research process. This should include a timeline, the methods you will use, and the sources you intend to consult. A well-thought-out plan ensures you stay organized and manage your time effectively.
7	Gather background information on your topic to ensure its viability. Conduct preliminary research using academic journals, books, databases, and other reputable sources to establish a foundational understanding of your subject.
8	Choose the academic referencing system that you will use for your research (APA). Ensure you are consistent with your citation style throughout your paper. Be familiar with how to properly cite sources and include references to avoid plagiarism and maintain academic integrity.

9	Develop a detailed plan outlining how you will approach the research process. Break the tasks into manageable parts and set realistic deadlines for each stage of the project, including reading, writing, and revising. This will help you stay on track and ensure timely completion.
10	Plan the structure of your essay or research paper before you start writing. This should include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Organize your arguments and ideas logically, ensuring each section of the paper flows smoothly into the next.
11	Begin gathering data and information based on your research question. This can involve consulting academic journals, conducting interviews, surveys, experiments, or reviewing primary and secondary sources. Collect relevant evidence to support your thesis and analysis.
12	After completing your research, begin writing the draft of your essay. Ensure that your paper is organized, clearly written, and well-argued. Present your findings with evidence to support your thesis. After completing your draft, review and revise it for clarity, coherence, and accuracy. Be sure to check your referencing and ensure all sources are properly cited.

Writing the Extended Essay

1. Structure of the Essay

The structure of your essay is significant in that it allows you to organize your arguments and appropriately use the evidence you have accumulated. It gives clarity and adheres to a logical order of your thoughts in the paper.

The primary components of the essay include:

- Title Page
- Contents Page
- Introduction
- Body (including development, methods, and results)
- Conclusion
- References and Bibliography
- Appendices

As soon as you start writing, use the academic referencing system you have chosen. You need to understand it fully and apply it consistently throughout the essay. It is a good idea to start with a rough introduction draft, but be prepared to revise it once the main body of your essay is finished. The body of your essay should present a clear, logical argument. It is important that the reader can easily follow the evidence you have found, how you gathered it, and how it supports your points. Using sub-headings can help break up the sections and guide the reader through your ideas. They can also help you stay on track. Once you have completed the body, you can finalize the introduction, which sets up the expectations for your essay, and the conclusion, which sums up what you have achieved in your research, mentioning any unresolved issues or questions.

Remember, important information that supports your argument should not be placed in the appendices or footnotes/endnotes. The examiner will not be required to read these sections, and if your main argument is incomplete, it may affect your grade. Ensure that you have cited every source that is not your own and that your citations are correct and consistent with the referencing style you've chosen. The bibliography should only list the sources you have used directly in your essay.

Finally, thoroughly proofread your essay to make sure it is clear, accurate, and free of errors. Do not forget to number your pages and complete the contents page. Your extended essay should be written in a clear, formal academic style that is appropriate for the subject you're working on.

2. The Length of the Extended Essay

The maximum word count for all extended essays is 4,000 words. This limit includes the introduction, body, conclusion, and any direct quotations, but it does not include:

- Acknowledgments
- The contents page
- Maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations, and tables
- Equations, formulas, and calculations
- Citations/references (whether in parentheses or numbered)
- Footnotes or endnotes

- The bibliography
- Appendices

Please note that examiners are **not** required to read anything beyond the 4,000-word limit.

1. Title

The title of your essay should give a clear indication of the focus of your research. It must be precise and informative but does not need to be framed as a question.

2. Contents Page

A contents page is mandatory and must be included at the beginning of your extended essay. Ensure all pages are numbered correctly. An index is **not** required.

3. Illustrations

Any illustrations used in your essay (such as graphs, diagrams, tables, and maps) should be well-organized and directly support the points made in the text. These materials must be clearly labeled, with captions and/or annotations explaining their relevance. Photographs and other images can be used but should also be captioned and linked to specific points in your essay.

4. Bibliographies, References, and Citations

Your extended essay must reflect **academic integrity** in all research practices. This means accurately citing all sources for quotations, ideas, and viewpoints. You must include a complete bibliography and reference list.

Failure to provide proper citations and references will be considered **plagiarism**, which is classified as malpractice and could lead to penalties.

5. The Bibliography

The bibliography is a list of all the sources you have used in researching and writing your extended essay. It is important to remember that whichever citation style you choose, it must be applied consistently throughout your essay. Before starting your research, make sure you fully understand how the chosen referencing style works.

Commonly accepted documentation styles is:

- **American Psychological Association (APA):** Often used for scientific topics.

4.1 The Reference

A reference is a way of indicating to the reader where you obtained your information. It provides all the necessary details to locate the source material. References must be included every time you quote, paraphrase, or summarize someone else's work. This allows the reader to verify the information you present.

References can come from many types of sources, including primary and secondary sources, such as:

- Books
- Magazines and journals
- Newspapers
- Emails
- Internet sources
- Interviews

When citing an internet source, be sure to include the title of the page, the website address, the date it was accessed, and, if possible, the author's name.

It's important to note that the **IB requirement is that all electronic sources must include a date stamp.**

Be cautious when using websites that do not provide references or cannot be verified against other reliable sources.

For interviews, the reference should include the name of the interviewer, the name of the interviewee, the date, and the location of the interview.

4.2 Citations

A citation is a shortened reference used within the body of the essay that directs the reader to the full reference in the bibliography. Citations provide a quick way to identify sources while you write and help the reader locate the original material.

Ensure that your citations are accurate and consistent so that the reader can easily find the source in your bibliography.

4.3 Appendices, Footnotes, and Endnotes

Be mindful that **all relevant information that supports your argument should be included in the main body of the essay**. Appendices, footnotes, and endnotes are **not essential** for your extended essay, and examiners are **not required to read** them.

If you place important information in these sections, you risk losing marks, as it may not be considered part of the core analysis. Additionally:

- Lists of raw data should not be included unless necessary.
- Do not frequently refer to material in appendices or footnotes, as this may disrupt the flow of your essay and make it harder for the reader to follow your argument.

4.4 The Use of Other Media and Materials

While computers can be helpful tools for analyzing data relevant to your extended essay, they should be used appropriately. For example:

- **Hard copies of computer-generated output** (e.g., graphs, data sets) may be included in the body of your essay.
- Any associated computer programs should generally be referenced or included in the appendices if necessary.

Note: Computer programmes should only be included in subjects like **Computer Science** and **Physics**, where they are directly relevant.

CDs, DVDs, and audio-visual materials should **not** normally be included in your extended essay unless specifically required by your subject. Instead, focus on presenting the key points in written format.

Lastly, **specimen materials** (like physical artifacts or raw samples) should **not** be submitted. If needed, **photographic evidence** can be provided instead.

Three Reflection Sessions and Reflection and Progress Form

You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session takes place once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce, once you have completed and handed in your extended essay. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. Following the viva voce, you write a reflective statement of no more than 500 words., which must be included on the RPF.

Before your final viva voce with your supervisor, you need to complete two reflections as part of the **Reflection and Progress Form (RPF)**. Here are the key questions to consider:

1. Is my topic appropriate for the subject I am considering?

Does your topic fit well within your chosen subject and allow for in-depth research?

2. Why am I interested in this area, and why is it important?

Why did you choose this topic, and what makes it interesting and relevant?

3. What possible questions have emerged from my initial reading?

What questions have come up after your first reading? Are they helping narrow your focus?

4. What did I find particularly challenging about researching and writing my draft?

What aspects of the research or writing process were difficult? How did you overcome them?

5. Are there any ethical issues that I need to consider?

Are there any ethical concerns related to your research, like consent or source use?

6. What methods or approaches might be used for research, and why?

What research methods suit your topic best, and why? (e.g., qualitative or quantitative)

7. What specific evidence or arguments do I need to explore further?

What key evidence or arguments need further development in your essay?

These reflections will help you stay focused and guide your progress throughout your extended essay.

Viva Voce:

The **viva voce** is a brief interview between you and your supervisor, marking the conclusion of your extended essay process. It serves several important purposes and provides a chance to discuss your work and the research journey.

The main purposes of the viva voce are:

Check on Plagiarism and Malpractice: The viva voce helps ensure that your work is original and free from academic dishonesty.

Reflection on Research Process: It allows you to reflect on the successes and challenges you faced during your research and writing process.

Reflection on Learning: You'll have the chance to talk about what you have learned throughout the research and how it has shaped your understanding of the topic.

Aid for the Supervisor's Report: The viva voce serves as a key part of your supervisor's final report, providing additional insight into your work and progress.

The viva voce typically lasts between **10 and 15 minutes**. Be prepared to discuss your essay, the process behind it, and any challenges you encountered.

Award of Diploma Points

Appointed examiners externally assess all extended essays, and they are scored on a scale from 0 to 36. This score is then converted into a letter grade, ranging from A to E.

The extended essay contributes to the overall Diploma score. A maximum of 3 points can be awarded based on your combined performance in the Extended Essay and Theory of Knowledge (TOK).

The following matrix will be used for award of points for TOK and the EE

Extended essay	Theory of knowledge (TOK)					
	Grade awarded	A	B	C	D	E or N
	A	3	3	2	2	Failing condition
	B	3	2	2	1	Failing condition
	C	2	2	1	0	
	D	2	1	0	0	
	E or N	Failing condition				

Figure 8: Award of points for TOK and the EE

The Assessment Criteria

How the assessment criteria are applied

Examiners mark positively, giving credit where appropriate for what students have written, rather than looking for omissions. Their aim is to find the level descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student's work, using the **best-fit** approach. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches aspects of different markbands. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the markband. It is not necessary for every indicator within a markband to be met for a mark to be awarded in that markband. **Awarding the top mark does not imply faultless performance.**

Note: Criteria A, B, C and D are applied to the extended essay as a whole. Criterion E is applied only to the reflective statement on the student's RPF.

Assessment criteria

Criterion A: Framework for the essay	Guiding question: Do the research question, research methods and structural conventions followed provide an effective framework for the essay?		
	Note: If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
	1-2 marks	3-4 marks	5-6 marks
Research question	A research question is stated but it lacks relevance to the topic of investigation, clarity or focus.	The research question is relevant to the topic of their investigation and clear but only partially focused in	The research question is relevant to the topic of investigation, clear and focused in relation to the scope of the essay.

		relation to the scope of the essay.	
Research methods	Research methods are used, but these are mostly unsuitable for the research question.	Research methods that are mostly suitable for the research question are explained and applied with partial effectiveness.	Research methods that are suitable for the research question are explained and applied effectively.
Structure	Structural conventions are present in the essay but these do not support communication of the research.	Structural conventions used in the essay support some aspects of the communication of the research.	Structural conventions used in the essay effectively support communication of the research.

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding	Guiding question: Does the subject matter being used in their research?		
	Note: If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
	1-2 marks	3-4 marks	5-6 marks
Knowledge	Research materials are used to establish knowledge of the subject matter but these materials lack relevance.	Relevant research materials are used to establish some knowledge of the subject matter.	Comprehensive, relevant research materials are used to establish knowledge of the subject matter.

Understanding — Terminology	Terminology is used but it lacks accuracy or is very limited.	Some relevant terminology is used accurately to demonstrate understanding of the subject matter.	Relevant terminology is used accurately and consistently to demonstrate understanding of the subject matter.
Understanding — Concepts	Concepts are identified but these are not relevant or are explained superficially.	Some relevant concepts are explained and used with partial effectiveness to demonstrate understanding of the subject matter.	Relevant concepts are explained and used effectively to demonstrate understanding of the subject matter.

Criterion C: Analysis and line of argument	Guiding question: Does the student analyse the information presented in the essay and produce a coherent line of arguments?		
	Note: If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.		
	1-2 marks	3-4 marks	5-6 marks
Analysis	The essay is descriptive rather than analytical.	The essay includes analysis that is partially effective and produces some relevant findings.	Analysis in the essay is effective and consistently produces relevant findings.

Line of argument	A partial line of argument is present.	A partially consistent line of argument links the research question, research findings and conclusions.	A clear, sustained line of argument links the research question, research findings and conclusions.
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Criterion D: Discussion and evaluation	Guiding question: Does the student discuss the findings and evaluate the essay?			
	Note: If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.			
	1–2 marks	3–4 marks	5–6 marks	7–8 marks
Discussion	The significance of the findings is described, but there is no reference to supporting evidence.	A partially balanced discussion of the significance of the findings is sometimes supported by appropriate evidence.	A balanced discussion of the significance of the findings is often supported by appropriate evidence.	A balanced discussion of the significance of the findings is fully supported by appropriate evidence.
Evaluation	A partial evaluation of the effectiveness of the essay is present, but strengths and	An evaluation of the effectiveness of the essay is present, with some strengths	An evaluation of the effectiveness of the essay is present, with relevant strengths and	An evaluation of the effectiveness of the essay is present, with relevant strengths and

	limitations are not stated.	and limitations stated.	limitations described.	limitations explained.
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Criterion E: Reflection	Guiding question: Does the student evaluate the effect of the extended essay learning experience on them as a learner?			
	Criterion E applies only to the reflective statement on the student's RPF. Evidence referred to in the reflection may be drawn from, but is not limited to: • experiences and insights that could shape future thinking • explicit examples of how skills learned could be used in other current contexts and in the future • how changes in perspective impacted decision-making. Note: If the work does not reach a standard outlined by the performance level descriptors, 0 marks are awarded for this criterion.			
	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks
Evaluative	Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is descriptive.	Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is descriptive and includes some specific examples.	Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is partially evaluative and includes specific examples.	Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is consistently evaluative and includes specific examples.

Growth	Reflection on the student's growth is limited to a description of the process and there is no evidence of transfer of learning.	Reflection sometimes shows evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.	Reflection often shows evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.	Reflection consistently shows evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.
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Alignment with assessment objectives

Criterion	Assessment objectives	Why these assessment objectives?
A: Framework for the essay	• Knowledge and understanding • Communication of research	“Knowledge and understanding” because: • the relevance of the research question indicates knowledge and understanding • knowledge and understanding of relevant research methods is evident. “Communication of research” because: • research is communicated according to appropriate structural conventions.
B: Knowledge and understanding	• Knowledge and understanding	“Knowledge and understanding” because:

		• research materials establish knowledge of the subject matter • terminology and concepts demonstrate understanding of the subject matter.
C: Analysis and line of argument	• Application and analysis • Synthesis and evaluation	“Application and analysis” because: • appropriate analysis is used to determine relevant findings. “Synthesis and evaluation” because: • a line of argument links the research question, research findings and conclusions.
D: Discussion and evaluation	• Synthesis and evaluation	“Synthesis and evaluation” because: • there is a balanced discussion of the significance of the findings

		the effectiveness of the essay is evaluated.
E: Reflection	Synthesis and evaluation	“Synthesis and evaluation” because: the extended essay learning experience is evaluated and the student’s growth reflected on.

Extended essay 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 the extended essay should be based on the qualitative grade descriptors for the extended essay presented below.

These descriptors will be used by senior examiners to set the boundaries. While boundaries are subject to change, it is the grade descriptors that remain consistent. Please refer to the document *Assessment principles and practices—Quality assessments in a digital age*.

Grade A
- The student demonstrates effective research skills, resulting in a well-focused and appropriate research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic. - There is effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources. - There is excellent knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline. - There is effective application of source material and correct use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts that further supports this.

• Conclusions are consistent, relevant and proficiently analysed. • Arguments show sustained reason and are supported effectively by evidence. • Research is critically evaluated. • Coherence, consistency and effective use of structural conventions support readability to an excellent degree. • Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is consistently evaluative and includes specific examples. • Reflection shows consistent evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.
Grade B
• The student demonstrates appropriate research skills, resulting in a research question that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic. • There is reasonably effective engagement with relevant research areas, methods and sources. • There is good knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the relevant discipline. • There is a reasonably effective application of source material and reasonable use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts. • Conclusions are consistent and accurately analysed. • Arguments show reason and are often supported by evidence. • Research at times shows critical evaluation. • Coherence, consistency and use of structural conventions support readability to a good degree. • Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is partially evaluative and includes specific examples. • Reflection often shows evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.
Grade C
• The student demonstrates evidence of research undertaken, leading to a research question that is not necessarily expressed in a way that can be explored within the scope of the chosen topic. • There is 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.

• There is some knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline, and the knowledge is mostly relevant. • There is an attempted application of source material and appropriate terminology and/or concepts; an attempted synthesis of research results with partially relevant analysis. • Conclusions are partly supported by the evidence. • Arguments are descriptive rather than analytical. • There is a partially successful evaluation of the research. • The essay is not always coherent and consistent, and structural conventions are irregularly applied, but this does not significantly hinder readability. • Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is descriptive and includes some specific examples. • Reflection sometimes shows evidence of the student's growth and transfer of learning.
Grade D
• The student 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, there is engagement with appropriate research, methods and sources, but discrepancies in those processes occasionally interfere with the planning and approach. • There is some relevant knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline but at times the knowledge is irrelevant. • There is an attempted application of source material but with inaccuracies in the use of, or underuse of, terminology and/or concepts. • There is irrelevant analysis and inconsistent conclusions as a result of a descriptive discussion. • There is a lack of evaluation. • The limited coherence and consistency of the essay and absence of structural conventions hinders readability. • Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is descriptive. • Reflection on the student's growth is limited to a description of the process and there is no evidence of transfer of learning.
Grade E (a failing condition)

- The student demonstrates little or no research, a lack of focus and an ineffective research question.
- There is a generally unsystematic approach and a resulting unfocused research question.
- There is limited engagement with limited research and sources.
- There is generally limited and only partially accurate knowledge and understanding of the topic in the wider context of the discipline.
- There are ineffective connections in the application of source material, and inaccuracies in the terminology and/or concepts used.
- The results of research are summarized with inconsistent analysis.
- There is an attempted outline of an argument but one that is generally descriptive in nature.
- The lack of coherence and consistency and absence of structural conventions significantly hinders readability.
- Reflection on the extended essay learning experience is very limited, with no evidence of transfer of learning.

How do I choose a subject, topic, and research question?

A) To choose a subject, ask yourself:

What subjects am I studying at HL?

Which subjects do I enjoy studying the most?

What subjects am I considering for my future university studies?

What topics would I like to discuss in my university interview?

After considering these questions, select the subject that best aligns with your interests and goals.

B) Once you have chosen the subject, choose a topic within that subject by asking yourself:

What topics have I enjoyed learning about?

What topics spark my interest or enthusiasm?

What personal interests or passions do I have that align with this subject?

After considering these questions, choose a topic that excites you and feels meaningful.

Points to bear in mind when choosing a subject and topic:

If you have chosen a

subject from ...

<i>Group 1</i>	The extended essay may be related to work studied in class, but it is essential to demonstrate relevant wider reading and individual study in all cases. When selecting appropriate literary works, they may be chosen from any source, including the IB Diploma Program's prescribed list of authors. However, it is crucial that the texts selected have sufficient literary merit, allowing the student to engage in sustained literary analysis and produce meaningful insights.
<i>Group 2</i>	You can write about any topic that interests you, as long as it relates to the target language and is written in the target language. However, the essay should focus on studying an issue within one of three categories: language, culture and society, or literature. Combinations of these categories are also allowed, giving you the flexibility to explore interdisciplinary topics that connect these areas.
<i>Group 3</i>	Avoid asking "What if...?" questions, as these do not align well with the Assessment Criteria for the extended essay. Instead, focus on specific, researchable questions that allow for in-depth analysis and evidence-based conclusions. Additionally, an analysis of the reliability and/or representativeness of your sources will be crucial. Ensure that you critically evaluate the sources you use to support your research, assessing their credibility, relevance, and bias to strengthen your arguments.
<i>Group 4</i>	It is fairly easy to get data and then analyze it. But if you decide to measure something over time, you must do all this before the summer holidays, which is the intended time for writing the bulk of the essay. You have to work with the Science teachers in order to find time when you can use a laboratory to collect data while being supervised by a member of staff. Avoid experiments for which the outcome is already well documented.

<i>Group 5</i>	Unless you are taking Math SL, it is generally best to avoid choosing Mathematics as your subject for the extended essay. However, if you are studying Math HL, it may be worth considering. In a mathematics extended essay, the word count is rarely a determining factor for quality. There is no mandatory minimum length for the essay, and credit will be given for presenting the content in a well-organized and readable style, rather than focusing on the page or word count. The key is to demonstrate mastery of appropriate mathematical concepts and present them effectively using mathematical reasoning and methods.
<i>Group 6</i>	Topics that are primarily focused on summarizing general secondary sources, such as universal art history textbooks and encyclopedias, should be avoided. These types of topics are often more narrative or descriptive, which may not allow for in-depth analysis and critical thinking. If you choose to do a biographical study of an artist, make sure that the research addresses a relevant issue or research question and leads to a specific, ideally personal, conclusion. Avoid topics that try to cover broad aspects of art history or span long periods of time, as these tend to result in unfocused essays. Narrowing the scope of your topic will help maintain a clear focus and provide a better opportunity to demonstrate detailed understanding and critical analysis.

C) Once you have thought through these points, choose a research question

- 1. Ask an open-ended question:** Your research question should invite analysis and cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." It should encourage a thorough investigation and exploration of ideas.
- 2. Ensure the question is specific and manageable:** Your research question should be narrow enough to complete within the 4,000-word limit and the 40-hour research timeframe. A very specific question will help keep your research focused and feasible.
- 3. Select a unique topic with limited existing research:** Choose a topic and research question that has not been widely explored already. This will allow you to demonstrate originality and personal insight. If there's a lot of existing information on the topic, it's better to avoid it to ensure you can contribute something new.

4. **Avoid topics covered in the syllabus:** Don't pick a topic that is already thoroughly covered in your syllabus. Instead, focus on areas that are less explored and will allow for deeper personal analysis and a unique perspective.
5. **Supervisor expertise is not critical:** It's fine if your supervisor is not an expert in the specific topic. They will still be able to guide you on the research process, help you navigate potential issues, and ensure your approach is solid.
6. Steps to launch the programme.
7. **Introductory seminar of the EE:** Students attend an introductory seminar to get an overview of the Extended Essay (EE) process.
8. **Students choose 2 possible subjects:** Students select two potential subjects for their Extended Essay, considering their interests and the feasibility of research.
9. **Students are given a supervisor and discuss feasibility:** Once assigned a supervisor, students meet to discuss the chosen topics and refine their research question to ensure it's manageable and appropriate.
10. **Develop a rough outline:** Students create an initial outline of their Extended Essay, including everything from the title page to the bibliography, to structure their research.
11. **Present work after the summer break:** After the summer, students present the progress they've made to date to their supervisor for feedback and guidance.
12. **Complete Draft:** Students submit their draft of the EE to their supervisor, who provides written feedback. This feedback is discussed to improve the essay further.
13. **Submit Final Version:** After incorporating feedback, students submit the Final Version.
14. **Viva Voce interview:** The final step is the Viva Voce, an interview with the supervisor where students reflect on their research process and the essay's development.

Timeline

Deadline week beginning	Goals	Signature of Supervisor

September 2026	• Attend the introductory Extended Essay workshop. • Understand the purpose and structure of the EE, the 4,000-word requirement, the supervision process, research ethics and academic integrity expectations. • Begin considering suitable EE subjects and broad areas of interest.	Date:
October 2026	• Participate in subject-specific EE guidance sessions. • Explore the requirements and research methods associated with different EE subjects. • Begin preliminary reading in possible subject areas.	Date:
November 2026	• Shortlist two possible EE subject areas. • Identify preliminary research interests within each subject. • Discuss the feasibility of the proposed subject areas with the EE Coordinator.	Date:
December 2026	• Submit the EE subject preference form, including two preferred subjects and preliminary areas of research. • Receive confirmation of the assigned EE subject and supervisor.	

	• Hold the initial meeting with the assigned supervisor. • Discuss the broad topic, subject-specific requirements and research feasibility. • Agree on immediate research priorities and the next steps.	Date:
January 2027	• Attend the research question workshop. • Develop and refine a focused research question. • Prepare for the first formal reflection session. • Review the expectations for the Reflections on Planning and Progress Form (RPF).	Date:
February 2027	• Complete the first formal reflection session with the supervisor. • Record the initial reflection on the RPF. • Confirm the research question, research approach and next stage of work.	Date:
March 2027	• Submit a structured research plan. • Submit a preliminary source list or working bibliography. • Demonstrate that the sources are relevant, reliable and appropriate for the chosen subject.	

	Review academic integrity, citation and note-taking practices with the supervisor.	 Date:
April 2027	- Attend a research progress meeting with the supervisor. - Present evidence of research, notes, developing arguments and source use. - Review the direction and feasibility of the essay. - Prepare for the interim reflection session.	 Date:
May 2027	- Complete the interim reflection session with the supervisor. - Record the interim reflection on the RPF. - Evaluate progress, challenges and changes made to the research process. - Confirm the work required before the summer.	 Date:
June 2027	- Submit a detailed Extended Essay outline. - Include the refined research question, proposed sections, main arguments, supporting evidence and working bibliography. - Receive guidance on the work to be completed during the summer.	 Date:

Summer 2027	• Complete the first full draft of the Extended Essay before returning to school. • Ensure that the draft contains a clear argument, evidence, analysis, citations and bibliography. • Revise the essay independently before submission to the supervisor.	Date:
September 2027	• Submit the first full draft to the supervisor. • Ensure that the draft is complete and suitable for formal supervisor feedback. • The supervisor will provide feedback by October Week 1.	Date:
October 2027	• Submit the revised Extended Essay. • Hold the final formal supervision meeting. • Discuss the final revisions required before submission. • Check structure, argument, analysis, referencing, bibliography and presentation.	Date:
November 2027	• Submit the final version of the Extended Essay. • Confirm that the submitted essay is complete, correctly formatted and academically honest.	

	• Schedule the viva voce interview. • No further changes should be made after final submission.	Date:
December 2027	• Participate in the viva voce interview. • Reflect on the research process, decisions, challenges, learning and final outcome. • Complete the final reflection on the RPF following the interview.	Date:
February 2028	• Confirm that the final Extended Essay and completed RPF are ready for submission. • The EE Coordinator checks the essay file, reflections, authentication and upload readiness. • Resolve any administrative or technical issues identified during the final check.	Date:

Bibliography

Organization, I. B. (2025). *Extended essay guide (First assessment 2027)*. Geneva: International Baccalaureate Organization.