

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE IB EXTENDED ESSAY



A QUINTESSENTIAL EDUCATION PUBLICATION

The Extended Essay (EE) is a compulsory component of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP), which requires students to undertake a self-directed academic research project and present it in the form of a 4,000-word paper. The final work is externally assessed by examiners appointed by the IB and is marked on a scale from 0 to 34. These scores relate to a band from E to A.

Criterion A: Focus and method 6 marks

- To what extent is the topic of the essay communicated effectively?
- To what extent is the research question clearly stated and focused?
- To what extent is the methodology of the research complete?

Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding 6 marks

- To what extent does the essay show knowledge and understanding?
- To what extent is the use of concepts and terminology clear and appropriate?

Criterion C: Critical thinking 12 marks

- To what extent is the research appropriate to the research question and its application relevant to the argument?
- To what extent are conclusions drawn from evidence?
- To what extent is a reasoned argument developed from the research with a conclusion that is drawn from the evidence?
- To what extent is a reasoned argument structured and coherent?
- To what extent has the research been critically evaluated?

Criterion D: Presentation 4 marks

- To what extent does the structure of the essay lend itself to the topic, subject and argument?
- To what extent do the structure and layout support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay?

Criterion E: Engagement 6 marks

- To what extent does the RPPF show reflection on decision making and planning?
- To what extent does the RPPF show personal engagement with the focus and process of research?

Steps to conducting your EE research

- Choose an available Diploma Programme subject, a relevant topic and undertake some background reading on it.
- Formulate a preliminary research question. Try to incorporate an IB command term in the research question if possible.
- Draw up an outline plan for the research and writing process. This should include a timeline.
- Begin to identify how and where they will gather source material for their research.
- Identify which system of academic referencing they will use, ensuring that this meets the minimum requirements for the IB.
- Set deadlines for themselves that are realistic and take into consideration the school's own internal deadlines.
- Plan a structure for the essay. This may change as the research develops but it is useful to have a sense of direction from the start.
- Undertake some preparatory reading in light of the proposed research question. If students discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, the research question should be changed.
- Upon approval from the school supervisor, carry out the research. The material collected should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay, and focused on the research question posed.

CHOOSING YOUR EE TOPIC



Choosing your EE topic

- **Generate Ideas Based on Your Interests**

Selecting the right topic is crucial for a successful extended essay. Choose a subject you're genuinely interested in and passionate about. It could be a subject related to your future career aspirations or something you've always been curious about. Ensure that your topic is specific enough to allow for in-depth academic research but broad enough to find ample resources for analysis.



- **Conduct your initial research**

Gather relevant sources and materials to support your research question. Utilise various resources such as academic journals, public databases, and primary sources. Take detailed notes and be critical of the information you gather. You should also consider different perspectives on your topic.

Tip: Here are some useful apps for your data collection

***Evernote:** An all-in-one note-taking app that allows you to organize your research, save articles, web clips, and images, and make annotations.

***Zotero:** A powerful research tool that helps you collect, organize, cite, and share your sources, including webpages, articles, books, and more.

***Mendeley:** A reference manager that lets you save and organize research papers, create citations, and collaborate with others in your field.

***Easybib:** EasyBib is the world's largest bibliography maker and citation machine. The integrated toolbar will let you cite websites with one click.



FORMULATING YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION



Formulating your research question

When formatting your research question for an Extended Essay (EE), it's crucial to ensure that it's clear and concise, effectively conveying the focus of your investigation. Avoid vague or overly broad questions, as they can make your research and analysis less coherent. Consider the following key factors:

- **Specificity:** Craft a question that precisely addresses the subject of your investigation. Steer clear of overly broad questions that can't be adequately explored within your essay's scope.
- **Focus:** Keep your question centred on the primary theme or policy you intend to investigate. Refrain from attempting to cover multiple variables within a single question.
- **Open-Endedness:** While your question should be specific, it should also allow for in-depth analysis and exploration. Avoid questions that prompt simple "yes" or "no" answers.
- **Relevance:** Ensure that your question aligns with the subject area for which you're writing the EE. Confirm that it fits within the subject's guidelines.
- **Researchable:** Your question should be feasible to research and investigate using available sources and appropriate methodologies.
- **Advisor's Input:** Seeking feedback from your EE advisor or supervisor can be immensely valuable. They can provide insights that will help refine your question further.

As an example, if you are working on an English EE centered on the use of symbolism in a novel such as "The Great Gatsby," your question could be framed as follows:

"To what extent does F. Scott Fitzgerald utilise symbolism to portray societal themes in 'The Great Gatsby'?"

This question demonstrates clarity, specificity, a focus on symbolism and societal themes, an open-ended nature, relevance to the field of English literature, and research potential.

If you are working on an Economics EE centred on the use of the Minimum Age Legislation to reduce smoking rates in Singapore, your question could be framed as follows:

"To what extent was the update to the Minimum Age Legislation in 2021 effective in reducing cigarette consumption among smokers aged 18–21?"

This question demonstrates clarity, specificity, and a focus on the chosen policy with good research potential on the economic theories of negative externalities and asymmetric information.

Remember that your research question serves as the cornerstone of your Extended Essay, guiding your exploration. Thus, dedicating time to craft a thoughtful and well-structured question is essential.

Comprehensive Checklist:

- Is it specific?
- Can you answer it?
- Can you address any variables?
- Can you justify any assumptions that it makes?
- Do you have enough research to back up your investigation?
- Is it interesting?



CONDUCTING YOUR RESEARCH



Conducting your research

Gather relevant sources and materials to support your research question. Utilise various resources such as books, academic journals(JSTOR, Google Scholars), online databases, and primary sources.

Academic Journals offer peer-reviewed articles from scholars. Online Databases like JSTOR and PubMed provide access to a wide array of research papers. Government Publications and Reports provide insights into social issues and policies.

Primary Sources, including interviews and surveys, offer firsthand accounts or original data that can provide insights into your research when there is insufficient literature on the subject.

As you gather sources and materials, take detailed notes to record key findings, quotes, and relevant information. Keep track of your sources using a citation management tool such as Zotero, Mendeley, Easybib. Be critical of the information you gather, evaluating the reliability, validity, and relevance of each source to your research question.

Tip: Regularly save your extended essay on a cloud platform like GoogleDocs or Onedrive to avoid losing progress in case of computer issues. This way, even if your computer crashes, your progress will be safe.



WRITING AND REVIEWING THE FIRST DRAFT



Write and review the First Draft

Before diving into writing, create a detailed framework outlining the structure of your essay. This will help you organise your thoughts and arguments cohesively. Include an introduction, body paragraphs discussing your research findings, and a conclusion summarising your key points. Perfection is not necessary at this point and you should focus on writing down as much information as you can.

Make sure each section flows logically and supports your thesis. Instead, think of this draft as the core structure that will propel your essay forward. A practical approach is to create a plan from your research, outlining the main elements for each paragraph.

We recommend breaking down the writing process into separate paragraphs and setting achievable goals for each one. This will help you steadily make progress week by week and make the task of writing a 4,000-word essay seem less overwhelming.

To save time, include links to the original articles instead of providing full references, as you might make changes to your essay's content and references as you go along.

Reviewing Your First Draft

During your meeting with your supervisor, the goal is to review your initial draft. Evaluate which parts are strong, where more exploration is needed, and which aspects require rethinking. This can be split into several sessions; for instance, you could look at your introduction first, then the main body's four sections, and finally your conclusion. This will reshape your goals moving forward and give you specific subsections to work on.

While editing your first draft, don't hesitate to delete, rephrase, or move parts you've written. This will help shape your extended essay into its final form. You might even adjust your question slightly if necessary. Embrace these changes, document them, and reflect upon them in your EE reflections. These are steps toward a complete final version and will get you many extra marks for the EE. Stay positive, as every change gets you closer to your finished essay.



EDITING & PROOFREADING FOR FINAL DRAFT



Editing & proofreading

Editing and proofreading are essential stages in the writing process to ensure the clarity, coherence, and accuracy of your essay. After completing your first draft, allocate sufficient time to thoroughly review and revise your work.

Start by focusing on grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. Use grammar checkers and proofreading tools to identify and correct any mistakes. Pay attention to the clarity and coherence of your arguments. Ensure that each paragraph flows logically from one point to the next, with clear transitions between ideas. Consider the overall structure and organization of your essay. Are the body paragraphs well-structured, with each supporting argument presented coherently? Does the conclusion effectively summarise your key points and provide an insightful conclusion to your essay?

Seek feedback from peers, teachers, or supervisors to gain fresh perspectives on your essay. They may identify areas for improvement or suggest alternative approaches that could strengthen your argument.

Finally, familiarise yourself with the IB Extended Essay guidelines and requirements. Pay attention to formatting, citation styles, word count, and other specifications outlined by the IB. Adhering to these guidelines is essential for earning maximum points on your essay.

Remember that writing an IB Extended Essay can be challenging, but don't get discouraged by setbacks or obstacles along the way. Stay focused on your goals and keep pushing forward. The process of writing an extended essay is as valuable as the final product.



Seek expert help from us!

As the leading IB tuition specialist, we offer a comprehensive range of programmes conducted by IB examiners and IB graduates from Singapore's leading schools. You will receive masterful guidance, extensive topic notes, and invaluable advice to help you ace your IB coursework.



- ☎ (+65) 6100 9338 / (+65) 9655 0590
- ✉ admin@qconsult.org
- 🌐 <https://qconsult.org>
- 📍 545 Orchard Road #14-06/09 S(238882)