

Extended Essay Description

The Extended Essay gives the student an opportunity to explore an academic topic in depth, making it among the most valued components of the IB curriculum. With the Extended Essay, each student has the opportunity to investigate a topic of special interest. The essay requirement acquaints students with the kind of independent research and writing skills expected by universities. The IBO recommends that a student devote a total of about 40 hours of private study and writing time to the essay.

Subject Area

The essay subject area is chosen by the student and may be any subject within the IB curriculum. These subjects are:

English/Literature	History	Politics
Biology	Mathematics	Psychology
Chemistry	Music	Theater Arts
Economics	Peace & Conflict Studies	Visual Arts
Environmental Systems	Philosophy	World Religions
Geography	Physics	

Research Topic

The topic is the particular area of study within the chosen subject. Topics should be interesting and challenging to the student, limited in scope to allow an in-depth analysis, and have data for analysis and/or require research. Once the topic is chosen, students must narrow the focus by formulating a specific research question. *Refer to sample topics listed at the end of this section.*

Timetable

The Extended Essay is written outside of the classroom on a student's own time. Students begin the process in the fall of their junior year, with the selection of a topic due in January. Final essays are submitted by October of their senior year. *See the end of this section for a suggested timetable for the essay process.*

Advisor

Each student must have a research advisor, selected by the student. Advisors will work with the student in refining the topic of the essay, suggesting sources for research, and guiding the student during the 12 months spent researching and writing.

The advisor must be a DCHS staff member, in the subject area of the research topic. The advisor does not have to be an IB teacher. Teachers will rarely supervise more than three candidates, so selection of an advisor should be made as soon as the student decides upon the subject area of his/her paper. Although the specific topic is not required to be determined until junior year, many students decide upon the subject area earlier and arrange for an advisor well before this time.

Length

All Extended Essays should be 3500 – 4000 words in length (roughly 19-20 pages). Word count does not include abstracts, contents, charts/tables, bibliography or appendices.

Presentation

A standard research paper format should be used for the essay. Any recognized format is acceptable providing it utilizes footnotes or endnotes, appendices and bibliographies. Standard MLA guidelines will meet all IB Extended Essay requirements.

- The paper must be word-processed or typed, double-spaced.
- 12 point type. Only standardized fonts should be used, with non-stylized, standard horizontal spacing.
- The essay requires an abstract (summary), title page, table of contents, and bibliography.
- On the title page, the title should be centered one-third from the top, with identifying information centered two-thirds from the top.
- All margins should be one inch.
- All pages should be numbered.

The essay should be logically presented and clearly ordered. Graphs, diagrams, tables, maps, and other supporting material must be neatly presented, well labeled, and easily interpretable. These components are NOT to be included in the word count of the essay.

Assessment

All Extended Essays are externally assessed by IBO examiners. There are both general assessment criteria as well as subject assessment criteria used for determining the essay score. General criteria are concerned with the general aspects of the essay, such as writing, use of data and overall presentation. The subject-based criteria are concerned with how the chosen topic is managed within the context of the chosen subject of the essay. Each subject has its own set of assessment criteria. Official essay guidelines will be provided to the student when the essay topic is finalized.

The total score of the essay places it in one of the following categories:

- A excellent
- B good
- C satisfactory
- D mediocre
- E elementary

Excellent examples of past essays are available for review in the IB Coordinator's office.

Sample Topics for Extended Essay

- Chemistry:** The influence of diet and geographical location on the isotopic composition of hair
The effects of sugar-free chewing gum on the pH in the mouth after a meal
- Economics:** Competition among petrol stations in my area
Determinants of consumer behavior with regard to fuel in the Dutch/Belgian border region
- Environmental Systems:** Lead pollution: impacts and control in the Colorado Rockies
- History:** Explanations of the collapse of the Minoan Civilization
Recording the beginnings and early events of the second Punic War
The historical backlash against American working women
- Geography:** Can man and the natural environment coexist?
- Mathematics:** The proof of the law of quadratic reciprocity
The ancient history of pi
- Philosophy:** The problem of survival: Utilitarianism versus Absolutism
- Physics:** Does the frequency of light affect the resolution of the eye?
- Psychology:** The fallibility of memory in eyewitness testimony
- English:** Myth and History in Derek Walcott's Epic Poem "Omeros"
The similarities between Gregor Samsa of the Metamorphosis and the monster from Frankenstein
A study in the nobility of man as portrayed by characters from three novels

Examples of Refining a Chosen Topic

Art / Design

An analytical study of the cycle of frescoes of St Christopher's Church in Milan
is better than The history of Renaissance Art.

Picasso: genius or cultural thief? **is better than** Constructivism.

Biology

The competitive and evolutionary nature of the symbiotic relationship in *Paramecium busaria*
is better than Symbiosis in animals.

The effect of banana peel on seed germination
is better than Factors which effect the germination of seeds.

Chemistry

Extraction of natural pigments and their use as dyeing agents **is better than** Natural dyes.

Kinetics of oxidation of Iodide with H₂O₂ in acidic solutions **is better than** Chemical Kinetics.

Classical Languages

The role of the Ara Pacis in promoting Augustan ideology **is better than** Propaganda of the Emperor Augustine.

The function of wit and humor in Cicero's Pro Caelio **is better than** Cicero as an orator.

Computer Science

The hidden enemies nemesis: The computer anti virus, cure or lost cause **is better than** Protect your computer.

The fundamentals of object orientated programming **is better than** Expert Systems.

Economics

Do interest rates affect investment decisions? **is better than** The Third World Debt Crisis.

The economic costs and benefits of shrimp farming in Ecuador
is better than The consequences of shrimp farming in Ecuador.

Environmental Systems

Lead pollution: impacts and control in Toronto **is better than** Atmospheric pollution.

Sustainable forestry management in Finland **is better than** Deforestation and global warming.

Geography

High school catchment areas in Denver, USA: their spheres of influence
but not High school catchment areas in the USA.

The influence of aspect on residential land use in San Salvador, El Salvador
but not Residential land use in Central America.

History

Nationalism as a cause of the First World War **but not** Nationalism.

An examination of the influence of British Darwinism on Cecil Rhodes **but not** Cecil Rhodes.

Literature

Religious imagery in Wuthering Heights **but not** The Brontes.

The problems of racial conflict as shown through the works of James Baldwin
but not Racial conflict in the twentieth century.

Mathematics

Prime numbers in cryptography **is better than** Prime numbers.

Using Graph Theory to minimize cost **is better than** Graph Theory.

Music

African influence on Paul Simon **is better than** The music of Africa.

The marimba music of Bagamoyo **is better than** The Xylophone.

Philosophy

A study of the Sense-datum theory **is better than** Perception.

Doing versus being: language and reality in the Mimamsa school of Indian Philosophy
is better than Language and the nature of reality.

Physics

Wind Power: A clean source of Energy? **is better than** Alternative energy sources.

Psychology

Can cognitive development in children be accelerated? **but not** The growing child.

Extended Essay Process & Timeline

- Choose your subject by January 31st
- Choose and meet with an advisor by January 31st
- Complete Rough Draft by October 1st
- Hand in two typed copies of Extended Essay by October 31st

Choose a Subject

You are midway through your Junior year in IB and it is time to begin serious planning for writing your Extended Essay. The first step is choosing a subject area.

Please pick up a Subject Booklet from Ms. Clever.

These booklets are either yellow, green, or orange. Each booklet contains the following:

- * A 14-page Introduction section (white paper) that informs you about regulations, supervision, and general guidelines to writing the essay.
- * An 8-page section on Assessment of Extended Essays (goldenrod).
- * A section on your specific subject's guidelines and criteria (various colors).
- * A lengthy Guide to MLA Documentation (white).

Keep these as you write your EE and return them when you complete it.

Choose an Advisor

Writing an Extended Essay is your responsibility. Take ownership of it.

It is an opportunity to shape your own course of study and to write a paper independently. Part of this responsibility is to find a faculty advisor.

Choose a teacher who best matches your subject, who can direct you to sources, and who can provide general guidance, criticism, and feedback.

Ask questions of your advisor. Seek advice!

Write Your Research Question/Thesis

Formulate this question as well as you can and as early as you can.

This drives the direction your essay will go.

Share it with your advisor.

Your thesis can be modified and reshaped.

Develop A Working Outline

Establish the major points that you will use to answer your research question/to develop your thesis.

Your outline should become increasingly detailed as you continue your research.

Read, Research, Assemble Your Sources, Gather Your Data

Organize this information on note cards, in notes, and in early drafts.

This is the essential "stuff" of your essay.

Assembling it will most likely lead you to reorganizing your outline and possibly reshaping your research question/thesis. Keep your advisor informed.

Write Your Rough Draft

Include your title page, abstract, contents, conclusion and any illustrations, appendices and documentation.

Give a copy of your draft to your advisor.

Revise and Edit Your Rough Draft(s)

Successful writing lies in rewriting.

Revisit your paper and adjust it in terms of both content and mechanics.

Write Your Final Draft