

Extended Essay Guidelines

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Class of 2010

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of approved Diploma Program subjects—normally one of the student’s six chosen subjects for the IB diploma. It is intended to promote high-level research and writing skills, intellectual discovery and creativity. It provides students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor (a teacher in the school). This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing, in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, appropriate to the subject chosen. It is recommended that completion of the written essay is followed by a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervisor.

The extended essay is:

- compulsory for all Diploma Program students
- externally assessed and, in combination with the grade for theory of knowledge, contributes up to three points to the total score for the IB diploma
- a piece of independent research/investigation on a topic chosen by the student in cooperation with a supervisor in the school
- presented as a formal piece of scholarship containing no more than 4,000 words
- the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student
- concluded with a short interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervising teacher
- Chosen from the list of approved IB subjects listed below:

English	Physics
History	Environmental Systems
Economics	Design Technology
Philosophy	Mathematics
Psychology	Visual Arts
Music	Social and Cultural Anthropology
Theatre Arts	Business and Management
Islamic History	Computer Science
World Religions	Information technology in a global society
Biology	Politics
Chemistry	Peace and conflict studies
Human Rights	Film Studies
Foreign Language	Dance

FORMAT:

Title Page:

Includes a title which provides a clear indication of the focus of the essay. It should be precise and not necessarily phrased in the form of a question. The title page also includes the candidate name and number, the session for which the candidate will examine (i.e. May 2005), and the subject area chosen.

Abstract:

Directly follows the title page with the candidate number as header, but no page number. This portion may not exceed 300 words. It does not serve as an introduction but presents a synopsis of the extended essay, and therefore should be written after the paper is completed.

The inclusion of an abstract is intended to encourage candidates to examine closely the development of an argument within the extended essay and the pertinence of any conclusions that are reached. It is also designed to allow readers to understand quickly the contents of the extended essay.

The minimum requirements for the abstract are to state clearly the research question being investigated, the scope of the investigation, and the conclusion of the extended essay.

Contents Page:

Directly follows the abstract and includes candidate number and page number as header. Lists all contents AFTER the contents page (does NOT therefore list the title page or abstract).

Body of paper:

Introduction:

The introduction should include:

- An indication of why the topic chosen is interesting, important or worthy of study
- Some background information and an attempt to place the topic in an appropriate context
- An indication of whether the topic has been narrowed to a focus of more manageable proportions
- A clearly and precisely stated research question
- A clear concluding statement of the thesis and argument, i.e. the response to the research question that will subsequently be developed in the body of the essay.

Body/Development:

The essential feature of the major section or body of the essay is the systematic development of a convincing answer to the research question. Some subjects may require sub-headings for major sections within the main body (i.e. scientific investigations usually have separate sections for method and results). In some other subjects, however, sub-headings should be avoided because they disrupt the flow and unity of an essay.

Conclusion:

The requirements of a conclusion are that it:

- Is clearly stated
- Is relevant to the research question being investigated
- Is substantiated by the evidence presented
- Indicates issues, unresolved questions and new questions that have emerged from the research.

References/Bibliography:

The direct or indirect use of the words of another person, written, oral or electronic, must be acknowledged appropriately as must visual material in the essay, derived from another source. A candidate's failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as plagiarism, and will therefore be treated as a case of malpractice.

The bibliography or list of references should include only those works, such as books and journals that have been consulted by the candidate. An accepted form of quoting and documenting sources should be applied consistently. The major documentation systems are divided into two groups, parenthetical in-text systems and numbered systems; either may be used, provided this is done consistently and clearly.

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: author/s, title, date and place of publication, and the name of the publisher, following consistently one standard method of listing sources.

Appendices:

Appendices are not an essential section of the extended essay and examiners are NOT required to read them. Include all information of direct relevance to the analysis and argument in the main part of the essay. Unless considered essential, complete lists of raw data should not be included in the extended essay.

WHERE DO I INCLUDE THE RESEARCH QUESTION?

Candidates must state the research question in the early part of the extended essay. This requirement can be met in a number of ways. The research question may be:

- Stated in the title
- Set out separately on the title page
- Defined in the opening paragraphs of the essay, in the course of the introduction.

Even if the research question is stated in the title or on the title page, candidates are strongly advised to repeat it explicitly in the introduction. Furthermore, stating the research question only in the abstract or only on the extended essay cover sheet is NOT sufficient because the abstract and cover sheet do not form part of the main body of the essay.

AIMS OF THE EXTENDED ESSAY:

The extended essay provides candidates with the opportunity to:

- pursue independent research on a focused topic
- develop research and communication skills
- develop the skills of creative and critical thinking
- engage in a systematic process of research appropriate to the subject
- experience the excitement of intellectual discovery.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXTENDED ESSAY:

Candidates will be expected to:

- plan and pursue a research project with intellectual initiative and insight
- formulate a precise research question
- gather and interpret material from sources appropriate to the research question
- structure a reasoned argument in response to the research question on the basis of the material gathered
- present their extended essay in a format appropriate to the subject, acknowledging sources in one of the established academic ways
- use the terminology and language appropriate to the subject with skill and understanding
- apply analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject, with an understanding of the implications and the context of their research.

Advice to Students from Examiners:

Recommended: things to do

Examiners' reports frequently emphasize the following positive steps. Before starting work on the extended essay, students should:

- read the assessment criteria
- read previous essays to identify strengths and possible pitfalls
- spend time working out the research question (imagine the finished essay)
- work out a structure for the essay.

During the research process, and while writing the essay, students should:

- start work early and stick to deadlines
- maintain a good working relationship with their supervisor
- construct an argument that relates to the research question
- use the library and consult librarians for advice
- record sources as they go along (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- choose a new topic and a research question that **can** be answered if there is a problem with the original topic
- use the appropriate language for the subject
- let their interest and enthusiasm show.

After completing the essay, students should:

- write the abstract
- check and proofread the final version carefully.

Recommended: things to avoid

Examiners' reports also mention these things to be avoided at all costs.

Students should not work with a research question that is too broad or too vague, too narrow, too difficult or inappropriate. A good research question is one that asks something worth asking and that is answerable within 40 hours/4,000 words. It should be clear what would count as evidence in relation to the question, and it must be possible to acquire such evidence in the course of the investigation. If a student does not know what evidence is needed, or cannot collect such evidence, it will not be possible to answer the research question.

In addition, students should not:

- forget to analyze the research question
- ignore the assessment criteria
- collect material that is irrelevant to the research question
- use the Internet uncritically
- plagiarize
- merely describe or report (evidence must be used to support the argument)
- repeat the introduction in the conclusion
- cite sources that are not used.

One further piece of advice is as follows: the more background a student has in the subject, the better the chance he or she has of writing a good extended essay. Choosing to write the extended essay in a subject that is not being studied as part of the Diploma Program often leads to lower marks.

Deadlines and Important Dates for Robinson Secondary School Class of 2010

Thursday, March 5	½ day in media center to introduce EE, talk about the resources available at Robinson media center, and learn about four subject areas in which to write EE's (periods 5 & 7).
March 11-April 2	Students must spend at least two periods of RAISE time in media center doing further independent research on topic. <u>Signature required.</u>
Wednesday, March 18	Kevin Simons, Research Librarian at Northern Virginia Community College, meet with students during sixth period to discuss research process. Start time: 12:30 in media center.
March 19-March 30	Complete research in the library through ToK class.
March 31	Students must submit specific research topic through ToK class by this day.
By April 3	All students assigned mentors.
Friday, April 24	Deadline for meeting with mentor to discuss research, get directions for further research and discuss interview/email contact possibilities. <u>Signature required.</u>
Friday, May 29	Deadline for writing outline AND meeting with mentor to discuss and get feedback and next step info for writing process. Exchange summer contact information. <u>Signature required.</u>
Friday, June 5	Hand in form with all required signatures to ToK class for grade.
Tuesday, September 8	Rough draft due. One copy to IB office, one copy to mentor.
September-October	Meet with mentor to discuss rough draft. Attend sessions during RAISE time about abstracts, proper format, citation issues, etc.
Wednesday, Nov. 4	2 COPIES OF FINAL DRAFT DUE TO IB OFFICE

Assessment Criteria

This section provides an overview of what each criterion assesses in the extended essay. Further advice on interpreting the assessment criteria is provided within the guidelines for each subject in the “Details—subject specific” section.

A: research question (Objectives 1 and 2)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the purpose of the essay is specified. In many subjects, the aim of the essay will normally be expressed as a question and, therefore, this criterion is called the “research question”. However, certain disciplines may permit or encourage different ways of formulating the research task.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The research question is not stated in the introduction or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in an extended essay in the subject in which it is registered.
1	The research question is stated in the introduction but is not clearly expressed or is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit.
2	The research question is clearly stated in the introduction and sharply focused, making effective treatment possible within the word limit.

B: introduction (Objectives 1 and 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the introduction makes clear how the research question relates to existing knowledge on the topic and explains how the topic chosen is significant and worthy of investigation.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	Little or no attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is little or no attempt to explain the significance of the topic.
1	Some attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is some attempt to explain the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation.
2	The context of the research question is clearly demonstrated. The introduction clearly explains the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation.

**C: investigation
(Objectives 1 and 3)**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the investigation is planned and an appropriate range of sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, that is relevant to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is little or no evidence that sources have been consulted or data gathered, and little or no evidence of planning in the investigation.
1	A range of inappropriate sources has been consulted, or inappropriate data has been gathered, and there is little evidence that the investigation has been planned.
2	A limited range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and some relevant material has been selected. There is evidence of some planning in the investigation.
3	A sufficient range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been selected. The investigation has been satisfactorily planned.
4	An imaginative range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been carefully selected. The investigation has been well planned.

D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied
(Objectives 3 and 7)

Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2. “Academic context”, as used in this guide, can be defined as the current state of the field of study under investigation. However, this is to be understood in relation to what can reasonably be expected of a pre-university student. For example, to obtain a level 4, it would be sufficient to relate the investigation to the principal lines of inquiry in the relevant field; detailed, comprehensive knowledge is not required.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The essay demonstrates no real knowledge or understanding of the topic studied.
1	The essay demonstrates some knowledge but little understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows little awareness of an academic context for the investigation.
2	The essay demonstrates an adequate knowledge and some understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows some awareness of an academic context for the investigation.
3	The essay demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay successfully outlines an academic context for the investigation.
4	The essay demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay clearly and precisely locates the investigation in an academic context.

**E: reasoned argument
(Objectives 1 and 4)**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay uses the material collected to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and develops a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	There is no attempt to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question.
1	There is a limited or superficial attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question.
2	There is some attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question, but this is only partially successful.
3	Ideas are presented in a logical and coherent manner, and a reasoned argument is developed in relation to the research question, but with some weaknesses.
4	Ideas are presented clearly and in a logical and coherent manner. The essay succeeds in developing a reasoned and convincing argument in relation to the research question.

**F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject
(Objective 7)**

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The essay shows no application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.
1	The essay shows little application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.
2	The essay shows some application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills, which may be only partially effective.
3	The essay shows sound application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.
4	The essay shows effective and sophisticated application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.

**G: use of language appropriate to the subject
(Objective 6)**

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The language used is inaccurate and unclear. There is no effective use of terminology appropriate to the subject.
1	The language used sometimes communicates clearly but does not do so consistently. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is only partly accurate.
2	The language used for the most part communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is usually accurate.
3	The language used communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is accurate, although there may be occasional lapses.
4	The language used communicates clearly and precisely. Terminology appropriate to the subject is used accurately, with skill and understanding.

**H: conclusion
(Objectives 1, 4 and 5)**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay incorporates a conclusion that is relevant to the research question and is consistent with the evidence presented in the essay.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	Little or no attempt is made to provide a conclusion that is relevant to the research question.
1	A conclusion is attempted that is relevant to the research question but may not be entirely consistent with the evidence presented in the essay.
2	An effective conclusion is clearly stated; it is relevant to the research question and consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. It should include unresolved questions where appropriate to the subject concerned.

**I: formal presentation
(Objective 5)**

This criterion assesses the extent to which the layout, organization, appearance and formal elements of the essay consistently follow a standard format. The formal elements are: title page, table of contents, page numbers, illustrative material, quotations, documentation (including references, citations and bibliography) and appendices (if used).

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The formal presentation is unacceptable, or the essay exceeds 4,000 words.
1	The formal presentation is poor.
2	The formal presentation is satisfactory.
3	The formal presentation is good.
4	The formal presentation is excellent.

**J: abstract
(Objective 5)**

The requirements for the abstract are for it to state clearly the research question that was investigated, how the investigation was undertaken and the conclusion(s) of the essay.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The abstract exceeds 300 words or one or more of the required elements of an abstract (listed above) is missing.
1	The abstract contains the elements listed above but they are not all clearly stated.
2	The abstract clearly states all the elements listed above.

K: holistic judgment
(Objective 1)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the qualities that distinguish an essay from the average, such as intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight. While these qualities will be clearly present in the best work, less successful essays may also show some evidence of them and should be rewarded under this criterion.

Achievement level	Descriptor
0	The essay shows no evidence of such qualities.
1	The essay shows little evidence of such qualities.
2	The essay shows some evidence of such qualities.
3	The essay shows clear evidence of such qualities.
4	The essay shows considerable evidence of such qualities.