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Scots College

IB Diploma

Extended Essay Handbook
2011-2012

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EXTENDED ESSAY TIMELINE

First year, Term 1	
One of the last weeks...	First introduction to the EE for students <i>and</i> teachers (Diploma Coordinator), addressing the general concepts of the EE, the time line, how to get started. Students should <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. begin thinking about subjects and possible topics, 2. consult 50 Excellent Extended Essays (Library and ScotE), 3. contact subject teachers for preliminary discussions.
First year, Term 2	
Week 3	Detailed information regarding the scope of the EE and the writing process (Diploma Coordinator). The EE Handbook is handed out and discussed.
Week 4-6	Allocation of students to supervisors (facilitated by Diploma Coordinator).
Week 7-8	MEETING 1 (~ 30 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student and supervisor decide on topic and an initial, preliminary research question (submit to Diploma Coordinator with consent form). 2. <u>Supervisor</u> provides student with a hard copy of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject specific information copied from the IB EE guide • latest EE report in chosen subject (found at the OCC) Both of these are discussed thoroughly in the meeting. 3. Background reading / research for next weeks specified and assigned.
Week 8	Hands-on research skills workshop for students (Diploma Coordinator/Librarian)
Week 9-10	MEETING 2 (~ 30 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss progress (this means: there must be some progress to discuss!) 2. Plan work to be done over term break 3. Set goals for next meeting (see below)
First year, Term 3	
Week 1 – 2	MEETING 3 (~ 30 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students bring something tangible for discussion, e.g. summary of background reading, preliminary calculations, pilot experiments or pilot surveys. 2. Set goals for next meeting (see below)
Final Week	MEETING 4 (~ 30 min) Full scope of EE to be discussed: literature needed, planning of investigations/surveys/interviews.
First year, Term 4	
Week 2	Diploma Coordinator informs students about assessment criteria and formal requirements for the EE. Check-list handed out.
Week 2 – 5	Several short, informal meetings with supervisor to discuss progress.
Before Week 5	Experimental EEs: pilot experiments must be concluded, and actual experiments planned and commenced.
Last week: two writing days	MEETING 5 (30-60 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss the written product. 2. Outline goals for summer break (All experiments must be finalised before the break)

Second year, Term 1	
Week 1	Submit full draft of EE to Diploma Coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard copy (one) • electronic copy (through Turn-it-in) • self-assessment of draft against the criteria • completed check-list
Week 2-3	Supervisors feed back to students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft annotated with comments • List of specific suggestions for improvement and further work. • Assessment against the criteria
Week 3-4	MEETING 6 In-depth session (30-45 minutes) to discuss the draft and the feedback. Set targets for revisions and improvements.
Rest of the term	Several short, informal meetings to discuss progress. (Initiative rests with students)
Second year, Term 2	
Week 1	Submit final EE to Diploma Coordinator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard copies (two) • soft copy (through Turn-it-in)
Before week 10	Supervisors mark the EE and report a predicted grade to Diploma Coordinator. Supervisors conduct short Viva Voce interviews with their students
September	Diploma Coordinator sends original EEs to examiners, copies are filed.

“Some of us students agree that, could we go back, we would have started the essay a lot earlier on last year, as was recommended”.

“I find that it is easy to nearly waste the first year, thinking that you can catch up in the second, but this is obviously not true”

Y13 IB Scots student statements

The Extended Essay: FAQs

What is an Extended Essay?

It is an independent in-depth piece of academic research in one of the IB Diploma subjects. The EE must meet a number of formal requirements for format and structure. In particular it must not exceed 4,000 words.

Is it compulsory to write the Extended Essay?

Yes. If you do not submit your Extended Essay, you will not receive your Diploma.

Must my Extended Essay be written in one of my examination subjects?

No. However, it is strongly recommended that you select a topic from one of your HL subjects.

Is my Extended Essay worth anything?

Yes!

1. Your EE and your TOK Essay may earn you up to three bonus points that will count on your Diploma.
2. Most importantly, the skills you get by completing the EE – both in terms of conducting independent research and communicating your results and opinions – will be valuable in your further studies. Indeed, one of the reasons universities like IB students is that they know how well prepared they are for university studies, not least because of the EE.

How will my Extended Essay be evaluated?

It is sent off for external evaluation by the IB. Two examiners will mark it against the EE criteria (see p. 11f) resulting in up to 36 EE points. The point grade is translated into a letter grade according to the following grade boundaries:

E	0-7
D	8-15
C	16-22
B	23-28
A	29-36

Notice that if you manage to only get an E, you will need *minimum* 28 points (not 24) in your subjects to obtain the Diploma.

How do I earn the bonus points?

Simple: write a good EE *and* a good TOK essay!

		BONUS	TOK ESSAY				
			A	B	C	D	E
EE	A	3	3	2	1	1	
	B	3	2	2	1	0	
	C	2	2	1	0	0	
	D	1	1	0	0	0	
	E	1	0	0	0	0	

How much time should I devote to my Extended Essay?

- The IB assumes you will spend approximately forty hours on your EE.
- Many IB students find that they spend considerably longer! (Especially if they are poorly organised and have infrequent contact with their supervisor...)
- Your supervisor expects to spend about four hours supervising you face to face.

What is the role of my supervisor?

- Your supervisor will help you narrow down your research question and help you get started in the right direction, but will expect you to work independently.
- Your supervisor will expect to be updated with your progress at a regular basis. This will enable your supervisor to pull you back on track if necessary, or to give you that extra push that will help you gain momentum in your research.
- A supervisor can do little if not presented with concrete questions or written draft material for comment. It is therefore extremely important that you always present something tangible to your supervisor all the way through the process, right from the beginning.
- When you have handed in your first full draft, the supervisor will read it carefully and provide you with written feedback of general nature – supervisors are not allowed to edit your draft.
- Your supervisor will only read your first draft in its entirety. After that you can present bits and pieces for feedback.
- The supervisor will mark the final version of your EE and submit a predicted grade to the IB.

Will my supervisor be proactive and babysit me?

- No. You are now an IB learner, and we expect **you** to be inquiring and proactive.

What must my final submission include?

1. A *front page* with
 - a. A clear and precise title, indicating the focus of the essay.
 - b. The research question
 - c. Your name
 - d. Your exam registration number (which you get towards the end of your first year)
 - e. Your signature
 - f. Your supervisor's name
 - g. Word count
2. An *Abstract* (see p.6)
3. An *introduction* outlining the background for the research and stating a clear and precise research question.
4. A *Table of Contents page*
5. A *main body* with numbered pages. Numbered chapters and sub-sections are encouraged in order to increase clarity.
6. A *conclusion* in which the research question is restated and answered, and where areas of further research are suggested.
7. *Reference notes/citations*. (This will follow the APA referencing style).
8. A *Bibliography* listing all the references referred to from within the text – but only these.

What is an abstract?

The abstract summarises for the reader – who you can assume is a specialist in the field you are writing in – what your EE is all about.

In particular, it **must state**

1. The research question (verbatim)
2. The scope of the investigation (methods used)
3. The conclusion.

The abstract of an EE must not be more than **300 words**.

When the reader reads your abstract, s/he will have an understanding of the thesis and main supporting points in the paper s/he is about to read. That is why you complete your abstract at the end of the writing process.

What does the 4,000 word limit include?

This upper limit includes the introduction, the body, the conclusion and any quotations, but does **not** include:

- the abstract
- acknowledgments
- the contents page
- maps, charts, diagrams, annotated illustrations and tables
- equations, formulas and calculations
- citations/references (whether parenthetical or numbered)
- footnotes or endnotes
- the bibliography
- appendices.

Is it OK to write slightly more than 4000 words?

No! Essays containing more than 4,000 words are subject to penalties and examiners are not required to read material in excess of the word limit.

What is the Viva Voce?

Viva Voce is an interview with your supervisor once the final EE has been handed in; it is the conclusion of the process. You will have the opportunity to discuss the challenges and triumphs involved in writing the Extended Essay and, perhaps more importantly, to reflect upon what you learned about your subject. This interview will be scheduled for approximately fifteen minutes.

How do I avoid that the Extended Essay turns into an Extended Nightmare?

- Choose your favourite subject and favourite topic within that subject – something that you are passionate about.
- Get started early.
- Be organized. Keep a logbook. Meet all deadlines.
- Work continuously.
- Keep in touch with your supervisor.
- Be concrete: start writing as early as possible, produce tangible results.

Guidance from the IB re: Extended Essays

Candidates should aim to choose a topic that is both interesting and challenging to them. The topic chosen should be limited in scope and sufficiently narrow to allow candidates to examine an issue or problem in depth. It should present the candidate with the opportunity to collect or generate information and/or data for analysis and evaluation.

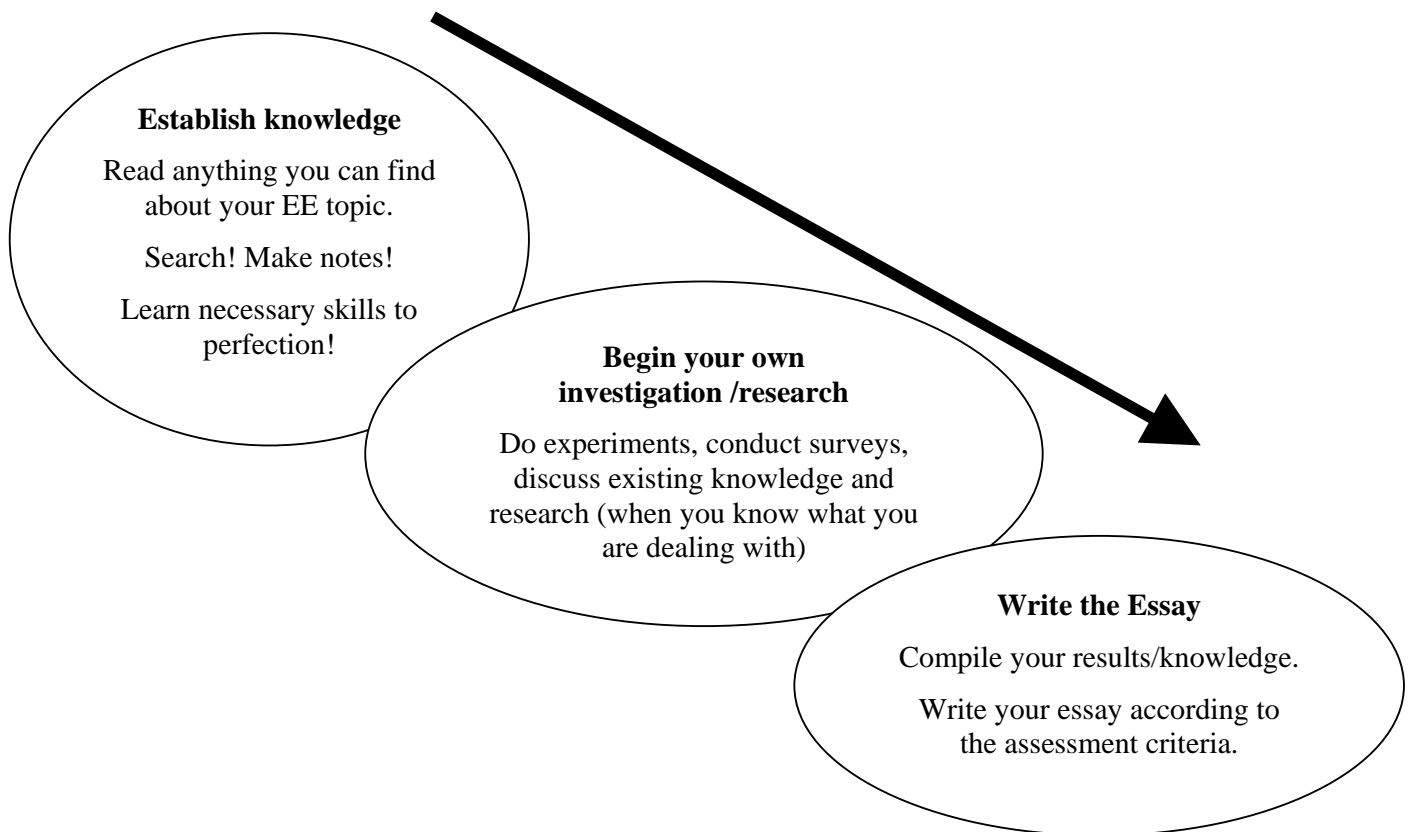
A broad topic is unlikely to result in a successful extended essay. A topic which requires no personal research and/or requires an essentially narrative or descriptive approach is not suitable for an extended essay. Similarly, although a reliance on secondary sources is sometimes necessary, an extended essay which only provides a summary of such sources will not be successful. Writing a précis of a well-documented topic is unlikely to result in a successful extended essay. (Guide. p. 8)

The Research Question

When an appropriate topic has been chosen, candidates should narrow the focus of the investigation and formulate a specific research question. For many extended essays this will be phrased in the form of a question, but alternatives such as launching the investigation with a hypothesis are acceptable.

What does this guidance mean?

- The topic should be interesting, but not the subject of a book or a 20,000 word thesis!
- You need to collect, analyse, and evaluate information. It is not enough just to deliver your own spin on the subject.
- Do not tell stories and do not just summarise sources. It is *your* essay, and there must be a point to it.
- Your research question doesn't have to be a question, and it doesn't have to be final from day 1. It is only natural to continuously modify the original research question as you get deeper into the research and your knowledge of the topic increases.



Good and bad topics for an EE

These samples show you what IB considers to be good and bad topics. This is not an exhaustive list it is merely provided to give an indication of the nature of the topic of an extended essay.

Subject Area	Bad Choice	Acceptable Choice
English A	The Brontes	Religious imagery in Wuthering Heights.
	Racial Conflict in the 20th Century	The problems of racial conflict as shown through the works of James Baldwin.
Biology	Organ transplants	Histocompatibility in organ transplants.
Chemistry	Water analysis	Spectrophotometric determination of trace amounts of lead in drinking water.
Economics	The Third World Debt Crisis	Do interest rates affect investment decisions?
Geography	The study of transport networks	A study of the seasonal variation in the transport network of Jersey, UK.
History	Fascist propaganda	Use of the visual arts in fascist propaganda.
Mathematics	Fractals	The Hausdorff dimension of fractal sets.
Physics	Alternative energy sources	Wind power: a clean source of energy?
	Wave theory	The investigation and analysis of the modes of vibration of a guitar string.
Visual Arts	Constructivism	Picasso: genius or cultural thief?

Working on your Extended Essay Drafts: Some Advice

In order to create a clear and precise Extended Essay, you should consider this advice. It is simply a process approach to creating your essay.

- Establish your thesis statement. This is often in the form of a research question. Talk to other people about this statement and consider all the useful advice that you are given.
- Explore relevant resources. Find out what is already known about the topic.
- Keep a meticulous record (logbook) of your research (this helps you stay organized even when the amount of material gets large – and it helps you avoid plagiarism).
- Create an outline and review it to make certain that it meets the *promise to the reader* (see below). If you are writing your paper in segments, it is absolutely critical that you have a precise outline to follow; otherwise, it is very easy to ‘stray’ when you are writing.
- Establish your ‘working title’ which reflects your research question/thesis statement.
- Write your first draft and *deconstruct it*. (see below)
- Use your own deconstruction to create a second draft.
- Read this draft aloud to yourself and note areas of weakness. Then, integrate these observations into your next draft.
- If necessary, have another person read your paper and comment on it. Ask that person whether the essay meets its purpose and how it possibly could be met more effectively.
- Integrate any useful advice which you received into your paper.
- Polish your paper. At this point, you have created your official ‘first draft’. It is a paper which is ready to be looked at by your supervisor.

Deconstruction

The process of deconstruction is simply the process of looking at your paper as if someone else had written it and as if you were the editor in charge of commenting upon this paper. Your goal is the improvement of the paper.

Meeting the Promise to the Reader

Your entire paper may be considered to be a promise to the reader. You promise to develop your ideas logically and with precision. Your reader, in turn, promises to read your paper with both attentiveness and interest. Keep the following comments in mind as you write:

- Make certain that your thesis is precise and clear.
- Make certain that the order in which you have presented your supporting/developing points makes logical sense. There should be a pattern of development and, in some cases, a building to a ‘climax’. Remember that the average reader is most attentive at the beginning and at the end of any paper.
- Make certain that all relevant points are grouped together rather than scattered throughout the paper. Paragraphs should be coherent and cohesive with each paragraph focused upon one idea only.
- Make certain that your ideas are linked through proper and effective transition. Ideas must ‘flow’; they should not ‘limp’. Effective transition leads to effective ‘flow’.
- Make certain that your introduction and conclusion are directly related to your thesis.

Meeting the Test of Academic Honesty

If your paper requires research, you have an academic framework to consider. No one likes their ideas to be 'stolen'. Therefore, please be careful to acknowledge your sources through using quotations and end/foot notes.

- Make certain that all your quotations are properly formatted and integrated seamlessly into your paper.
- Make certain that you have acknowledged all sources within the paper (if an idea or phrase is clearly not common knowledge, acknowledge it – this is why you have made careful notes!)
- Make certain that your endnotes/footnotes/citations are accurate.
- Make certain that you have included a comprehensive and accurate Bibliography or Works Cited.

Meeting the Need for Clarity

Your reader wants to be able to read your paper without becoming puzzled about what you are attempting to do. Therefore, it is your responsibility to follow the conventions of language and syntax.

- Make certain that you have attempted to remove grammatical errors (such as incorrect pronoun reference and tense agreement).
- Make certain that you have attempted to remove syntax errors (such as fragments and run-on sentences).

Avoiding the Trap of Overwriting

Your reader would like to be delighted by your ability to express your ideas in such a way that they wish they had written your paper. This is style. Deft word choices, scintillating phrases, and sentences that 'sing' are characteristics of style. It is not easy. It is, in fact, better to concentrate on clarity of expression unless you are already writing with a great deal of style. Developing writers sometimes believe that adding big words and creating a paper full of compound-complex sentences is a good thing; it is not. It simply annoys the reader.

- You have done all the above checks and are content that your paper is clear, logical, precise, and carefully prepared.
- You have removed inappropriate word choices (particularly those big words that were used for no reason) and convoluted sentences (which aim to impress the reader – but usually just confuse her/him).

As you work through this process, you may find that you need help. Consult

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Refer to the Essay section. This site is helpful and friendly.

Extended Essay: General Assessment Criteria

Adapted from the IB EE guide

You are wise to **consult these Criteria continuously** when you write your draft and your final essay.

	0	1	2	3	4
A: Research Question	Not stated or does not lend itself to systematic investigation.	Stated, but not precisely - or too broad in scope to be treated effectively in the word limit.	Clearly and precisely stated in the introduction. Sharply focused. Can be effectively treated within word limit.		
B: Introduction	Little or no attempt to set research question into context or to explain significance of the topic.	Some attempt to set research question into context and to explain significance of the topic.	Context of research question and significance of the topic clearly demonstrated		
C: Investigation	Little or no evidence that sources have been consulted or data gathered; little or no evidence that the investigation has been planned..	Inappropriate sources have been consulted or inappropriate data gathered; little evidence that the investigation has been planned..	Sufficient range of appropriate sources have been consulted, or data gathered, and some relevant material selected. Evidence of some planning of the investigation.	Sufficient range of appropriate sources have been consulted, or data gathered, and relevant material selected. Investigation satisfactorily planned.	Imaginative range of appropriate sources have been consulted, or data gathered, and relevant material carefully selected. Investigation well planned.
D: Knowledge and understanding of the topic studied	No real knowledge or understanding of the topic demonstrated	Some knowledge but little understanding of the topic demonstrated. Little awareness of an academic context of the investigation	Adequate knowledge and some understanding of the topic demonstrated. Some awareness of an academic context of the investigation	Good knowledge and understanding of the topic demonstrated. Where appropriate, the essay successfully outlines an academic context for the investigation.	Very good knowledge and understanding of the topic demonstrated. Where appropriate, the essay clearly and precisely locates the investigation in an academic context.
E: Reasoned argument	No attempt to develop reasoned argument in relation to research question.	Limited or superficial attempt present ideas in a logical and coherent manner and to develop reasoned argument in relation to research question	Some attempt present ideas in a logical and coherent manner and to develop reasoned argument in relation to research question, but this is only partially successful	Ideas presented in a logical and coherent manner and reasoned argument in relation to research question developed, but with some weaknesses	Ideas presented clearly and in a logical and coherent manner. Essay succeeds in developing a reasoned and convincing argument in relation to research question .

	0	1	2	3	4
F: Application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject	No application of appropriate analytic and evaluative skills.	Little application of appropriate analytic and evaluative skills.	Some application of appropriate analytic and evaluative skills, only partially effective.	Sound application of appropriate analytic and evaluative skills.	Effective and sophisticated application of appropriate analytic and evaluative skills.
G: Use of language appropriate to the subject	Language inaccurate and unclear. No effective use of terminology appropriate to subject.	Language sometimes communicates clearly, but not consistently. Use of terminology appropriate to subject only partly accurate.	Language for the most part communicates clearly. Use of terminology appropriate to subject usually accurate.	Language communicates clearly. Use of terminology appropriate to subject accurate with occasional lapses.	Language communicates clearly and precisely. Terminology appropriate to subject used accurately, with skill and understanding.
H: Conclusion	Little or no attempt made to provide a conclusion that is relevant to research question	Conclusion is attempted that is relevant to research question, but may not be entirely consistent with evidence presented	Effective conclusion clearly stated; it is relevant to research question and consistent with evidence presented. It should include unresolved questions where appropriate to the subject.		
I: Formal presentation	Unacceptable or exceeds 4000 words	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
J: Abstract, must: State the research question. State how the investigation was undertaken. State the conclusion	Abstract exceeds 300 words or does not meet one or more of the requirements listed to the left	Abstract contains all the elements listed to the left, but not all are clearly stated.	Abstract clearly states all the elements listed to the left..		
K: Holistic judgment: Intellectual initiative. Depth of understanding. Insight.	Essay shows no evidence of such qualities	Essay shows little evidence of such qualities	Essay shows some evidence of such qualities	Essay shows clear evidence of such qualities	Essay shows considerable evidence of such qualities.

The essay is evaluated out of 36, and the points obtained are converted into a grade according to the following grade boundaries:

E	0-7
D	8-15
C	16-22
B	23-28
A	29-36