



***Lexington High School
Extended Essay Guide
For
Students***





Dear IB Extended Essay Supervisor:

Thank you for generously volunteering to be an IB Extended Essay supervisor. Our IB Candidates are fortunate to have your subject area expertise to assist them as they travel through the process of creating their Extended Essay (EE) requirement.

The EE introduces students to independent, scholarly research. The essay is based on a topic of the student's choice, chosen from one of the six IB subject areas. The EE is written outside of the classroom on a student's own time. Lexington High School students begin the EE process in the spring of their junior year and submit their essays at the end of the first semester of their senior year. Each EE student will proactively obtain a LHS teacher to mentor and guide him/her during the months spent researching and writing. The EE is excellent preparation for assignments students can expect in the next stages of their academic career.

This guide provides a basic overview of the supervisor's role in the EE process. It is adapted from the International Baccalaureate Organization's Extended Essay Guide, which can be found on the Google Drive as well as from EE materials from other IB schools experienced in EE coordination. This guide should be used in conjunction with the Extended Essay Student Handbook and the IBO's Extended Essay Guide, which contains subject-specific information. The EE Student Handbook will be distributed to all EE students and a digital version also will be available in the IB Teacher Support Materials folder on the Google Drive.

If you choose to supervise an EE candidate, I will meet with you to review the subject-specific requirements for the EE. At any time, feel free to contact me if you need clarification or if you have concerns relating to the Extended Essay.

I thank you for once again using your talents and gifts to benefit the students of Lexington High School.

Sincerely,

Carla Neeley
Extended Essay Coordinator
(803) 821-3567
cneeley@lexington1.net

The Extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme 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. Completion of the written essay is followed by a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervisor. The same piece of work **cannot** be submitted to meet the requirements of both an internal assessment and the extended essay

The extended essay is assessed against common criteria, interpreted in ways appropriate to each subject.

The extended essay is:

- Compulsory for all Diploma Programme 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
- Chosen from the list of approved Diploma Programme subjects, published in the *IB Diploma Programme Handbook*
- 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.

In the Diploma Programme, the extended essay is the prime example of a piece of work where the student has the opportunity to show knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm about a topic of his or her choice. Whatever the subject, the extended essay student should strive to find relevant information from a diverse range of sources.

Assessment Objectives

In working on the extended essay, you are 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 your 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.

Student Responsibilities

Before starting work on the extended essay, you will:

- Select a subject for the EE in a subject that is part of the Diploma Programme
- 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, you will:

- Start work early and stick to deadlines
- Maintain a good working relationship with your supervisor
- Construct an argument that relates to the research question
- Use a library and consult librarians for advice
- Record sources as you 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 your interest and enthusiasm show.

After completing the essay, you will:

- Write the abstract
- Check and proofread the final version carefully.

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 you do not know what evidence is needed, or cannot collect such evidence, it will not be possible to answer the research question.

In addition, you **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 you have in the subject, the better the chance you have of writing a good extended essay.

Researching the EE

When researching the extended essay, you should do the following:

- Choose the approved Diploma Programme subject for the extended essay.
- Read the assessment criteria and the relevant subject guidance.
- Choose a topic.
- Formulate a well-focused research question.
- Plan the investigation and writing process.
- Identify how and where you will gather material.
- Identify which system of academic referencing you will use, appropriate to the subject of the essay.
- Set deadlines for yourself that will allow you to meet the school's requirements.
- Plan a structure (outline headings) for the essay. This may change as the investigation develops but it is useful to have a sense of direction.
- Undertake some preparatory reading.
- If you discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, the research question should be changed. This should be done sooner rather than later: you should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. If this happens go back to stage 3, 2 or 1, and choose a new research question that can be answered.
- Carry out the investigation.
- The material gathered should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay. Only then will you know whether you have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next.

- You should be prepared for things to go wrong. Sometimes you will discover something later in the investigation that undermines what you thought had been established earlier on. If that happens, the investigation plan needs to be revised.

Writing the EE

The structure of the essay is very important. This is what helps students to organize the argument, making best use of the evidence gathered.

The required elements of the final work to be submitted are listed here. More details about each element are given in the “Formal presentation of the extended essay” section.

- Title page
- Abstract
- Contents page/Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Body (development/methods/results)
- Conclusion
- References or bibliography
- Appendices

You need to use the chosen system of academic referencing as soon as you start writing. That way, you are less likely to forget to include a citation. It is also easier than trying to add references at a later stage. Most modern word processing software is helpful with this. Some students draft the introduction first. If you do that, you must be prepared to revise it once the essay is complete.

The main task is writing the body of the essay, which should be presented in the form of a reasoned argument. The form of this varies with the subject of the essay but, as the argument develops, it should be clear to the reader what relevant evidence has been discovered, where/how it has been discovered and how it supports the argument. In most subjects, sub-headings within the main body of the essay will help the reader to understand the argument (and will also help the student to keep on track).

Once the main body of the essay is complete, it is possible to finalize the introduction (which tells the reader what to expect) and the conclusion (which says what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved).

Any information that is important to the argument should not be included in appendices or footnotes/endnotes. The examiner is not bound to read notes or appendices, so an essay that is not complete in itself will lose marks.

The remaining stages in writing the essay take time but are not difficult. You need to check that you have cited sources for all material that is not your own, and that the citations are complete and consistent with the chosen referencing system. The bibliography should list only the

sources used in the essay. The whole essay needs to be proofread carefully (computer spelling and grammar checkers are useful but will not do everything). Pages must be numbered and the contents page must be completed. The abstract is normally written last.

Formal presentation of the EE

The extended essay should be written in a clear, correct and formal academic style, appropriate to the subject from which the topic is drawn.

The length of the extended essay

The upper limit is 4,000 words for all extended essays. 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 works cited page
- Appendices.

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.

Title

The title should provide a clear indication of the focus of the essay. It should be precise and not necessarily phrased in the form of a question.

Abstract

An abstract not exceeding 300 words must be included with the essay submitted. It does not serve as an introduction, but presents an overview of the extended essay, and should, therefore, be written last.

The inclusion of an abstract is intended as a way 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 for it to state clearly:

- The research question being investigated
- The scope of the investigation
- The conclusion(s) of the extended essay.

The abstract should be written on one side of a sheet of paper, and placed immediately after the title page.

Contents page

A contents page must be provided at the beginning of the extended essay and all pages should be numbered. An index is not required.

Illustrations

Presentation and overall neatness are important, and it is essential that illustrative material, if included, is well set out and used effectively. Graphs, diagrams, tables and maps are effective only if they are clearly labeled and can be interpreted with ease. All such material that is incorporated into the extended essay must be directly related to the text and acknowledged where appropriate. The use of photographs and other images is acceptable only if they are captioned and/or annotated and are used to illustrate a specific point made in the extended essay.

Works Cited, references and citations

An extended essay must reflect intellectual honesty in research practices and provide the reader with the **exact** sources of quotations, ideas and points of view through accurate works cited and referencing. Producing accurate citations, referencing and a works cited is a skill that students should be seeking to perfect. Documenting the research in this way is vital: it allows readers to evaluate the evidence for themselves and it shows the student's understanding of the importance of the sources used.

Failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as plagiarism and will, therefore, be treated as a case of malpractice.

What is a reference list?

A reference list is an alphabetical list of every source used to research and write the essay. Sources that are not cited in the body of the essay, but were important in informing the approach taken, should be cited in the introduction or in an acknowledgment. The reference list should list only those sources cited.

There are a number of different documentation styles available for use when writing research papers; most are appropriate in some academic disciplines but not others. The supervisor should help the student decide on a style for the particular subject of the essay. It is important to remember that, whatever style is chosen, it must be applied consistently. When choosing the documentation style, the student needs to have a clear understanding of how it is to be used before embarking on the research task. The documentation style should be applied in both the final draft of the essay and in the initial research stages of taking notes. This is good practice, not only for producing a high-quality final product, but also for reducing the opportunities and temptation to plagiarize.

Major documentation styles

The following are examples of acceptable documentation styles.

- American Political Science Association (APSA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Chicago/Turabian
- Council of Biology Editors (CBE)
- Harvard citation and referencing guide

- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Numbered references

What is a reference?

A reference is a way of indicating to the reader, in an orderly form, where information has been obtained. A reference provides all the information needed to find the source material.

References must be cited because they acknowledge the sources used, and enable the reader to consult the work and verify the data that has been presented.

References must be given whenever someone else's work is quoted or summarized. References can come from many different sources, including books, magazines, journals, newspapers, e-mails, Internet sites and interviews.

Internet references should include the title of the extract used as well as the web site address, the date it was accessed and, if possible, the author. Caution should be exercised with information on web sites that do not give references or that cannot be cross-checked against other sources. The more important a particular point is to the essay, the more the quality of its source needs to be evaluated.

Any references to interviews should state the name of the interviewer, the name of the interviewee, the date and the place of the interview.

What is a citation?

A citation is a shorthand method of making a reference in the body of an essay, which is then linked to the full reference at the end of the essay. A citation provides the reader with accurate references so that he or she can locate the source easily. How sources are cited varies with the particular documentation style that has been chosen. Page numbers should normally be given when referencing printed material: in some styles this will be in the citation, in others in the full reference. Once again, it is important to emphasize that there must be consistency of method when citing sources.

Appendices, footnotes and endnotes

Appendices, footnotes and endnotes are not an essential section of the extended essay and examiners are not required to read them, so care should be taken to include all information of direct relevance to the analysis and argument in the main body of the essay. An essay that

attempts to evade the word limit by including important material in notes or appendices risks losing marks under several criteria.

Unless considered essential, complete lists of raw data should not be included in the extended essay. Students should not constantly refer to material presented in an appendix since this may disrupt the continuity of the essay.

The Concluding Interview

The *viva voce* is a short interview between the student and the supervisor, and is the conclusion to the extended essay process. Students who do not attend the *viva voce* may be disadvantaged.

The *viva voce* 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
- An aid to the supervisor's report

The *viva voce* should last between 10 and 15 minutes. This is included in the recommended amount of time the supervisor should spend with the student. The following are examples of questions that can be asked, which should be adapted to the particular essay and student.

- "I am not clear what you mean on page XXX. You quote Y: could you explain a little more about what this tells us?"
- "On page *** you cite Z. I couldn't find this reference (for example, web site). Could you tell me more about it?"
- "What have been the high and low points of the research and writing processes?"
- "What were the most interesting aspects of the process? Did you discover anything that surprised you?"
- "What have you learned through writing this essay? Is there any advice you would want to pass on to someone just starting out on an extended essay?"
- "Is there anything else that you would particularly like me to mention in my report?"

Getting Started and Important Dates to Remember (EE Timeline)

Select a Subject. Please choose a subject from the following list: Group 1 (Language Arts), Group 2 (World Languages), Business and management, Chemistry, Economics, Environmental systems and societies, History, Mathematics, Theatre, and Visual Arts. If you have a specific question about a subject please see me for the subject requirements. It is beneficial to write an EE in a subject you will be examined on in May.

An important component of choosing a topic is selecting a supervisor. When approaching someone to be your supervisor for the EE please be considerate of the teacher's time. No teacher should be supervising more than five students, and even this number is on the high end. Many of you will need to approach a teacher whose class you might not have taken yet. Depending on your subject/topic it might be beneficial to choose someone who is not teaching a designated IB class.

Choose a Topic – the narrower the better. A subject is a broad field of study. History and Mathematics, for example, are subjects. A topic is a specific element contained within a subject. A topic can be both wide and narrow. In the case of the EE the narrower the topic the easier it will be to generate a focused research question. In a broad sense the Cold War is a topic within history. But for planning purposes this is too broad. An example of a narrow topic is Truman informing Stalin at the Potsdam Conference that the United States possessed a powerful new weapon.

Formulate a well-focused research question. When you have the right question the rest is simple because your essay is the answer to the question. In a manner of speaking, the paper will write itself. The research question distinguishes your essay from an encyclopedia entry. Perhaps your primary consideration should be to proceed with something that is interesting. Please make every effort not to bore me.

- Plan the investigation and writing process.
- Identify how and where you will gather material.
- Identify which system of academic referencing you will use, appropriate to the subject of the essay.

5. Undertake some preparatory reading. If you discover that it will not be possible to obtain the evidence needed in the time available, the research question should be changed. This should be done sooner rather than later: you should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. If this happens go back to stage 3, 2 or 1, and choose a new research question that can be answered.