

## SUMMARY OF EXTENDED ESSAY

The first step in the EE process is to decide in which **Diploma Programme subject** you want to complete an in-depth study of a focused topic. This is normally **one of your six** chosen subjects and your supervisor will be allocated on the basis of this decision.

The EE is a **long process** and is likely to take several months or even a year to complete.

There are many other things you will need to figure out early in the process including:

- What **kind of essay** you are going to write?
- How **formal** should your writing be?
- What **tense** and **voice** (third person or first person) should you use?
- Are you collecting **primary** data yourself or are you analysing **primary and secondary** sources?

The sources you use will **depend on the subject you choose** for your essay. For example, a topic in history or politics will likely require you to research and analyse a collection of primary & secondary sources, mostly in print. With a topic in any of the experimental sciences, you may design an experiment based on a hypothesis or question. You will then execute that experiment and analyse the results of the data you collect.

Throughout the research and writing process, you will be encouraged to **reflect** on your experiences, both formally and informally.

Use your personal Researcher's Reflection Space (RRS) to re-examine your ideas and decide whether changes are needed at different points during the process. More information can be found in [The Importance of Reflection](#).

You will also need to **complete three formal reflection sessions** with your supervisor which need to be **written up on the on the Reflections on Planning and Progress Form (RPPF)**. More information can be found in [The Importance of Reflection](#).

This table provides some additional information.

Reflection Session
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Purpose

Advice

First Reflection, Takes place early in the EE process. Focuses on initial ideas, how you plan to do your research and formulating a suitable EE topic and research question. Should be around 150 words. Use your RRS to discuss with your supervisor why you are interested in your chosen topic, how you will link it to the relevant IB subject and any outstanding questions you have.

Interim Reflection

Takes place after you have completed a significant proportion of your research and have started writing the essay.

Focuses on how your thinking and arguments have developed and any challenges you have faced.

Should be around 150 words.

Use your RRS to discuss with your supervisor whether you have sufficient data and information to answer your research question, whether or not your question needs to be reformulated, what your reaction to your research is and how you have overcome any challenges.

Final Reflection (Viva Voce)

Takes place after your final essay has been submitted.

Focuses on how you have grown as a learner, your personal experience with the EE process, and what improvements could have been made to your own working practices with hindsight.

Should be around 200 words.

This session is more of an interview than a discussion and will be longer than the previous two sessions. However, you should use your RRS to reflect on the successes and difficulties you faced in the research process and to provide evidence of your learning experience.

This table provides some additional information.

<b>Reflection Session</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Advice</b>
<b>First Reflection</b>	<p>Takes place early in the EE process.</p> <p>Focuses on initial <b>ideas</b>, how you plan to do your <b>research</b> and formulating a suitable EE <b>topic</b> and <b>research question</b>.</p> <p>Should be around <b>150 words</b>.</p>	<p>Use your RRS to discuss with your supervisor <b>why</b> you are interested in your chosen topic, <b>how</b> you will link it to the relevant IB subject and any outstanding <b>questions</b> you have.</p>
<b>Interim Reflection</b>	<p>Takes place after you have completed a significant proportion of your research and have started writing the essay.</p> <p>Focuses on how your <b>thinking</b> and <b>arguments</b> have developed and any <b>challenges</b> you have faced.</p> <p>Should be around <b>150 words</b>.</p>	<p>Use your RRS to discuss with your supervisor whether you have <b>sufficient data and information</b> to answer your research question, whether or not your question needs to be reformulated, what your <b>reaction</b> to your research is and how you have <b>overcome any challenges</b>.</p>

**Final  
Reflection  
(Viva  
Voce)**

Takes place after your final essay has been submitted.

Focuses on how you have **grown** as a learner, your **personal experience** with the EE process, and what **improvements** could have been made to your own working practices with hindsight.

Should be around **200 words**.

This session is more of an interview than a discussion and will be longer than the previous two sessions. However, you should use your RRS to reflect on the **successes and difficulties** you faced in the research process and to provide **evidence of your learning** experience.

**Each EE is marked out of 34 with grades awarded from A to E.**

**If you do not submit your EE or achieve an E grade for your EE you will not be awarded your diploma.**

The following table shows how the **34 marks are allocated** across five assessment criteria:

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Marks</b>
<b>Criterion A</b> - focus and method	Focuses on the topic, the research question and the methodology. It assesses the explanation of the focus of the research, how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.	6
<b>Criterion B</b> - knowledge and understanding	Focuses on subject-specific content, context and terminology. It assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question and the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.	6

<b>Criterion C</b> - critical thinking	Focuses on the research, discussion, analysis and evaluation. It assesses the extent to which critical-thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.	12
<b>Criterion D</b> - presentation	Focuses on structure and layout. It assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.	4
<b>Criterion E</b> - engagement	Focuses on engagement in research focus and the research processes. It is assessed at the end of the assessment of the EE and is based only on the reflections on your RPPF using your EE and supervisor comments as context.	6
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>34</b>

The EE is **externally assessed** so it will not be marked by your supervisor.

As you begin the EE process, try to **follow these steps**:

1. Choose a subject and topic that is of **interest** to you.
2. Carry out **preliminary reading** about the topic.
3. Start posing some **general questions** about the topic using words like 'how', 'why' or 'to what extent'.
4. **Evaluate** your questions based on whether they are clear, focused, and arguable.
5. Meet with your supervisor to **discuss** your ideas.
6. **Select which question to use** for your essay based on what outcomes you can achieve. Consider what kind of argument you could make and whether there is enough research to support you with this.

The key to a successful essay is **writing a clear, focused and arguable research question**.

Hurrah! Once you have your approved **research question** you can start to develop your argument, using concrete facts and data from your reading and research to support your ideas.

The IB helps you with this! 😊

There are **six required elements** but you can add more sections depending on your essay subject and topic:

1. **Title page** - This must only include your title, research question, subject and the word count.
2. **Contents page** - Number your pages and include a contents page at the start of your essay.
3. **Introduction** - Tell readers what to expect in your essay.
4. **Body (research, analysis, discussion and evaluation)** - The requirements for this section vary from subject to subject, but essentially this should take the form of a reasoned argument which tells the reader what relevant evidence has been discovered, where/how it has been discovered and how it supports the argument.
5. **Conclusion** - Say what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved.
6. **References and/or bibliography**.

The IB has set out the following **formatting requirements**:

- Choose a **font, font size and spacing** conducive to on-screen marking.

A good example might be arial, size 12 with double-line spacing.

- Include **page numbering**.

This should be at the **bottom** of your pages and will help you create a professional contents page.

- Do **not** include your candidate, supervisor, or school name anywhere in the essay or the RPPF.

Your EE is externally marked so **needs to be anonymous**.

- Make sure the **file size** for your essay is not more than 10 MB.

If your file size is too large it cannot be uploaded to the IB.

## EVALUATING Academic Source

**THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CAN BE USED TO HELP YOU EVALUATE EACH SOURCE:**

- ✓ Who wrote it? Is it scholarly or non-scholarly?
- ✓ When was it written and/or published? Is it up to date?
- ✓ Does it contain any evidence or information that you can check?
- ✓ Do you have other sources that support the content of this source?
- ✓ Is it biased or impartial and does this matter for this source? (For example, advertising material on a website is expected to be biased while a newspaper article should be more objective.)
- ✓ What was the purpose of the publication?

As a general rule of thumb, the **four main citation styles** used in academic publications are:

- Chicago Manual
- MLA
- APA
- Harvard Reference

There are plenty of websites that you can find online to clarify **how to cite your sources**.

Just **be aware** that a given website might take liberties with some of the details of the guidelines, so when in doubt, **trust only the official published manual** for each style.