

IB EXTENDED ESSAY

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All IB Diploma students have to undertake an Extended Essay on a topic of their choice within an IB subject. This does not have to be chosen from the six subjects chosen at Higher/Standard Level, although it usually is. The purpose of the Extended Essay is to develop independent research skills.

The Extended Essay is an in-depth study of a limited topic within an IB subject. It is recommended that students spend a maximum of 40 hours on it, though many willingly exceed this, often by a significant amount. Students have around 5 hours contact time with an academic supervisor, who is usually a teacher within the school, and they are expected to work independently for the remainder of the time. The supervisor provides the candidate with advice and guidance in the skills of undertaking research – by assisting, for example, with defining a suitable topic, with techniques of gathering and analysing information/evidence/data, with documentation methods for acknowledging sources and with writing an abstract. The work is undertaken over several months.

One third of the marks for the essay is based on subject specific merit. Two thirds are awarded for specific research skills which are common and highly-transferable:

- Formulation of Research Question
- Approach to Research Question
- Interpretation/Argument/Evaluation
- Conclusion
- Abstract
- Formal details – referencing, bibliography, etc.

Recent examples of Extended Essay titles by TBGS students:

- How does pressure inside a rugby ball determine how far it can be kicked?
- Is the use of non-nutritional sweeteners Acesulfame Potassium and Aspartame in foodstuffs ethically viable?
- Is Psychology the true path to a holistic understanding of religion?
- To what extent has the post-glacial environment in North Wales been successfully exploited by human development?

