

# The Basics

## What is the Extended Essay?

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of available Diploma Programme subjects. It is a research essay, 4,000 words long, written in an academic style, and formally presented. The extended essay is described by the IB as 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.*'

## What will I achieve by writing an Extended Essay?

The aims of the extended essay are for you to:

- engage in independent research with intellectual initiative and rigour
- develop research, thinking, self-management and communication skills
- reflect on what has been learned throughout the research and writing process.

## Can I write my EE in any subject?

The EE must be written in one of the available IB Diploma Programme subjects. There is no such subject as 'Law', or 'Medicine', for example, but there are subjects such as 'Film' and 'Dance'. The DP Coordinator can provide you with a list of available subjects.

## Should I write my EE in one of my six DP subjects?

Yes, you should. These are the subjects you know best, and have studied the most. You are MUCH more likely to be successful writing an EE in one of your six subjects than you will be writing an essay in subject where you have no understanding of the theoretical background, the subject material, the language or the subjects's conventions.

If you really want to write an EE in a subject which you are not studying for the DP, and which perhaps you have never studied, then you must discuss this with the DP Coordinator.

## How long is the EE?

The maximum length is 4,000 words. Examiners are instructed not to read or assess any material in excess of the word limit. This means that essays containing more than 4,000 words will be compromised across all assessment criteria. Given the holistic nature of the assessment criteria, writing in excess of the word limit is self-penalizing. This means that there is no actual penalty for going over 4,000 words, but you are very likely to lose marks by doing so.

There is no minimum number of words, but writing under 3,000 is likely to result in a low grade, as you won't be able to indicate sufficient knowledge, understanding or critical thinking is such a low number of words.

## How much time should I devote to the Extended Essay?

The IB indicates that the EE should be *the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student*. Of course you can spend more time than this working on your essay, but you should probably not spend significantly less than the suggested 40 hours on your essay. You also need to make sure that you do not spend so much time on your EE that your other subjects suffer.

## **What support will I be given to help me complete the EE?**

You will be supported by a **supervisor**, one of the teachers at school, who will guide you through the research and writing process. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that you are supervised by a teacher at the school with appropriate qualifications and/or experience in the subject you have chosen. You can only have one supervisor, and it is not permitted for any of your relatives to undertake the role of your supervisor.

## **How much time can my supervisor give me?**

The IB states that your supervisor can give you between 3–5 hours of support, which includes three mandatory reflection sessions.

## **In what language can I write my Extended Essay?**

Extended essays in a group 1 or group 2 language subject must be written in the chosen language. So, an English A essay must be written in English, a Danish B essay must be written in Danish ...

Extended essays in subjects from groups 3 (Humanities), group 4 (Sciences), group 5 (Maths) and group 6 (Arts) can be written in English, French or Spanish. However, there is an exception for history and biology, which can also be written in German.

BUT, remember that your supervisor will need to be able to read the language in which you are writing your essay - so don't plan on writing a Maths EE in Spanish, unless your Maths teacher is also a fluent Spanish teacher.

Bear in mind that you cannot write a Danish B extended essay if you are studying Danish A. The rule is *Extended essays in group 2 languages are for learners of a second or an additional language. A candidate is not permitted to submit a group 2 extended essay in the language A that is his or her chosen group 1 subject.* Equally, you should not write a Danish A EE if you are studying Danish B. The rule is *Extended essays in group 1 are intended for candidate whose best language is the language A chosen for the extended essay.*

## **What other requirements should I be aware of?**

- The extended essay is **compulsory** for all students taking the Diploma Programme and is an option for Course students.
- A student **must achieve a D grade** or higher in the EE to be awarded the Diploma.