

# How to do really well - or really badly - in your Extended Essay

Before starting work on the Extended Essay, you should:

- read the assessment criteria
- read previous essays to identify strengths and possible pitfalls
- 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 should:

- start work early and stick to deadlines
- maintain a good working relationship with their supervisor
- construct an argument that relates to the research question
- use the 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 should:
- check and proofread the final version carefully.

## Recommended: things to avoid

You 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 analyse 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. Choosing to write the Extended Essay in a subject that is not being studied as part of the Diploma Programme can lead to lower marks.

### **How to flunk your EE in 10 easy steps**

- ❖ Don't follow the criteria
- ❖ Change your topic halfway through
- ❖ Write a research question that's too broad
- ❖ Choose a 'been there/done that RQ', or one which has already been answered
- ❖ Ignore your supervisor's suggestions and advice
- ❖ Procrastinate - start it three weeks before it's due
- ❖ Let the internet write it for you
- ❖ Find all your sources on Wikipedia
- ❖ Choose a subject for which you have no qualified supervisor

*Adapted from the Western Academy of Beijing's EE Handbook*