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. It is recommended that completion of the written essay is followed by a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with the supervisor.

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 *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*
- 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 (recommended).

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.

**Responsibilities of Students**

It is **required** that students:

- choose a topic that fits into one of the subjects on the approved extended essay list (found on the May 2017 Extended Essay commitment form)
- observe the regulations relating to the extended essay
- meet deadlines
- acknowledge all sources of information and ideas in an approved academic manner.
It is strongly recommended that students:

- start work early
- think very carefully about the research question for their essay
- plan how, when and where they will find material for their essay
- plan a schedule for both researching and writing the essay, including extra time for delays and unforeseen problems
- record sources as their research progresses (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
- have a clear structure for the essay itself before beginning to write
- check and proofread the final version carefully
- make sure that all basic requirements are met (for example, all students should get full marks for the abstract).

Recommended: things to do

Examiners’ reports frequently emphasize the following positive steps.

Before starting work on the extended essay, students 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, students 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 they 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. A student wishing to change topics and research questions after they have been submitted and reviewed by the IB Coordinator MUST HAVE the written approval of the IB Coordinator.
- use the appropriate language for the subject
- let their interest and enthusiasm show.
After completing the essay, students should:

- write the abstract
- check and proofread the final version carefully.

**Recommended: things to avoid**

Examiners’ reports also mention these things to be avoided at all costs.

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

In addition, students **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 a student has in the subject, the better the chance he or she has 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 often leads to lower marks.

**The Research Process**

When researching the extended essay, students should do the following.

1. Choose the approved Diploma Programme subject for the extended essay.
   - Read the assessment criteria and the relevant subject guidance found in the Extended Essay Guide posted in Google Classroom and the IB/MYP page of the PAHS website.

2. Choose a topic.

3. Formulate a well-focused research question.

4. Plan the investigation and writing process.
• Identify how and where they will gather material.

• Identify which system of academic referencing they will use, appropriate to the subject of the essay.

• Set deadlines for themselves that will allow them to meet the school’s requirements.

5. 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.

6. Undertake some preparatory reading.

• If students 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: students should not lose time waiting and hoping that something will turn up. Students should go back to stage 3, 2 or 1, and choose a new research question that can be answered. A student wishing to change topics and research questions after they have been submitted and reviewed by the IB Coordinator MUST HAVE the written approval of the IB Coordinator.

7. Carry out the investigation.

• The material gathered should be assembled in a logical order, linked to the structure of the essay. Only then will students know whether they have enough evidence for each stage of the argument so that they can proceed to the next.

• Students should be prepared for things to go wrong. Sometimes they may discover something later in the investigation that undermines what they thought had been established earlier on. If that happens, the investigation plan needs to be revised.

Writing the Extended Essay

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. Please note that the order in which they are presented here is not necessarily the order in which they should be written.

• Title page

• Abstract

• Contents page

• Introduction

• Body (development/methods/results)

• Conclusion

• References and bibliography

• Appendices
Students should use the chosen system of academic referencing as soon as they start writing. That way, they are less likely to forget to include a citation. It is also easier than trying to add references at a later stage.

Some students draft the introduction first. If students do that, they 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. Students need to check that they have cited sources for all material that is not their 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.

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 bibliography
- 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 to encourage students 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 presented on a separate 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 labelled 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.

**Bibliographies, references and citations**

An extended essay must reflect academic honesty in research practices and provide the reader with the exact sources of quotations, ideas and points of view through accurate bibliographies and referencing. Producing accurate citations, referencing and a bibliography 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 bibliography?

A bibliography 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 bibliography 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.

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, emails, internet sites and interviews.

Internet references should include the title of the extract used as well as the website address, the date it was accessed and, if possible, the author. **With regard to electronic sources, the requirement of the IB for date-stamping supersedes the requirements of the chosen referencing system. In other words, all electronic sources must be date-stamped.** Caution should be exercised with information on websites 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 as this may disrupt the continuity of the essay.

Assessment

This section provides an overview of what each criterion assesses in the extended essay. Further advice on interpreting the assessment criteria is provided within the guidelines for each subject in the “Details—subject specific” section beginning on pg. 29 of the Extended Essay Guide. The extended essay is assessed against common assessment criteria for all extended essays. Candidates must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively. Supervisors of extended essays should ensure that the assessment criteria are made available to candidates and that the candidates understand these criteria.

A: research question

(Objectives 1 and 2)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the purpose of the essay is specified. In many subjects, the aim of the essay will normally be expressed as a question and, therefore, this criterion is called the “research question”. However, certain disciplines may permit or encourage different ways of formulating the research task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The research question is not stated in either the introduction or on the title page or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in an extended essay in the subject in which it is registered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The research question is stated in either the introduction or on the title page but is not clearly expressed or is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The research question is clearly stated in either the introduction or on the title page and is sharply focused, making effective treatment possible within the word limit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B: introduction

(Objectives 1 and 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the introduction makes clear how the research question relates to existing knowledge on the topic and explains how the topic chosen is significant and worthy of investigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Little or no attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is little or no attempt to explain the significance of the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some attempt is made to set the research question into context. There is some attempt to explain the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The context of the research question is clearly demonstrated. The introduction clearly explains the significance of the topic and why it is worthy of investigation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C: investigation

(Objectives 1 and 3)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the investigation is planned and an appropriate range of sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, that is relevant to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There is little or no evidence that sources have been consulted or data gathered, and little or no evidence of planning in the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A range of inappropriate sources has been consulted, or inappropriate data has been gathered, and there is little evidence that the investigation has been planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A limited range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and some relevant material has been selected. There is evidence of some planning in the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A sufficient range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been selected. The investigation has been satisfactorily planned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>An imaginative range of appropriate sources has been consulted, or data has been gathered, and relevant material has been carefully selected. The investigation has been well planned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

(Objectives 3 and 7)

Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2. “Academic context”, as used in this guide, can be defined as the current state of the field of study under investigation. However, this is to be understood in relation to what can reasonably be expected of a pre-university student. For example, to obtain a level 4, it would be sufficient to relate the investigation to the principal lines of inquiry in the relevant field; detailed, comprehensive knowledge is not required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The essay demonstrates no real knowledge or understanding of the topic studied.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The essay demonstrates some knowledge but little understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows little awareness of an academic context for the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The essay demonstrates an adequate knowledge and some understanding of the topic studied. The essay shows some awareness of an academic context for the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The essay demonstrates a good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay successfully outlines an academic context for the investigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The essay demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic studied. Where appropriate, the essay clearly and precisely locates the investigation in an academic context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
E: reasoned argument

(Objectives 1 and 4)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay uses the material collected to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and develops a reasoned argument in relation to the research question. Where the research question does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject in which the essay is registered, the maximum level that can be awarded for this criterion is 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There is no attempt to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a limited or superficial attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There is some attempt to present ideas in a logical and coherent manner, and to develop a reasoned argument in relation to the research question, but this is only partially successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ideas are presented in a logical and coherent manner, and a reasoned argument is developed in relation to the research question, but with some weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ideas are presented clearly and in a logical and coherent manner. The essay succeeds in developing a reasoned and convincing argument in relation to the research question.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

(Objective 7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The essay shows no application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The essay shows little application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The essay shows some application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills, which may be only partially effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The essay shows sound application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The essay shows effective and sophisticated application of appropriate analytical and evaluative skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
G: use of language appropriate to the subject

(Objective 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The language used is inaccurate and unclear. There is no effective use of terminology appropriate to the subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The language used sometimes communicates clearly but does not do so consistently. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is only partly accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The language used for the most part communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is usually accurate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The language used communicates clearly. The use of terminology appropriate to the subject is accurate, although there may be occasional lapses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The language used communicates clearly and precisely. Terminology appropriate to the subject is used accurately, with skill and understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H: conclusion

(Objectives 1, 4 and 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the essay incorporates a conclusion that is relevant to the research question and is consistent with the evidence presented in the essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Little or no attempt is made to provide a conclusion that is relevant to the research question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A conclusion is attempted that is relevant to the research question but may not be entirely consistent with the evidence presented in the essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>An effective conclusion is clearly stated; it is relevant to the research question and consistent with the evidence presented in the essay. It should include unresolved questions where appropriate to the subject concerned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I: formal presentation

(Objective 5)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the layout, organization, appearance and formal elements of the essay consistently follow a standard format. The formal elements are: title page, table of contents,
Achievement level | Descriptor
--- | ---
0 | The formal presentation is unacceptable, or the essay exceeds 4,000 words.
1 | The formal presentation is poor.
2 | The formal presentation is satisfactory.
3 | The formal presentation is good.
4 | The formal presentation is excellent.

**J: abstract**

*(Objective 5)*

The requirements for the abstract are for it to state clearly the research question that was investigated, how the investigation was undertaken and the conclusion(s) of the essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The abstract exceeds 300 words or one or more of the required elements of an abstract (listed above) is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The abstract contains the elements listed above but they are not all clearly stated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The abstract clearly states all the elements listed above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
K: holistic judgment

(Objective 1)

The purpose of this criterion is to assess the qualities that distinguish an essay from the average, such as intellectual initiative, depth of understanding and insight. While these qualities will be clearly present in the best work, less successful essays may also show some evidence of them and should be rewarded under this criterion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The essay shows no evidence of such qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The essay shows little evidence of such qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The essay shows some evidence of such qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The essay shows clear evidence of such qualities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The essay shows considerable evidence of such qualities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reference: