

Extended Essay FAQs

Q: If my topic is controversial, will an examiner look down on that and penalize me?

A: No. In fact, IB students write many great essays about controversial topics. As with all essays, be sure to construct a thoughtful argument that takes into account a variety of perspectives.

Q: What is a passing grade for an EE?

A: 6, out of a possible 34 points.

Q: What if my Supervisor is unresponsive?

A: Chat, email, or stop by to visit Ms. Matthew and Ms Mervat to let them know. They will reach out to your Supervisor and get things back on track!

Q: Are those 3 Reflections really important?

A: Yes! Together, these reflections are worth 6 points (out of a possible 34) and speak to how engaged in and reflective you were about your EE. You will be asked in college (and later on in life) to reflect upon your projects and work in a professional manner, so this will be the first time of many you'll have to do this!

Q: I found an example essay online and it has an abstract: do I need an abstract?

A: No. The IB stopped requiring abstracts in 2018.

Q: How many research articles or sources should I be including?

A: The unofficial suggestion is for you to use 8-10 [scholarly sources](#). You can certainly use more, but keep in mind that every source you list in your Works Cited (MLA), Bibliography (CMS), or References (APA) has to be cited or referenced within your essay.

Q: What are the benefits/criteria to scoring well on the EE?

A: It literally might mean the difference between you receiving or not receiving your IB diploma. If you get a high grade on your EE and a high grade on your TOK essay, you can earn up to 3 additional points that will be applied to your IB points total.

Q: Why is my Supervisor encouraging me to take individual notes for every interesting fact I come across, which takes much more time than doing what I have always done - bookmarking the web page?

A: While it does take time to do this during the research phase, it will prove to be a big time saver once the writing phase begins, since note cards (either hard copy or digital) can be organized in the order they will be used per your outline. Each card will need to contain the citation details so complete citations can be quickly added. If you depend on browser bookmarks, you will end up doing the research TWICE as you look for full citation information and try to find the exact piece of data that interested you when you first discovered the resource.

Q: Should we use footnotes?

A: Only if you are using the Chicago Manual of Style (which you have the option of using if you are writing your EE in History). The majority of our students use the Modern Language of

American (MLA) citation style, and if they are writing a Psychology EE, they use the American Psychological Association (APA) citation style.

Q: Is it ok to interview someone and use them as a primary source?

A: Yes! The IB encourages when primary sources are used (whenever appropriate given the subject area), and it is easy to cite these conversations using either of the citation styles we use in our school. Check your subject area guidance in your subject's graphic organizer first before you arrange any interviews. For instance, you are NOT allowed to use primary sources in Psychology for data-collecting purposes, but you WOULD be able to interview a psychologist about your topic.

Q: How much time can my Supervisor spend helping me with my EE?

A: Your Supervisor is allowed to spend no more than 5 hours with you in total, from the very beginning of the process until the very last official EE conversation you have with them, the Viva Voce. Plan your time with them carefully and accordingly. Keep in mind that after your Rough Draft Meeting, you are only allowed to check in with them about little things (not the full draft again). One of the IB world schools' supervisors weighed in on this, saying "Poor planning on your part does not necessitate an emergency on mine."

Q: Should I break down the assessment criteria and self-assess against them?

A: It is always helpful to have the [EE rubric](#) close at hand when you are writing your EE. It is also very helpful to read and annotate the subject area guidance and subject area examiner reports as you move through the EE process.

Q: If I can read one source and find the answer to my RQ, why do I have to read anything else?

A: Look at **Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding** on the [rubric](#). An important part of research is understanding an issue from multiple perspectives including its context, development, and implications. In many cases, there may be disagreement on these issues or multiple ideas to consider. A large pool (roughly 8-10) sources are likely to lead you to a more complete answer than a single source will.

Q: Does a student fail if they are under the suggested minimum of 3,500 words?

A: No, but it often takes students that word count range to answer their RQ and satisfy the [EE rubric](#).

Q: Will my essay pass?

A: The [EE rubric](#) is your best friend and answer to this question! Although you will get really helpful feedback from your Supervisor during this process, they are not allowed to tell you the predicted grade they give your essay. If you read and follow the [EE rubric](#) carefully as you create and construct your essay, you will pass!

Q: How should I organize a Category 1 EE?

A: First, head to the Group 1 EE Graphic Organizer on [this page](#). These resources will really help you! As far as organizing your Group 1 essay goes, all EEs (regardless of subject area) need

a very clear introduction. After that, you can decide to analyze book #1, then book #2, and then analyze the differences or similarities between them OR you could structure your writing thematically, and analyze aspects of each book for the different themes or questions you've chosen. Remember, your goal is to analyze the pieces of literature and that needs to be the focus of your paper. If you need to add in any historical or theoretical contextualization, make sure you are clearly connecting to the text and the formation of your argument!

Q: Can you help me with my referencing?

A: Mr Matthew (as your EE Coordinator) is happy to be your second line of defense when you encounter a source that might be difficult to reference, but your first line of defense should be [ZoteroBib](#) or any of the other free referencing websites available.

Q: How do I know that I am analyzing and evaluating my sources and not just describing and narrating them?

A: Look at **Criterion C: Critical Thinking** on the [rubric](#). In general, it's a good idea to make sure that you are (1) explicitly connecting your evidence to the research question, and (2) explicitly demonstrating how the evidence supports your main claim (or a sub claim or counterclaim).

Q: How do I break down my paper to create a Table of Contents?

A: After you've finished your essay (in which you have inserted section headings), head [here](#) for a trick on how to have Google create your Table of Contents for you!

Q: How do I make my page count begin NOT on the title page?

A: With your Google Doc open, go to INSERT, then down to PAGE NUMBERS, then over to MORE OPTIONS. Unclick "show on first page" and then have the numbering start on page 3 (which will be your Table of Contents page).

Q: What IS included in the 4,000 maximum word count?

A: The Introduction, the Body, the Conclusion, and section headings.

Q: What is NOT included in the 4,000 maximum word count?

A: Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, maps, charts, diagrams, captions for illustrations or tables, equations, formulas, calculations, in-text citations, Works Cited, and Appendices.

Q: What will happen if I don't cite my sources properly in my final EE?

A: If academic integrity is a potential issue in your final EE, your Supervisor will bring it to Ms. Mervat the IBDP Coordinator and Mr. Matthew's attention. If the uncited sources are listed in your Works Cited, we will allow you to insert the in-text citation. If any of the uncited sources are NOT listed in your Works Cited, BPHS will not be able to submit your EE to the IB, and you will no longer be eligible for an IB Diploma. Take a look at [this presentation](#) featuring easy to understand examples of different types of plagiarism.

Q: Is it a problem if my Turnitin score is very high or very low? Is there a percentage I should be aiming for?

A: Turnitin's Similarity Index simply refers to the total percentage of text in an assignment that has been matched to other sources. If you have a very low percentage, it means that you did not use/cite a lot of outside sources, and if you have a very high percentage, it means you used/cited a lot of sources (or a lot from a few of your sources). If you have a high percentage and not everything is cited, you will have an academic integrity problem.

Q: Should I check over the PDF I make of my Final Essay before I email to my supervisor?

A: Yes!! Sometimes the electronic process of creating a PDF from a Google Doc shifts things on pages in unintended ways. Please make sure you check ALL pages of your PDF carefully before you mail it to your supervisor.

Q: Will I ever know what predicted grade my Supervisor gave me for my EE?

A: No. IB schools are not allowed to share that information with students.

Q: When will I know what grade the IB gave me on my EE?

A: When you receive your official IB scores sometime during the first week of July (after graduation).