

The interdisciplinary pathway

Curiosity is the engine of achievement.

Ken Robinson

Your extended essay, whether interdisciplinary or subject-focused, should begin with an idea that is generated by your personal interest. Some ideas will suit exploration through the subject-focused pathway, while others will suit the interdisciplinary pathway if the ideas may be better explored through the combined lenses of two DP subjects. Imaginative interdisciplinary collaboration can open such topics to rich research.

What does “interdisciplinary” mean in the extended essay?

You research and write your extended essay in an interdisciplinary way when **you integrate knowledge, concepts, theories, perspectives or methods, or a combination of these, from two chosen DP subjects**. In other words, elements of the two subjects are combined so that they work together effectively to help research an extended essay topic.

Ultimately, integration of two subjects can lead to fresh insights and create new and/or deeper understandings that would not be possible through research within one DP subject alone.

Note: As you will see in “[The subject-focused pathway](#)” section of this guide, **there are two DP subjects that are categorized as “cross-disciplinary”: environmental systems and societies (ESS) and literature and performance**.

It is not permitted to choose these subjects in the interdisciplinary pathway, only in the subject-focused pathway. This restriction aims to prevent over-complexity in your research and writing.

If you are interested in a topic that combines theatre and literature, choose literature and performance in the subject-focused pathway.

If you are interested in a topic that combines geography and biology, depending on the nature of your topic, consider choosing ESS in the subject-focused pathway.

A note on “integration”

“Integration” is a characteristic that develops and emerges as the research and writing of the extended essay progresses. It is not necessary to think of integration as a starting point. You can begin in a relatively straightforward way by focusing on incorporating some approaches from the two DP subjects you have chosen, and applying those approaches to the research question.

You can then develop a line of argument that is informed by connections made between elements of the two chosen DP subjects. Gradually, these elements can be synthesized, resulting in a conclusion that brings the reader a sense of how you have integrated the knowledge, concepts, theories, perspectives, methods, or a combination of these, from the two DP subjects. This will allow for the success of your integrative approach to be evaluated.

Guidance on interdisciplinary research and writing

If you decide that the interdisciplinary pathway is appropriate for your extended essay topic, further advice on how best to make this approach work is available in the *Extended essay support material*. Make sure that your supervisor shares the guidance you need or gives you access to it, from both the guide and the support material.

Balance between the two DP subjects

In an interdisciplinary extended essay, it is not necessary for you to achieve an evenly balanced combination of each of the two DP subjects. The relative balance will depend on the nature of the topic and the emphasis of the research question. However, an interdisciplinary extended essay should demonstrate clearly that integration of elements of the two subjects has specifically enabled an effective response to the research question.

Rigour in an interdisciplinary extended essay

To ensure rigour in an interdisciplinary extended essay, your understanding of the two DP subjects that are combined in an interdisciplinary essay needs to be evident. This understanding will contribute to the quality of the research, which is the overall measure of rigour in an extended essay. A more rigorous research process is likely to lead to more reliable findings. **Consequently, it is strongly recommended that you are studying at least one of the two DP subjects you are using for the extended essay.** You will then be bringing to the research process an emerging understanding of knowledge, concepts, theories, perspectives, methods, or a combination of these, from at least one DP subject. This understanding will be important in terms of developing an understanding of elements of the second DP subject and combining these in an effective interdisciplinary research pathway.

To safeguard the rigour of an interdisciplinary extended essay, it is important that you regularly check with your supervisor about the quality of your ongoing research and, if necessary, take action to improve it.

Why choose an interdisciplinary extended essay?

Some answers to this question are explored in the table below.

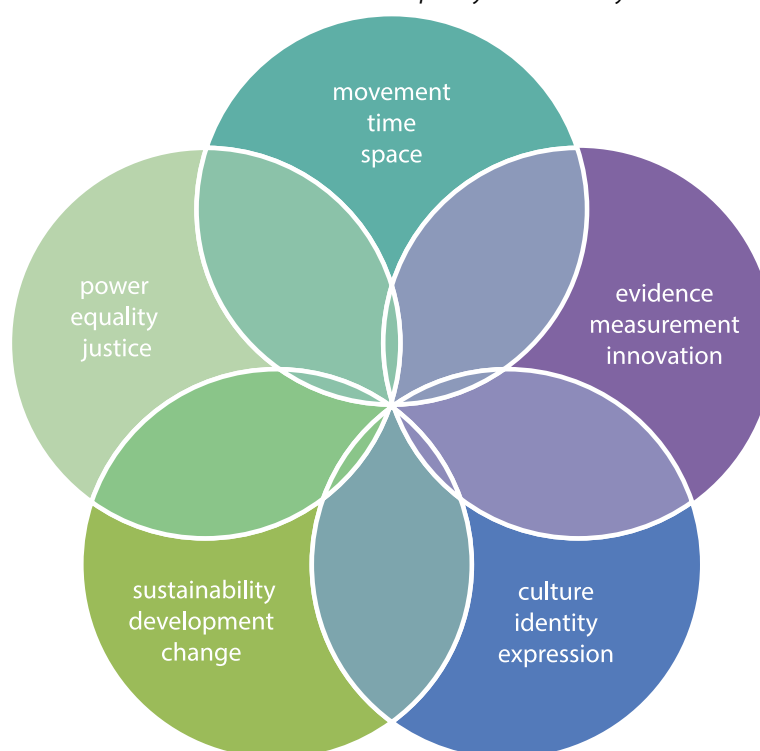
Students who take the interdisciplinary pathway could be:	Examples of interdisciplinary ideas
responding to a question of personal interest in a more insightful way than would be possible through a single subject.	- Exploring the biomechanics and physics of generating spin with a cricket ball: sports, exercise and health science combined with physics - Examining the automobile as literary symbol and motif: design technology combined with language and literature - Investigating government health policy from the perspectives of economic policy and human well-being: economics combined with social and cultural anthropology
integrating concepts or methods to gain a deeper understanding of an issue or problem.	- Investigating the concept of gender from both biological and social perspectives: biology combined with social and cultural anthropology - Applying mathematical modelling to finding solutions for social housing: mathematics combined with geography - Analysing the covers of women's magazines from the perspectives of both language and marketing: business management combined with language and literature - Investigating enzyme activity using skills from two sciences: biology combined with chemistry
investigating a complex issue of global concern that is better addressed using two DP subjects.	- Investigating the potential for achieving global sustainability of using plastics: chemistry combined with geography, or psychology combined with business management - Exploring climate change modelling: mathematics combined with computer science - Examining both economic and social perspectives of development: economics combined with geography
applying an insight, theory or method from one DP subject to the content of another DP subject to seek new perspectives and understandings.	- Applying chaos theory to the Cuban Missile Crisis: physics combined with history - Exploring poetry with an understanding of cognitive neuroscience: language and literature combined with psychology

Students who take the interdisciplinary pathway could be:	Examples of interdisciplinary ideas
	- Investigating how literary works might influence political movements: history combined with language and literature - Investigating the need for game design to adapt to the dynamic nature of communities and societies: digital society combined with design technology
exploring interesting questions at the boundaries of DP subjects.	- Exploring the ethics of nanotechnology: physics combined with philosophy - Examining the purposes of specific dress designs in graphic novels: design technology combined with language and literature - Exploring the psycholinguistic and cultural processes involved in learning languages: language acquisition combined with psychology - Analysing addiction to social media from social and biological perspectives: digital society combined with biology or psychology - Applying the idea of asymmetric information to investigate internet scams: economics combined with digital society - Exploring cognitive processes in the creation of abstract art: visual arts combined with psychology

Interdisciplinary frameworks

Figure 6

Frameworks for the interdisciplinary extended essay



The five frameworks shown in figure 6 are intended to help you position and shape your ideas for an interdisciplinary extended essay topic. These frameworks allow for inclusion of a broad, diverse range of ideas that could arise from your personal interests. They are designed to help you choose an appropriate context for the topic you wish to explore with an interdisciplinary approach.

- The frameworks are depicted as overlapping in figure 6 because, while your topic should broadly fit within one framework, it could include aspects that relate to another one or more.
- It should be noted that a topic does not need to connect with all the words that describe a framework. For example, in the framework “culture, identity, expression”, the focus might be on “identity” but not “culture” or “expression”.
- The same topic could even be placed in an alternative framework, depending on the emphasis of the research question.

While the official registration with the IB of your interdisciplinary extended essay must place it in one of the frameworks, the connection with the framework is not directly assessed. The main purpose of the frameworks is to provide you with initial guidance for the inquiry process, but they will also assist the IB with coordinating the assessment of interdisciplinary essays.

Broad topic areas within the five interdisciplinary frameworks

The number of possible broad topic areas that could kick-start an interdisciplinary extended essay is limited only by your capacity to imagine ideas that you would like to research. Here are some initial suggestions for each of the five frameworks that may help you get started.

Power, equality, justice

Social or political issues—health, education, racism, gender, poverty, fairness, conflict; the body—commodified bodies, violent bodies, bodies as weapons of war.

Culture, identity, expression

Belief systems; politics of identity; political movements; disputed territories; sporting and other competitions; art and science; music; protests; icons; cultural heritage; the body—modifications; literature and science; psycholinguistics; gaming.

Movement, time, space

Migration; refugees; virtual communities; astronomy; travel; urbanism; social media; contested spaces; non-places or non-spaces; conflict; globalization; museums; questions of evolution.

Evidence, measurement, innovation

Art and science; literature and science; cross-scientific inquiry; mathematics in science; gaming; social media.

Sustainability, development, change

Sustainability—environmental, social, economic; development—economic, social; food; health; political issues; poverty.

Choosing a topic

Choosing a topic is arguably the most important stage of your extended essay journey because it sets you up for a confident start and drives everything else that follows. To begin with, it is important for you to “take your idea for a walk”, that is, to think through how it might develop as an interdisciplinary essay. If you have already identified an interest in a broad topic area, then responding to the following four questions will help you get started.

1. What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?
2. Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?
3. Which framework best suits my topic?
4. Which two DP subjects can I use to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?

To illustrate this process, some examples from students are outlined in the tables below.

For additional advice, refer to “[Getting started](#)” in the “Researching the extended essay” section of this guide.

Broad topic area: Gender

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I am really interested in gender. Specifically, I have been reading a lot about the case of Caster Semenya and I wonder if it is fair that athletes may have to prove their gender or perhaps take drugs that reduce hormone levels. Who should athletes like Caster be allowed to compete with?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	My essay could integrate scientific and social approaches to help provide a deeper understanding of the concept of gender than would be possible through just one of these approaches. An interdisciplinary approach may help me to better understand this problem, perhaps from the

Question	Comments
	perspective of the International Olympic Committee.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Depending on the nature of the research question I develop, the most suitable frameworks could be power, equality, justice or culture, identity, expression .
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think I can integrate biology and social and cultural anthropology : I could explore tensions between the genetic definition of gender and the idea of gender as being socially constructed. Also language and literature and global politics : I could explore the language of the media around women in sport and how this influences political decisions about gender rights globally.

Broad topic area: Cross-scientific inquiry

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I am interested in ideas that are relevant to more than one field of science. Specifically, I want to understand more about enzyme activity.
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	To understand enzyme activity fully, I need to explore it from more than one perspective, i.e. the structure of proteins and also reaction kinetics. That points me towards biochemistry, an area I am really interested in.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Evidence, measurement, innovation.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I will be able to integrate knowledge and understanding from both biology and chemistry .

Broad topic area: Mathematics in science

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I would like to know more about the patterns of movement of "rides" at fun fairs. What might the optimum speeds and angles be? Can this movement be modelled?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	I can explore the physical system experimentally, but using mathematical models will also help me to describe and explain it better. I could bring in video analysis of a section(s) of a rollercoaster, and factors such as frictional forces, angular acceleration and circular motion; but that could quite quickly become rather complex. However, using modelling would

Question	Comments
	mean that any differential equations could be solved using modelling software.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Evidence, measurement, innovation.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think physics and mathematics suit this investigation. The experimental methods of physics can be enhanced by using mathematical concepts and language to describe the system.

Broad topic area: Art and science

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I am interested to explore how cognitive processes work as artists create abstract art. I am curious about Wassily Kandinsky's work because he is said to have used his synaesthesia (the capacity to "see" sound and "hear" colour) to create abstract paintings.
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	Applying insights from psychology to the content of visual arts will add to my understanding of the artistic process.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Culture, identity, expression.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think visual arts and psychology . The ideas and practice of the artist will be unpacked by engaging with the study of the human mind and its functions, applying understanding of cognitive processes.

Broad topic area: Literature and science

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	Poems move me. I would like to know why and how this happens, to learn about how poetry impacts cognitive processes in the brain.
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	I have read that new brain imaging technology is connecting art and science by mapping the different ways in which the brain responds to poetry. I would like to explore this interdisciplinary idea further.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Depending on the emphasis of my research question, either culture, identity, expression or evidence, measurement, innovation will be suitable frameworks.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	Poetry, as experienced through language and literature , integrated with cognitive neurobiology, i.e. biology .

Broad topic area: Psycholinguistics

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I can speak several languages and am interested in the processes involved in how languages are learned. Do psycholinguistic and cultural processes mix?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	This is an interesting question on the boundary of language acquisition, so to help me undertake research I will need to combine elements from language B and psychology.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Culture, identity, expression.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	A language B subject and psychology .

Broad topic area: Culture and migration

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I am interested in culture and the sense of belonging. Inspired by my experiences as a “third-culture kid”, I would like to understand how moving from country to country impacts people’s understanding of the world and their response to it. Is it the same for migrants? I might focus on a cultural group that I find interesting.
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	I could research this topic through one subject, but the perspective from a second subject should enhance my understanding. Blending spatial analysis with cultural analysis could give me the answers I am looking for.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Depending on the emphasis of my research question, either movement, time, space, or culture, identity, expression.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think that geography can help me understand how places are continually reshaped as people move between them, forming interconnections and spatial linkages. Meanwhile social and cultural anthropology will help me understand how migrants are perceived by host societies and how they respond to these perceptions.

Broad topic area: Literature and political movements

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I would like to understand how literary works influence political movements. My background is

Question	Comments
	Irish, and this research could help me understand if we might one day see a united Ireland. I am inspired by reading about Bobby Sands and how his poetry affected his political vision, and vice versa.
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	Applying insights from the poetry of writers like Bobby Sands to the history of political movements in Ireland should provide me with new perspectives and understandings. An interdisciplinary approach will help me to find out if literature has a political purpose: how does literature affect the real world? I might focus on the importance of the literature of the Irish cultural revival to the 1916 Easter Rebellion.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Culture, identity, expression.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	Combining elements from history and language and literature will strengthen my inquiry and lead to a better understanding.

Broad topic area: Gaming

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	Society is changing so rapidly and I wonder if the way we design simulation games also needs to change to take this into account. How do we represent “reality” in the virtual world of gaming?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	Applying a method from one DP subject to the content of another DP subject will help me to seek new perspectives and understandings. In this case, I can combine a design thinking approach with a social analysis of gaming communities.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Depending on the emphasis of my research question, culture, identity, expression or evidence, measurement, innovation could frame my topic.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	Digital society and design technology.

Broad topic area: Conflict

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I would like to find out why terrorist groups have become a feature of our world. Is there a link with the foreign policies of various governments?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	A historical approach will give me insights into the circumstances surrounding the establishment of

Question	Comments
	these groups. I can then combine this knowledge with a contemporary understanding of people, power and politics.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Power, equality, justice.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think history will help me understand the “hard power/soft power” nature of governments’ foreign policies and global politics will help me investigate the way that power and politics play out as a result.

Broad topic area: Climate change and economics

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	I read that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared Southern Africa a “climate change hot spot”. I would like to find out if more focus on renewable energy sources is likely for new development projects. How might decisions made at local and global levels impact this situation?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	I will find out more if I look at this topic from the different viewpoints of political issues and economic policies and practices, at global and local levels.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Sustainability, development, change.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	Economics and global politics .

Broad topic area: Social media

Question	Comments
What aspect or issue within this broad topic area really interests me?	What makes us addicted to social media? I am interested to find out. Is it just a social phenomenon or is biology involved? Is my brain producing dopamine when I am interacting with social media?
Why is an interdisciplinary approach appropriate for my topic?	To find out the answers to my questions, I need to integrate concepts and methods from the humanities and the sciences.
Which framework best suits my topic?	Depending on the emphasis of my research question, either movement, time, space or evidence, measurement, innovation can frame my essay.
Which two DP subjects can I integrate to investigate my topic successfully within that framework?	I think biology (neuropharmacology) can help me look into the chemistry of the brain, and either digital society or the sociocultural approach in

Question	Comments
	psychology can help me explore the social aspects of the topic.

Developing a research question

Once your extended essay topic is ready to take the interdisciplinary pathway—that is, an appropriate framework has been selected, and two DP subjects have been chosen—you then need to develop a research question. Your research question should:

- be clearly stated and focused
- be open to amendment or change if your research takes you in a different direction
- invite a critical examination of the topic in respect of integrating knowledge, concepts, theories, perspectives or methods, or a combination of these, from two DP subjects
- encourage analysis, evaluation and synthesis, rather than description, unsupported generalizations and value judgements.

It is also important for you to imagine being able to respond to your research question comfortably within the 4,000-word limit of an extended essay. For more detailed guidance, refer to the “[Researching and writing the extended essay](#)” section of this guide.

Example topics, research questions and approaches

Topic and research question	Interdisciplinary framework	Outline of approach
Topic: The impact of rising economic power on the balance of forces in a particular region Research question: How has the rise of India as an economic power affected the balance of forces in the region with reference to China and the USA?	Power, equality, justice	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Macroeconomics • Power • The growth of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Integrating two DP subjects: economics and global politics.
Topic: The consequences of gentrification Research question: In what ways has the gentrification of the historic centre of Lisbon turned the city into a contested space?	Movement, time, space	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Aesthetics • Mass tourism • Commodification • Market forces Integrating two DP subjects: geography and economics, or geography and visual arts.
Topic: The relationship between machine learning and political populism Research question: With reference to the USA, how have the machine learning algorithms of social media impacted the recent growth of political populism and to what effect?	Evidence, measurement, innovation	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Neural networks • Echo chambers • Political polarization • Trolls

Topic and research question	Interdisciplinary framework	Outline of approach
		Integrating two DP subjects: mathematics and computer science , or mathematics and global politics .
Topic: Food security and sustainability Research question: How effective are the measures Singapore has taken since 2018 to ensure food security and sustainability for its people?	Sustainability, development, change	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Urban farming • Import risks • Climate resilience • Resource efficiency Integrating two DP subjects: geography and economics .
Topic: Migrants negotiating their identities Research question: What are the pressures on migrants obliged to negotiate their identities between their country of origin and their adopted country?	Culture, identity, expression	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • A case study of a migrated community • Language and traditions • Generational conflict Integrating two DP subjects: social and cultural anthropology and language and literature , or social and cultural anthropology and psychology .
Topic: Representation of Indigenous peoples Research question: How does Warwick Thornton's film <i>Samson and Delilah</i> (2009) provoke questions about the Aboriginal voice in Australia?	Power, equality, justice This research question could also function within "culture, identity, expression", depending on the specific focus of the research.	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Racial tensions • The road movie • Different cultural frameworks of perception and understanding Integrating DP subjects: film and psychology , or film and social and cultural anthropology .
Topic: The environmental impact of Bt crops (<i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i>) in developing countries Research question: What are the negative environmental impacts of Bt crops in developing countries compared with their positive effects?	Sustainability, development, change	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • A country case study • Pesticides • Genetic engineering and transferral • Hidden costs Integrating two DP subjects: biology and geography , or biology and economics .
Topic: Subversion of the principles of the Irish cultural revival Research question: How do the characters and the dramatic action in Sean O'Casey's "Dublin Trilogy" subvert	Culture, identity, expression	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Urban versus rural • Iconoclasm • Mythological naturalism

Topic and research question	Interdisciplinary framework	Outline of approach
the principles of the Irish cultural revival (1890–1916)? <i>*The Shadow of a Gunman/Juno and the Paycock/The Plough and the Stars</i>		Integrating two DP subjects: language A and history.
Topic: Disputes over property and land between Israelis and Palestinians Research question: How do the disputes over property and land in the East Jerusalem area of Sheikh Jarrah reflect the broader conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians on the West Bank of the Jordan River?	Power, equality, justice	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • The status of Jerusalem • The history of Sheikh Jarrah from Israeli and Palestinian perspectives • The settler movement • The Oslo Accords Integrating two DP subjects: history and global politics.
Topic: The impact of social influencers on marketing Research question: How has the growing popularity of influencers on Instagram marked an innovative shift in how service industries* market their products? *Examples might be entertainment, fashion, food.	Evidence, measurement, innovation	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Digital versus traditional marketing • The “celebrity effect” • Marketing demographics Integrating two DP subjects: digital society and business management.
Topic: The relationship between dance therapy and the cognitive function of dementia patients Research question: How can dance movement therapy alleviate the symptoms of dementia and improve the cognitive function of dementia patients?	Evidence, measurement, innovation	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Different forms of memory • Somatic sensory functions • Non-verbal language • Neuro pathway breakdown in dementia Integrating two DP subjects: dance and psychology.
Topic: The use of space, movement, time and technology in philosophical writing Research question: How does Robert Pirsig use space, movement, time and technology as structural elements in his book <i>Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance</i> to explore the purpose of life?	Movement, time, space	The research question could be addressed through the following lenses. • Ethics • Holistic experience • Quest narratives Integrating two DP subjects: philosophy and design technology.

Note: The examples above are general enough for you to adapt to your own learning environment. For example, the question on India could be addressed to Brazil or China; the question related to Singapore and sustainable food could be applied to another small country with similar restricted land issues; and the question on Bt crops as a principle can focus on specific country contexts.

Using the assessment criteria to inform the writing of the essay

Regularly refer to the “[Assessment of the extended essay](#)” section in this guide as you write your essay—it will be invaluable. Given that your interdisciplinary extended essay brings together the perspectives of two DP subjects, also read the assessment criteria sections of the subject-specific guidance for the two subjects you are using, or the subject group that includes it. You will find this in the “[Subject-specific guidance](#)” section of this guide. It is also essential to read the “[Generic guidance for the extended essay](#)” section in this guide.

The following table provides some additional guidance about using the assessment criteria that relates specifically to the interdisciplinary approach you have taken.

A: Framework for the essay	Your research question needs to reflect your interdisciplinary approach. You should explain and justify your use of this approach. The reader should be able to see that you have drawn on the research methods that relate to the two subjects you are integrating. Be aware of any structural conventions that are used in the writing of essays in each of the two subjects you are using, and apply these where relevant.
B: Knowledge and understanding	You need to show your disciplinary grounding in the two DP subjects that you are combining, through effective use of relevant terminology and concepts. The balance of knowledge and understanding between the two subjects does not necessarily need to be even—this depends on the nature of your research question.
C: Analysis and line of argument	The findings that come from your analysis should reflect the combination of the two subject lenses you are using. Your line of argument should give the reader a sense of the development and flow of the integration of the perspectives of the two subjects.
D: Discussion and evaluation	Discussion is the key tool for integrating the concepts, understandings and, as relevant, theories of the two subjects, in relation to your research question. Evaluation of the effectiveness of your essay can be enhanced by an appraisal of the interdisciplinary approach you have taken.
E: Reflection	Refer to the “Generic guidance for the extended essay” section and the “Reflection and the extended essay” section in this guide. It is worth noting that one of the transferable skills you have learned is applying an interdisciplinary approach to research.

The subject-focused pathway

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

Zora Neale Hurston

Your extended essay, whether subject-focused or interdisciplinary, should begin with an idea that is generated by your personal interest. If your idea can be specifically associated with one DP subject, then the subject-focused pathway is the best choice. Investigation through the lens of a specific subject allows you to develop understanding of a topic within the academic boundaries of that subject.

Note: If you would like to use **ESS** or **literature and performance** for your extended essay—both of which are classified in this guide as cross-disciplinary subjects—then you must take the subject-focused pathway,