



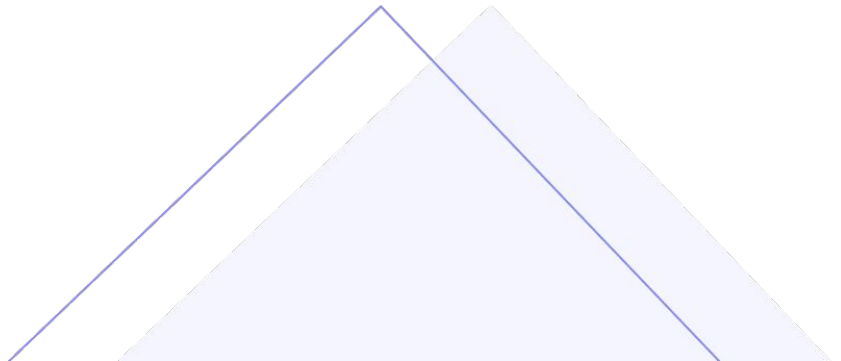
# Extended essay

and the role of the student



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## Part 1

# Extended essay at a glance



## Overview of the extended essay

The extended essay (EE) is an opportunity for you to undertake independent research on a topic of your choice under the guidance of your supervisor. Over the course of the EE journey, you engage in 40 hours worth of work which entails:

01



Selecting an **area of research** and align it with a DP subject or subjects

02



Deciding whether you will write a **subject-focused essay** or an **interdisciplinary essay**

03



Producing a **4000-word** independent research essay

04



Completing a **reflective statement** using the *Reflection and progress form* (RPF)

## Nature of the extended essay

The EE is a unique opportunity for you to engage in sustained academic research in **preparation for university education**.

As a part of the EE, you will be expected to show evidence of intellectual growth, critical and personal development, intellectual initiative, and creativity. This can be facilitated by the use of the **researcher's reflection space (RRS)**.

Furthermore, the process of researching and writing the EE represents the **learner profile** in action. Being open-minded, principled, and reflective are aspects of personal development you will experience with the EE.

Finally, the EE allows you to become more **internationally-minded** by engaging with local and global communities on topics of personal inquiry.



# The extended essay pathways

There are 2 EE pathways:

- Subject specific
- Interdisciplinary

A **subject-focused EE** explores a topic through the lens of a single DP subject.

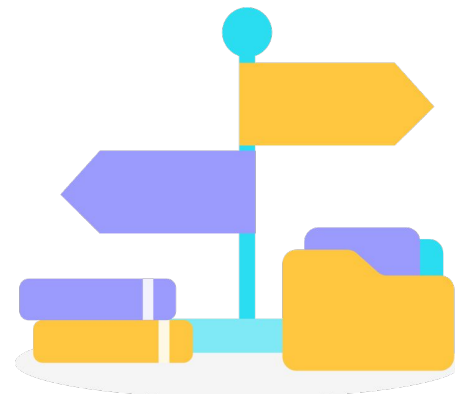


Tip: you should write your EE in a DP subject you are studying. You can choose to write it in an SL or an HL subject.

An **interdisciplinary EE** combines **2 different subjects** to bring different perspectives.



Tip: You should be studying **at least one** of these subjects.



# What is the interdisciplinary extended essay pathway?

## What is it?

The interdisciplinary EE combines knowledge, theories, and methods from two DP subjects to explore a research topic.

## Why choose it?

This approach offers fresh insights and deeper understanding that a single subject might not provide.

## Balance and integration

The two subjects don't need to be equally balanced, but their integration must help answer the research question effectively.

## Rigour

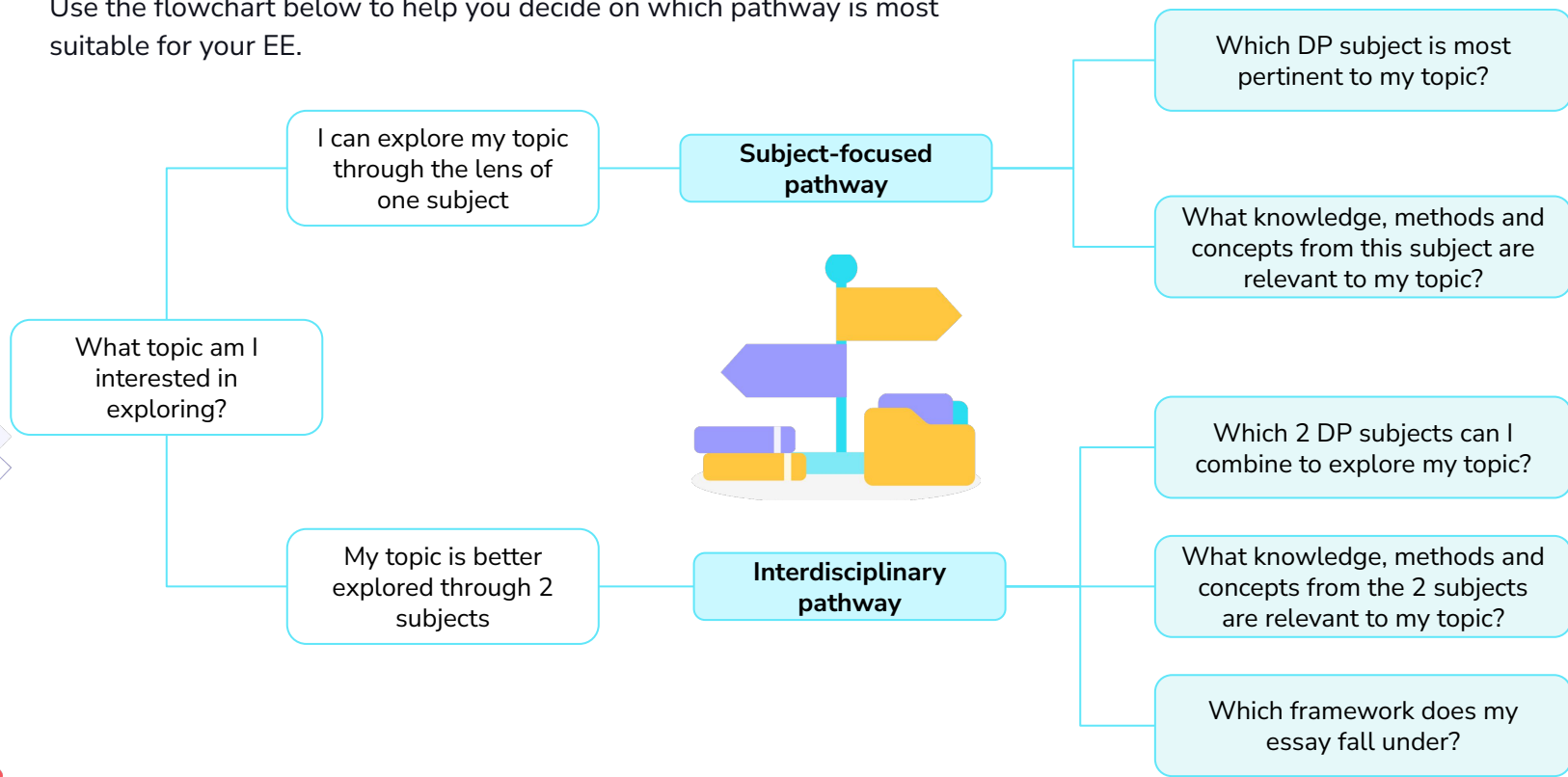
A strong understanding of at least one subject is crucial for quality research. Regular feedback from your supervisor is recommended.

## Subjects to avoid

Cross-disciplinary subjects like environmental systems and societies (ESS) and literature and performance cannot be used in the interdisciplinary pathway.

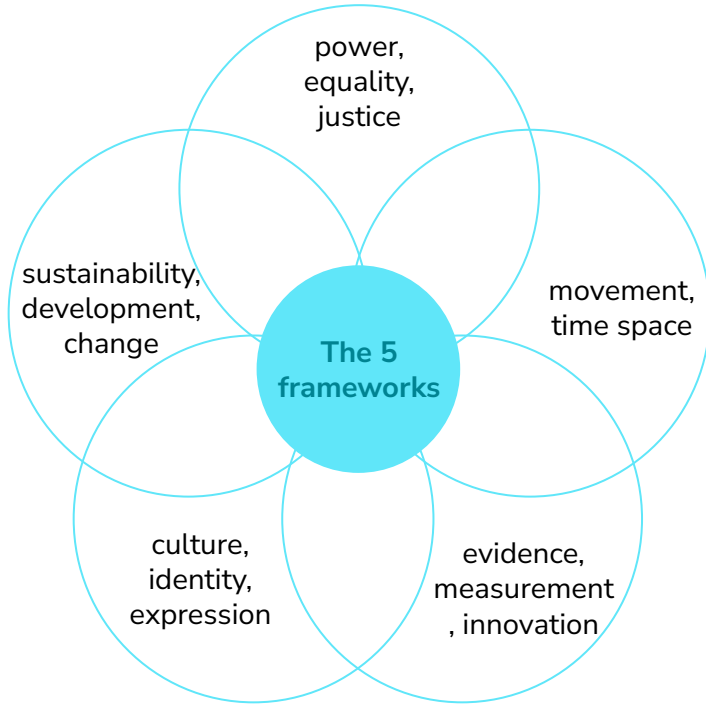
# Deciding your pathway

Use the flowchart below to help you decide on which pathway is most suitable for your EE.



# The interdisciplinary essay frameworks

If you choose to write an interdisciplinary essay, it will have to be registered under one of the following frameworks. Frameworks help you focus your topic, but your research question is what drives your exploration.



These 5 frameworks provide a **starting point for shaping your interdisciplinary essay**. Each framework focuses on a **different theme**.

Your topic **doesn't need to cover every aspect of the framework**. For example, if you focus on identity, you don't need to address all aspects of culture or expression. You can even connect your topic to a different framework, depending on your research approach.

The frameworks help you narrow your focus and organise your ideas, but they're **not directly assessed**. The goal is to **use them to guide your inquiry**, not define the limits of your research.

# Unpacking the frameworks

Use this guidance to help you map your topic ideas to one of the required interdisciplinary frameworks. Focus on the lens that best matches your research angle, not the broadest fit.

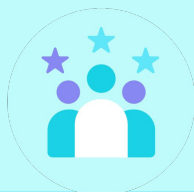
## Power, equality, justice



Here are some ideas to help you explore this framework. You can think of topics related to societal issues and how power is distributed.

- 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



This framework allows you to explore how culture and identity shape our world. Consider how different forms of expression play a role in society.

- Belief systems, political movements, disputed territories, cultural heritage
- The body: modifications, literature and science, gaming, psycholinguistics
- Art and expression: music, protests, icons

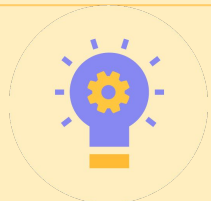
## Movement, time, space



Think about how people, ideas, and things move across time and space. This framework includes topics like migration and the connections between physical and virtual spaces.

- Migration, refugees, virtual communities
- Urbanism, social media, globalization, non-places
- Astronomy and evolution

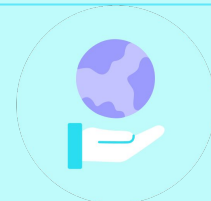
## Evidence, measurement, innovation



This framework encourages you to explore how we measure and innovate. You can consider how evidence and innovation come together in both the arts and sciences.

- Cross-scientific inquiry, mathematics in science, gaming, social media
- Art and science, literature and science

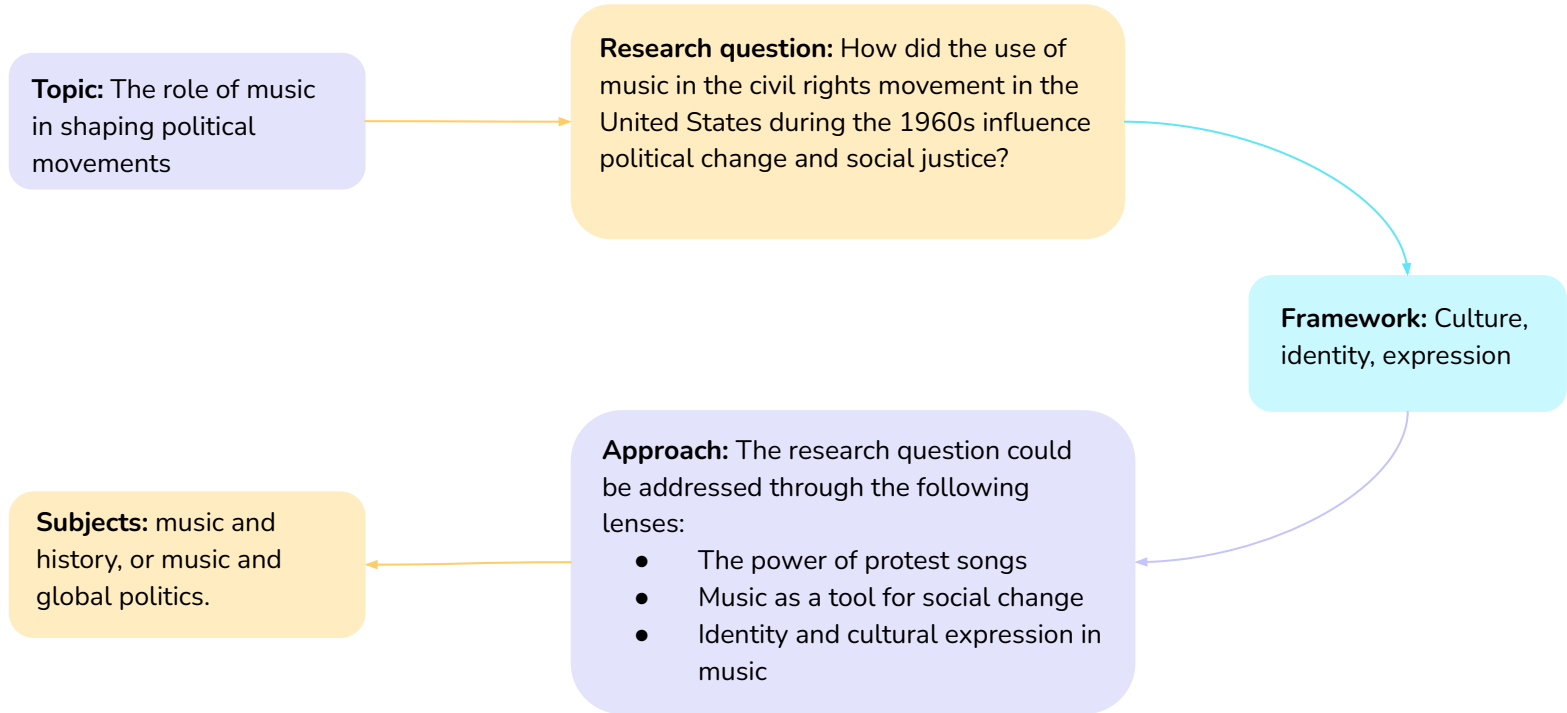
## Sustainability, development, change



This framework focuses on how the world changes and develops over time. You can explore topics related to sustainability, development, and the challenges our planet faces.

- Environmental, social, and economic sustainability
- Health, food, poverty, political issues
- Development and change

## An example of an interdisciplinary EE



## Aims of the extended essay

The EE, being at the core of the IBDP, is a valuable learning experience for you. It has three key aims and helps you to:

01



**Engage** in independent research with intellectual initiative and rigour

02



**Develop** research, thinking, self-management, and communication skills

03



**Reflect** on what has been learned throughout the research and writing process



Part 2

## General guidelines for students

## AI and the extended essay

The IB does not discourage the use of AI to support the writing of the EE. However, here are some general guidelines to consider when you engage with AI.



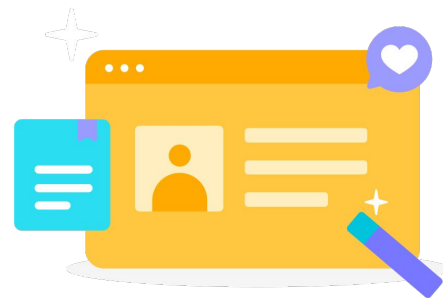
You **can** use AI to...

- Brainstorm topics
- Reformulate your RQ
- Act as a line editor
- Help with referencing
- Design questionnaires, protocols, etc.
- Process data
- Identify strengths and weaknesses



You **can't** use AI to...

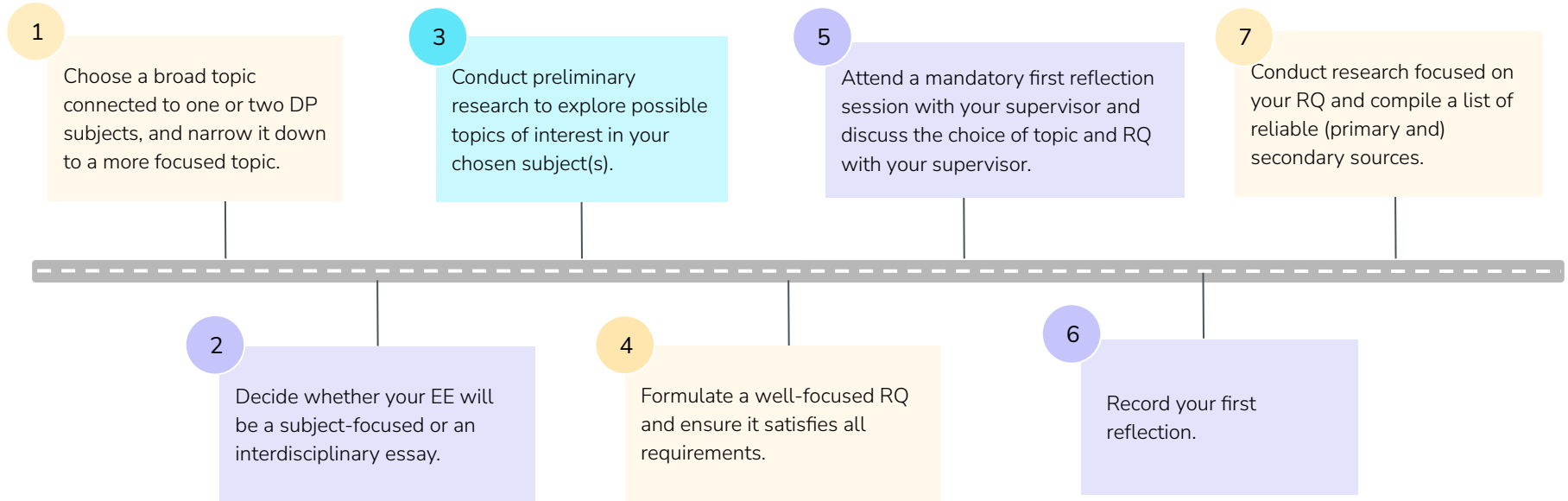
- Write your RQ
- Write whole sections
- Paraphrase sources
- Write your reflections



*AI should be used as a thinking partner, not as a ghost writer!*

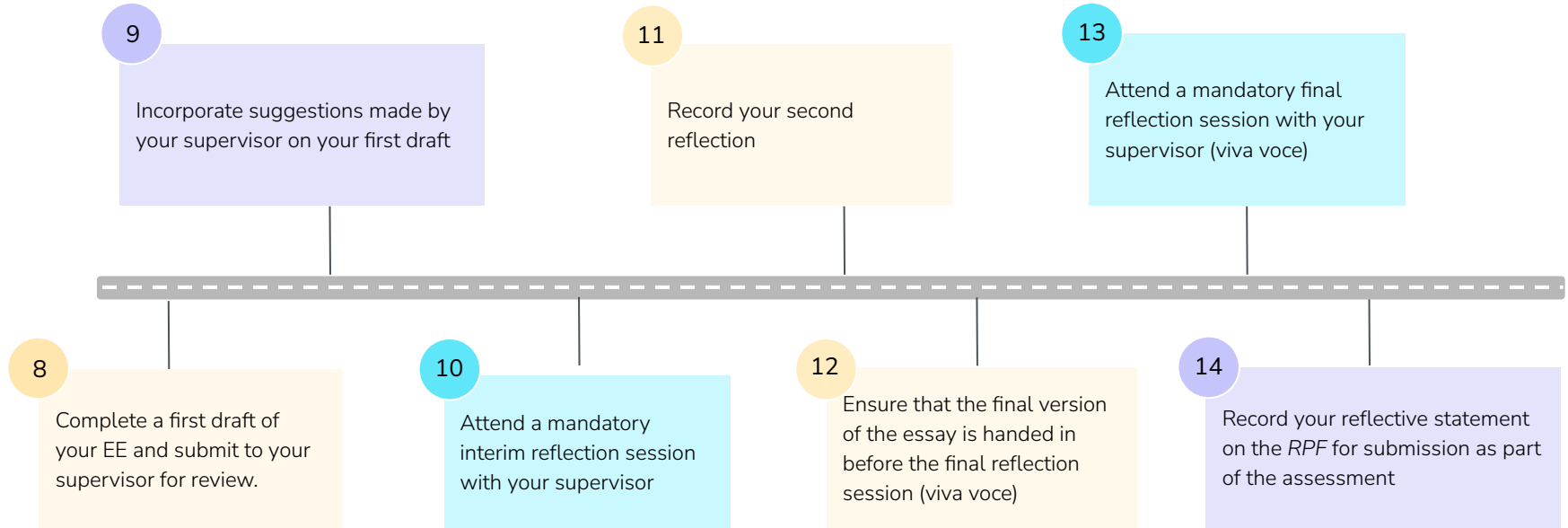
# Roadmap to extended essay success

The EE can be a long and, at times, arduous process. Having a roadmap to guide you along this journey can be helpful.



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## Steps for writing the extended essay

Some important areas that you will cover during your EE journey are outlined below:



Choosing a topic



Writing an effective research question



Structuring the essay



Reflection and progress form (RPF)



Developing approaches to learning (ATL) skills

# Choosing a topic

The first step in your EE journey after you select your subject(s) is choosing a topic. Your choice of topic is integral to your success in EE. Below are some key steps for you to consider.

| Identify topic of interest                                                                    | Narrow down the topic                                                                  | Conduct preliminary research                                                                                                                                                                                | Complete annotated bibliography                                                                                         | Craft an open-ended research question                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Identify a topic or two that interests you. This ensures that you are engaged in the process. | Identify which DP subject(s) your topic is linked to and focus it so it is manageable. | Begin with preliminary research on your topic to check if you will be limited by availability or lack of translations for sources; whether you need to modify your topic or broaden it or narrow the focus. | Provide a list of identified reliable sources with a detailed description and evaluative comments known as annotations. | Using your topic and preliminary research, create a question that will lead to an appropriate investigation. Ensure that it uses higher-order questions (to what extent...? How significant...? etc.) to help you engage in analysis and critical evaluation |

# Writing an effective research question

Once the topic is chosen, you can narrow your focus and begin writing the research question. There are five key elements to consider when writing the research question (not necessarily in that order). The end result should be an **open-ended** question with a **narrow and focused scope**. Consider the following aspects of writing an effective research question.



## Higher-order questions

To what extent...  
How useful...  
How significant...  
Why/How...  
In what ways...



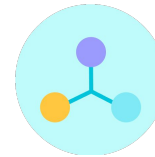
## Topic of interest

Novel, film, event, situation,  
policy, individual, experiment,  
equation, debate, theory, etc.



## Scope

Time period?  
Place?



## Link

Responsible for...  
A person studying...  
Impacts development...  
Causes issues...  
etc.



## Consequence

Event, policy, situation,  
development, discovery, etc.

# Writing an effective research question

In this RQ example, you can identify the five blocks, as highlighted in different colours:

**A**                      **B**                      **C**                      **D**                      **E**

How effective are the measures Singapore has taken since 2018 to ensure food security and sustainability for its people?

You may use the table below to piece together your research question

|                                 |                             |                 |                |                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>A: Higher-order question</b> | <b>B: Topic of Interest</b> | <b>C: Scope</b> | <b>D: Link</b> | <b>E: Consequence</b> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|

**Tip:** Notice how the example RQ is open-ended but focused on a very particular aspect.

# Structure of the extended essay

It is important to consider the appropriate structure of the extended essay as outlined below.

1

**Title page:** It should include your student code, the research question, whether it is a subject-focused or an interdisciplinary essay (and which subject(s) it is registered under) and the word count

2

**Contents page:** It must be provided at the beginning of the EE and all pages should be numbered

3

**Introduction:** It should tell the reader what to expect in the essay including the focus of the essay, the scope of the research, the sources to be used, and an insight into the argument to be proposed

4

**Body of the essay:** It should include the undertaken research an analysis, discussion and evaluation of the topic

5

**Conclusion:** It should say what has been achieved, including notes of any limitations and any questions that have not been resolved

6

**References and bibliography:** These should be completed in a consistent style of academic referencing

# Reflection and progress form (RPF)

During the course of completing the EE the role of reflection for future action is paramount. Here is a brief sketch of what you can plan for during the course of the EE process. The RPF helps inform the examiners' judgment on Criterion E and helps document the process for authentication.

- Preparation for the first reflection session
- First formal reflection session
- Preparation for the interim reflection session
- The interim reflection session
- Accommodating a change of direction
- Commenting on a draft version of the EE
- Submission requirements
- Preparation for the final reflection session (viva voce)
- Final reflection session (viva voce)



You can access an annotated RPF exemplar with tips on the process of the three reflections [here](#)!

**EE/RPF**  
For use from May/November 2027  
Page 1 of 2

Student personal code:

**Extended essay - Reflection and progress form**

**Student:** This form is to be completed by you and your supervisor during the progress and completion of the extended essay. It records your progress through the extended essay process and includes your reflective statement addressing your extended essay experience. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor. The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session takes place once a significant amount of your research has been completed; and the final session will take the form of a viva voce, once you have completed and handed in your extended essay. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. Following the viva voce, you write a reflective statement of no more than 500 words, which must be included on the RPF.

**The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the extended essay. It must be submitted together with the completed essay. The reflective statement will then be assessed under Criterion E. Students and supervisors should be aware that a mark of 0 will be awarded by the examiner for criterion E if the RPF is blank or the reflective statement is written in a language other than that of the accompanying essay.**

**Supervisor:** You must have three reflection sessions with each student, one early in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session you must record the month that the reflection session took place, the student's year of DP study at that time and initial the form.

**By submitting this student work for assessment, you are taking responsibility for the work. The student's year of DP study at that time and initial the form.**

**EE/RPF**  
Page 2 of 2

**Reflective statement**  
(No more than 500 words, written in the same language as the accompanying extended essay)

**First reflection session**

Month:  DP year (1 or 2):  Supervisor initials:

**Interim reflection session**

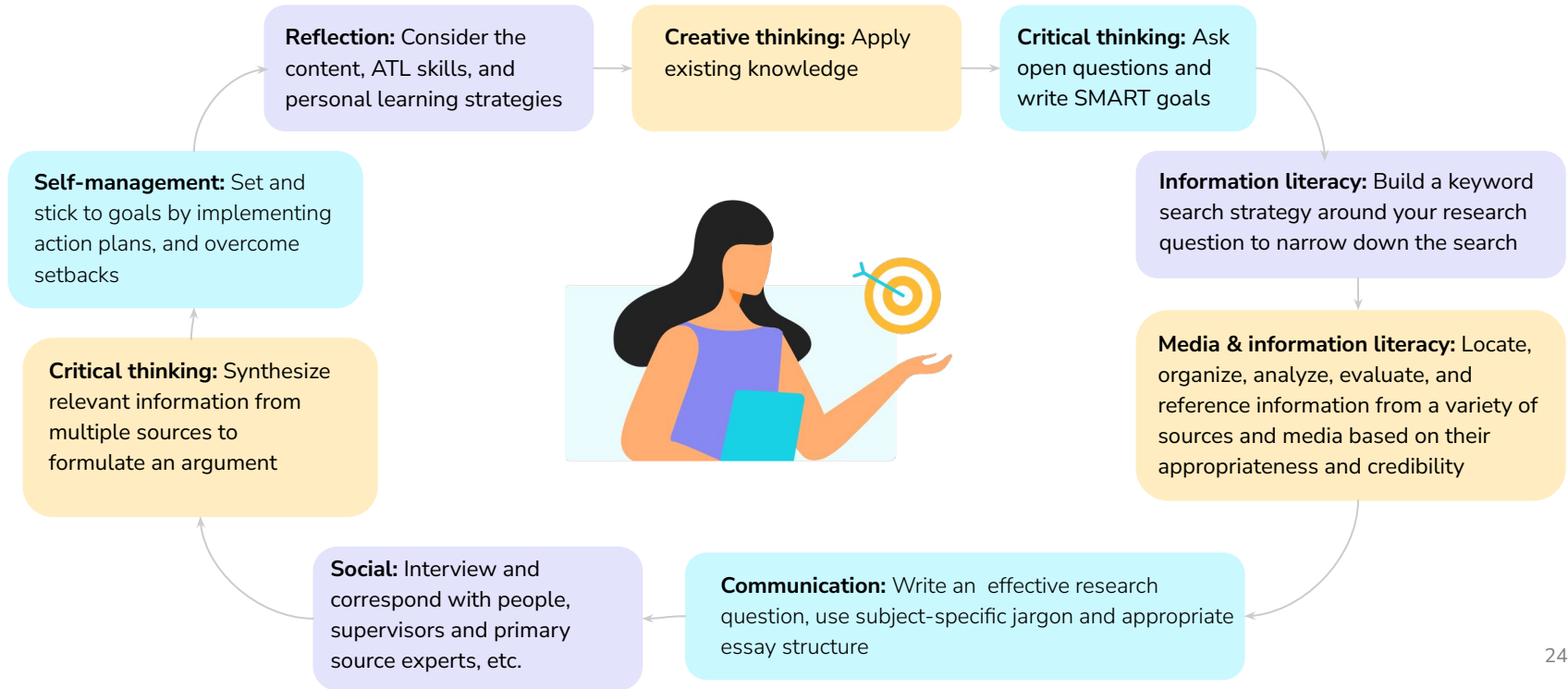
Month:  DP year (1 or 2):  Supervisor initials:

**Final reflection session – Viva voce**

Month:  DP year (1 or 2):  Supervisor initials:

# ATL skills and the extended essay

The EE process helps you develop ATL skills as you inquire deeply into your chosen subject/topic. Here are examples of different activities that you may undertake that will help with ATL skill development.



# EE success checklist

Congratulations! You have written your extended essay.

Are you ready to submit it?

You can use this [checklist](#) to help you ensure that your EE is good to go.

**Success checklist**

**Criterion A: Framework for the essay (8 points)**

**General features**

- My title page includes the following:
  - My student code (note, not your candidate code)
  - My research question
  - For an interdisciplinary essay the 2 DP subjects and the framework
  - For a subject-focused essay the DP subject
- The word count
- My essay is no more than 4,000 words (including all sections, including the bibliography and appendices)
- I have included a table of contents that lists the headings and subheadings of my essay with corresponding page numbers
- My essay is typed in 12 point font
- We have a double-spaced
- All pages are numbered
- I have checked all sources correctly carry a consistent citation style
- All figures, tables, images, and charts are correctly labelled and referenced
- Any additional materials (e.g., charts, data tables, interview transcripts) are included in the appendices, if necessary
- Appendices are referenced correctly in the body of the essay

**Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding (8 points)**

**Research question**

- I have clearly defined my research question, ensuring it is focused and relevant to the topic I am exploring
- My research question allows for in-depth analysis within the word limit

**Research methods**

- I have explained my methodology clearly, describing how I will collect and analyse my data
- I have justified my choice of methodology, explaining why it is suitable for my research question
- I have applied the chosen methods effectively throughout my research process

**Structure and conventions**

- I have used academic conventions (such as a title page, table of contents, correct formatting) that help make my research clear to readers
- The structure of my essay (introduction, body, conclusion) is well-organised, supporting the communication of my research findings

**Criterion C: Analysis and line of argument (8 points)**

**and analysed data in a systematic way that directly research questions**

**patterns and make connections between my data and of my research**

**of alternative viewpoints and analysed their relevance to**

**Criterion D: Discussion and evaluation (8 points)**

**Reflection on the research process**

- I have reflected on the challenges I faced during the research process and how I overcame them
- I have considered how my interdisciplinary approach (if applicable) has influenced my findings and approach to the topic
- I have described how the process of writing the extended essay has helped me develop key skills, such as critical thinking, time management, and academic writing

**Growth and transfer of learning**

- I have evaluated how my learning from the extended essay can be applied to other areas of my studies or future research
- I have identified specific ways in which I have grown as a learner, such as through better research skills or deeper understanding of the topic
- I have explained how the extended essay process has helped me transfer knowledge and skills from one subject to another (if applicable)



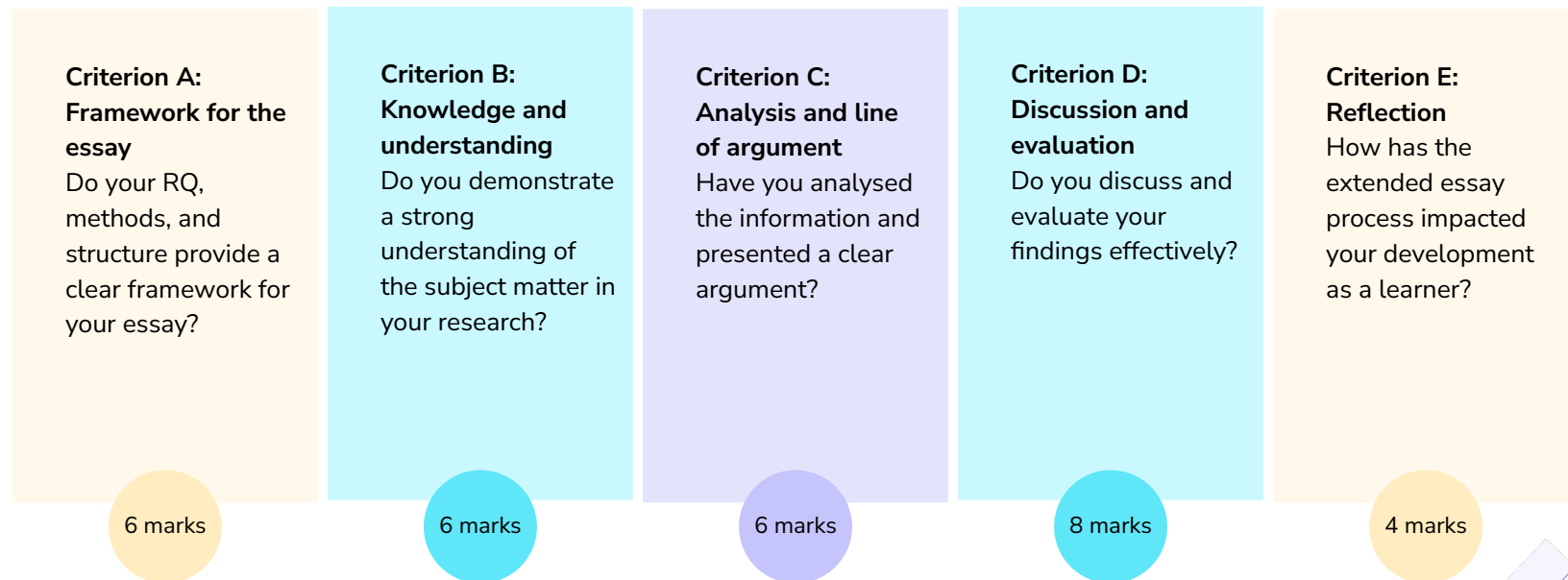
Part 3

# Extended essay assessment



## Overview of extended essay criteria

The EE is assessed against 5 criteria, each with a different weightage as summarized in the illustration. The maximum mark awarded is 30. The criteria is holistic as it assesses not only your knowledge but also communication skills, research methods and reflection.



## Description and unpacking of extended essay criteria

Before implementing the EE criteria, you should ensure that you understand them using the unpacking of EE Criteria published by the IB. Below is a summary of what each criterion focuses on.

A

**Framework for the essay:** This criterion looks at how well your research question, methods, and essay structure work together. Your research question should be clear and focused. The methods you choose should be suitable for the question, and the structure should help communicate your research effectively.

B

**Knowledge and understanding:** This criterion focuses on how well you demonstrate your understanding of the subject. You should use relevant research, accurate terminology, and explain key concepts to show your knowledge of the topic.

C

**Analysis and line of argument:** This criterion assesses how well you analyse your research and build a clear argument. Your analysis should lead to relevant conclusions, and your argument should be clear and consistent throughout the essay.

D

**Discussion and evaluation:** This criterion looks at how well you discuss your findings and evaluate your essay. You should provide a balanced discussion supported by evidence and explain the strengths and weaknesses of your work.

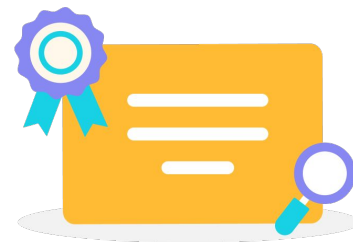
E

**Reflection:** This criterion applies only to your RPF and not to the essay itself. It focuses on how you reflect on the EE process. Your reflection should show how the experience has helped you grow as a learner, with specific examples of what you've learned and how you've applied that knowledge.

## Grade boundaries

Your final assessment against the different criteria will result in a final grade out of 30 which will then be converted into a letter grade. Each letter grade represents a 'grade descriptor'. The grade boundaries will be published at the end of the May 2027 exam session, but here is **an example of what the grade boundaries may look like**.

| Final |      |    |
|-------|------|----|
| Grade | From | To |
| A     | 23   | 30 |
| B     | 18   | 22 |
| C     | 12   | 17 |
| D     | 5    | 11 |
| E     | 0    | 4  |



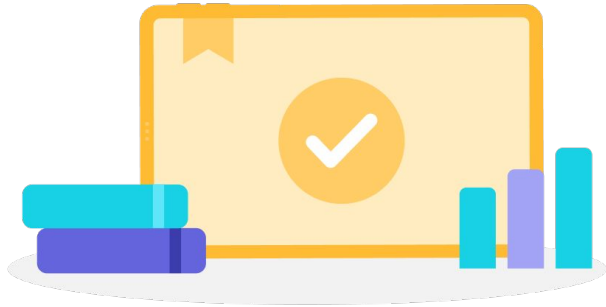
## Grade descriptors

After being assessed against the five criteria, your numerical grade is then converted to a letter grade. Each letter grade represents a 'grade descriptor'. Grade descriptors consist of characteristics of performance at each grade. The grade descriptors may also be used to help you understand the academic requirements of the EE and how you could improve your essay.

| Final IBDP Grade              | A                                                                                                                                                                                        | B                                                                                                                                                             | C                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | D                                                                                                                                                                                   | E                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Grade Descriptor<br>(Example) | Demonstrates:<br>effective research<br>skills resulting in a<br>well-focused and<br>appropriate research<br>question<br>that can be explored<br>within the scope of<br>the chosen topic. | Demonstrates:<br>appropriate<br>research skills<br>resulting in a<br>research question<br>that can be<br>explored within the<br>scope of the<br>chosen topic. | Demonstrates:<br>evidence of<br>research<br>undertaken,<br>leading to a<br>research question<br>that is<br>not necessarily<br>expressed in a way<br>that can be<br>explored within the<br>scope of the<br>chosen topic. | Demonstrates: a<br>lack of research,<br>resulting in<br>unsatisfactory<br>focus and a<br>research question<br>that is not<br>answerable within<br>the scope of the<br>chosen topic. | Demonstrates:<br>little or no<br>research, a lack of<br>focus and an<br>ineffective research<br>question. |

## Assessment in the core

- 1 TOK and the EE are graded using letter grades A–E, with A being the highest. These two grades are then combined in the bonus points matrix to contribute between 0 and 3 points to the total.
- 2 The overall maximum points from subject grades, TOK and the EE is 45.



Award of points matrix for TOK and the EE

| TOK<br>EE | A                 | B | C | D | E                    |
|-----------|-------------------|---|---|---|----------------------|
| A         | 3                 | 3 | 2 | 2 | Failing<br>Condition |
| B         | 3                 | 2 | 2 | 1 |                      |
| C         | 2                 | 2 | 1 | 0 |                      |
| D         | 2                 | 1 | 0 | 0 |                      |
| E         | Failing Condition |   |   |   |                      |



## Toddle for the DP!

Toddle can make a 10x difference at your school - plan collaboratively, assess authentically, foster student agency, and engage families - all from one intuitive interface!

**Let's have a chat**



Curriculum  
planning



DP Core: CAS, EE,  
ToK



Assessment  
& reports



Family  
communication



IA and student  
portfolios



AI  
Tutors



DP  
Library



Teaching and PD  
resources