



The Extended Essay

IB describes the Extended Essay as “an in-depth study of a limited topic within a subject” whose purpose is to “provide candidates with an opportunity to engage in independent research.” More prosaically, we can describe the Extended Essay as opportunity to explore, through writing, the secret yearnings of your mind, the undiscovered treasures of thought, the magical realms of intellectual independence. Realistically, it’s a 4000-word essay that you have to write if you want an IB diploma.

Perhaps the best way to think of the Extended Essay is as a unique opportunity to direct your own learning in a way that is personally meaningful. You pick your topic from within a wide range of subjects. You develop your focus. You gather together your source materials and distill from them a research question or a thesis as you read and learn and write. As one former IB student put it, you “make school want you want it to be.”

If you hadn’t noticed, the focus is on “you.” The Extended Essay is an opportunity for creative, student-driven learning at its best. It is an opportunity to stretch yourself, to grow personally through an exploration of your choice.

So what can you write about? IB provides the following list of subject areas:

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| English | Human Rights |
| Group 2 Language | Information Technology in a Global Society |
| Biology | Mathematics |
| Business and Management | Music |
| Chemistry | Peace and Conflict Studies |
| Computer Science | Philosophy |
| Dance | Physics |
| Design Technology | Politics |
| Economics | Psychology |
| Environmental Systems and Societies | Social and Cultural Anthropology |
| Film | Theatre |
| Geography | Visual Arts |
| History | World Religions |

Within your selected subject area, you will need to identify a topic and complete the EE Proposal. Then, after consultation with your advisor and some initial research, you will begin to formulate the research question or thesis for your essay. Further reading and research will allow you to write several drafts, some of which you will discuss with your advisor. Before you know it, you’ll be ready to write an abstract and title page and format your essay according to IB guidelines, at which point you’ll be done, all in time to celebrate at our annual IB Extended Essay Recognition Dinner.