

**A
Survival
Guide to
the
Extended
Project**

The Extended Project Survival Guide

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Frequently asked questions

What is the Extended Project?

- It is an in-depth study which can take the form of an experiment/ essay or project

How should I choose a subject/ topic?

- Choose a subject that you are interested in and enjoy.
- Think about how this may help your university application or show a breadth of interest/ knowledge.
- Remember that 5000 words is not very much – you will need to limit the area you are investigating.
- Think about how to formulate a question to research – be specific about what you want to prove or find out – see the examples in the introductory booklet on the school website.

Who supervises my EPQ?

- On the whole teachers from the subject area you have chosen will supervise you. However this may not always be possible. Remember that your supervisor is there to guide you on the process as well as the content. Heads of Department will also support you with suggesting resources.

How much time should I spend on it?

- It is recommended that you spend up to 120 guided learning hours on your project. This includes meetings with your supervisor, planning, researching, organising, writing and drafting.

When should I start working on it?

- Now.

How long should it be?

- All students must submit a written report for assessment of between 1000 and 5000 words. The exact length of each written report will depend on the nature of the project, the subject area or topic chosen and the other evidence provided.
- A project which consists solely of written work should be approximately 5000 words, for example an investigation, exploration of a hypothesis or extended essay or academic report. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in other formats should include a report or record of work undertaken which is at least 1000 words.

What should the written report contain?

The written report or record is likely to contain the following:

- sources of and range of information accessed.
- details of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to e-learning materials.
- historical or other research.
- details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks or activities of the project, eg an experiment, a construction, a performance or research interviews .
- a conclusion to include an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, an evaluation of own performance of learning and decision-making.

Is there anything else I need to do?

Yes:

- a) Complete the Production Log (on school Website)
- b) Deliver a presentation

Can I include supporting material with my project? Depending on the subject area or topic chosen, a variety of evidence may be submitted for assessment. Evidence can be provided in any form appropriate to the type of project chosen, and may include:

- an artefact, model or construction
- a CD/video/DVD of performances or activities
- an audiotape/multimedia presentation
- a journal of activities or events
- a slide or PowerPoint presentation
- a photographic record of the project.

How will it be marked?

- It will be marked by your supervisor
- See the marking criteria and grade descriptors sheets on the aqa website
(<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/projects/aqa-certificate/EPQ-7993/administration>)

What to do first?

- What areas are you interested in doing your Extended Project on?
- Can you put together a title that will allow you to investigate and to access the higher-level concepts and skills in the learning outcomes and assessment objectives, i.e. plan, research, analyse, evaluate and explain, rather than simply describe and narrate?
- Are the title and proposed action clear and focused on an issue which can be managed within the timescale, available resources and word total?
- Do the title and proposed action indicate that you will be capable of investigating and researching the topic or carrying out the activity or task independently?
- Is there a danger that you will be unable to approach the project impartially and in a balanced way?

Once you have worked through the above stages, complete page 4 of your Production Log (copy on school website) and arrange a meeting with your supervisor to discuss it.

After this meeting you will be able to complete pages 5 and 8 of the Production Log. The school will complete pages 6 and 7.

What will your supervisors do?

- Teachers supervise Extended Projects if at all possible in their subject area. There may be some students who will be supervised by someone who teaches a similar subject to the one chosen for the project or who has a personal interest in that area of study.
- Supervisors will meet with each student to discuss the student's initial idea and how they intend to develop the project.
- Supervisors will agree the project title and proposal and complete the supervisor's section in the Project Proposal Form for each learner.
- Supervisors will have a single period per week to see 2-3 students. You will also be expected to communicate with your supervisor on a weekly basis through Email.
- The role of the supervisor is to act as a critical analyst of the work you are doing, and comment on content, organisation and presentation of the project. They are there to help and suggest, but not to do the work for you!
- Supervisors will carry out a mid-term review and end-of project review with each student.
- Supervisors will confirm that a presentation by each student took place.
- Supervisors will endorse each student's Production Log by signing the front page

Hints

- Keep your Extended Project under control – don't get side-tracked or think 'I'll put it off until next week'.
- Keep your topic/ research question manageable – within the time available and your skills.
- Keep it in perspective – the Extended Project is worth the same UCAS point score as any AS Level – this can and will help your future education/career.
- It should be approximately 5000 words – this may seem long, but in fact is only about 12 sides A4.
- You are unlikely to change the world with your EP – you are not expected to write something totally original, just something new to you.
- It should be on a topic that interests you, and that you want to find out more about.
- Follow the guidelines in the learning Log – remember this forms part of the assessment.
- Keep checking the assessment criteria to make sure that your project will fulfil the requirements.
- Stick to deadlines – they are there to help you – promise!

Step one – Action plan Use the

SMARTER code to help you:

- Specific** -What exactly will you do?
- Measurable** -how will you know you've succeeded?
- Achievable** -is it realistic?
- Resourced** -have you allocated enough time? Have you enough information?
- Timetabled** -by when will you achieve each step?
- Evaluated** -keep checking if you are on track
- Reviewed** -sometimes changed circumstances mean a modification in the goal is necessary

Step two - Research

Scan reading:

- First flick through a textbook/article – scanning
- Look at the index
- Look at the headlines
- Look at the pictures
- Look at any summaries at the beginning or end of chapters
- Stop and glance at anything that interests you

Jot down anything you already know – key words.

Produce a mind map to develop ideas further.

Always make notes and ask yourself questions.

Analysis -Interrogate the author – ask questions as you are reading:

- How do I know this is true?
- If it is true, what else follows?
- Is the conclusion justified?
- What assumptions are being made?
- Is this fact or opinion?
- What's the evidence? If it's fact, is it always true? If it's opinion, can I trust the source?
- Can I think of any (better) examples to illustrate the argument?
- Is this logical?
- What personal opinion or conclusion can I draw from this? Is it justified?
- What are the unique and new points?
- What is essential to know and what is just padding?

Step three – Organising the Project

The average professional writer spends 40% of his time on research and planning, only 20% on actual writing and 40% on revision and re-writing.

Writing tips:

1. Keep to the topic – what exactly is the question or issue that you are addressing?
2. If it's a topic or problem for which you are proposing an answer, define the issue in the first paragraph, and keep checking back to see if you are sticking to the point.
3. Gather together the information you need – notes from books, sources from the internet. When you have your notes together try mind mapping the key ideas.
4. Now start to add to the mind map – putting ideas together in groups
5. Check back – do the points answer the question or suggest a solution to the problem?
6. Decide what will be in the beginning, middle and end of the report.

The middle develops your arguments and ideas with example, facts, quotations and evidence to back up the argument.

The end – a clever summary answer to the original question, and ties up any loose ends.

Step four – Draft it

Start with the middle:

- Start to write with your organised plan in front of you.
- Start with the middle – where you will be developing your arguments. Once the middle is complete then you can finish off by writing a punchy opening and a clever summary ending.
- Decide what is the best order for your main points – remember to give each new idea its own paragraph.
- All work should be done on a computer so its easy to cut and paste and move text around if necessary.
- Write up each of the ideas from your mind map

Writing the conclusion:

- Look back at the draft of the middle. Jot down the 10 most important key words.
- Find the shortest way to link them together – that's your ending.
- Check that your ending sums up your answer to the question or the issue you are addressing.
- Remember this is the last thing to be read before deciding your grade!

Writing the beginning:

- Now draft the beginning – this will give the reader the 'big picture' of what you're going to say.
- Remember the beginning is the first thing your reader (or examiner) will see.
- A punchy beginning will put them in a good mood expecting to agree with your argument.

What next?

- Sleep on it. When you read it again you will see points you missed or things you could have explained better.

Step five -Edit it

- Is the meaning clear? Have you used the words that describe exactly what you mean?
- Read your report out loud. Does it sound good?
- Have you used sub-headings that make it easy to read?
- Have you used short paragraphs that the reader will want to read, rather than long boring ones?
- Have you given examples to bring your ideas to life?
- Pay attention to the beginning – does it start with a bang?
- Does it make the reader want to read more?
- Keep your sentences short – long sentences are difficult to understand

Referencing/ Bibliography

- It is crucial that **as you are researching your project** that you make a note of the following information for every source you use:

Title or publication or address of the website
Name of the author or editor Page number
Publishers name Date or publication Place
or publication

This information will go into your bibliography, and will prevent you being accused on plagiarism.

- **Footnotes** – these are a way of allowing your reader to check your sources for themselves. They are notes that appear at the foot of the page. Footnotes should be used whenever you refer to the work of another person. Everything that is not your own work must be referenced.
- **Endnotes** have the same purpose as footnotes; they simply appear at the end of a document or at the end of a section of a document.

Both footnotes and endnotes can be used in one of two ways, either:

1. Parenthetical in text system -in other words putting your source in brackets within the text.
2. Number system -simply using the insert tool on Word to insert a number which refers the reader to your footnote or endnote.

- **Bibliography** -the list of all sources that you have used, referred to or consulted during the course of compiling your Extended Essay.

For example:

Power, J. *A History of the Extended Project at MTGS*. Crosby, England: Whatever Books, 2010

When citing a website you must specify Site name, Homepage URL, date viewed -for example:

The BBC Website

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2935875.stm> 10th January 2010

Useful Links:

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/library/about/ref.html>

A very thorough and easy to understand webpage on bibliographies and referencing from the University of Dundee.

<http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/harvard.html>

A very thorough pdf on the Harvard style of referencing and bibliography from the library of The University of Queensland, Australia.

The Formal presentation

- The presentation should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project.
- The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material.
- This could take the form of a group presentation, in the case of a group project, or a one-to-one presentation to the supervisor.
- The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from supervisors.

Useful links

For advice on the process of writing a project or extended essay:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/comms/level3/module6/1.shtml>

Step by step guide to essay writing:

<http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/intro.html>

**BUBL LINK Catalogue of Internet Resources Essay writing Titles
Descriptions Advice on Academic Writing Tips on writing assignments
from instructors at the University of Toronto. (bbc.co.uk):**

<http://bubl.ac.uk/link/e/essaywriting.htm>

Loads of good advice from the English School at University of
Birmingham:

<http://www.english.bham.ac.uk/staff/tom/teaching/howto/essay.htm>

For advice on basic essay writing:

<http://esl.about.com/library/howto/htessay.htm>