

RECOMMENDED: THINGS TO DO

IB Examiners' reports frequently emphasize the following positive steps.

Before starting work on the extended essay, students should:

1. Read the assessment criteria
2. Read previous essays to identify strengths and possible pitfalls
3. Spend time working out the research question (imagine the finished essay)
4. Work out a structure for the essay.

During the research process, and while writing the essay, students should:

1. Start work early and stick to deadlines
2. Maintain a good working relationship with their supervisor
3. Construct an argument that relates to the research question
4. Use the library and consult librarians for advice
5. Record sources as they go along (rather than trying to reconstruct a list at the end)
6. Choose a new topic and a research question that **can** be answered if there is a problem with the original topic
7. Use the appropriate language for the subject
8. Let their interest and enthusiasm show.

After completing the essay, students should:

1. Write the abstract.
2. Check and proof-read the final version carefully.

RECOMMENDED: THINGS TO AVOID

IB Examiners' reports also mention these things to be avoided at all costs.

1. Students **should not** work with a research question that is too broad or too vague, too narrow, too difficult or inappropriate.
2. A good research question is one that asks something worth asking and that is answerable within 40 hours/ 4,000 words.
3. It should be clear what would count as evidence in relation to the question, and it must be possible to acquire such evidence in the course of the investigation.
4. If a student does not know what evidence is needed, or cannot collect such evidence, it will not be possible to answer the research question.

In addition, students **should not:**

- **forget to analyse the research question**
- **ignore the assessment criteria**
- **collect material that is irrelevant to the research question**
- **use the Internet uncritically**
- **plagiarize**
- **merely describe or report (evidence must be used to support the argument)**
- **repeat the introduction in the conclusion**
- **cite sources that are not used.**

One further piece of advice is as follows:

The more background a student has in the subject, the better the chance he or she has of writing a good extended essay. Choosing to write the extended essay in a subject that is not being studied as part of the Diploma Programme often leads to lower marks.