



Reflections of an Extended Essay Examiner

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<http://www.bayview.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/ib/subjects/ee/reflections.htm>

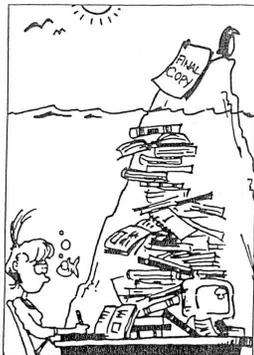
The success of an extended essay is shaped largely during the preparatory stages. Major weaknesses, such as broad topics, lack of focus, and vague research questions, can be traced directly to the research phase. The iceberg analogy illustrates clearly the importance of the analysis/research/experimentation that underpins the completed essay.

Since the initial work is so crucial, consider following the steps outlined below as you prepare your extended essay.



- • Select a subject in which you have an interest, preferably one of your diploma subjects.
- • Read the subject guideline in The Extended Essay (that Mr. Trefler gives you) that is relevant to your subject.
- • Meet your supervisor to discuss your choice of subject and to map out a schedule.
- • Draw up a list of research topics that interest you.
- • Discuss the topics with your supervisor and then decide on one.
- • Read about your topic and narrow it to a number of challenging issues or problems.
- • Select one issue or problem as the focus for your essay.
- • Formulate a precise and challenging research question or a hypothesis.
- • Undertake your analysis/research/experimentation using primary and secondary sources.
- • Shape the structure of your answer by creating a series of detailed outlines.
- • Rough out the complete essay from title page to bibliography.
- • Revise and edit the rough draft carefully.
- • Reread the assessment criteria to ensure that your draft addresses all of them.
- • Remember that an extended essay has a central thesis, argument or point of view.

Once you have revised and edited your rough draft you are ready to assemble the final copy. The one-tenth of the iceberg above water represents your completed extended essay. Since one-tenth of the overall project counts for 100% of the mark, package it with painstaking care. Use the following list of common weaknesses as a checklist when you assemble your essay.



Title

Provide a concise title that clearly indicates the focus of the essay. Do not use your research question or hypothesis as your title.

Abstract

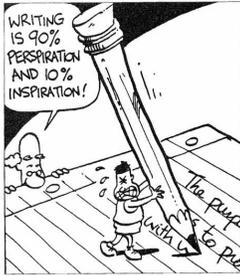
An abstract is not an introduction, although there is some overlap. An abstract is a synopsis of the essay. It also sets the tone of the essay.

Table of contents

The contents page outlines the main sections with corresponding page numbers. It also indicates the structure of the essay.

Introduction

Although not listed as a criterion of assessment, an introduction is an important component of an extended essay. The research question or purpose of the essay should be clearly spelled out and the thesis or argument should be succinctly stated.



Body and development

This is the longest and most important section. Its sole function is the development and substantiation of the thesis or argument. Eliminate all irrelevant descriptive, narrative, biographical and anecdotal details.

Conclusion

Remember that last impressions are lasting impressions. The conclusion pulls the essay together and sums up the major points that shaped the thesis.

Quotations

Use quotations judiciously and integrate them smoothly into the text of the essay. They are frequently used to excess and parachuted into the essay as space fillers.

Structure

Organization enhances the clarity of your thesis. Plan the structure of your essay carefully and ensure that your paragraphs reflect your plan.

Style

Write your essay in a style that is clear and smooth and in a tone that is formal and scholarly. Precise, articulate expression has persuasive power.

Subheadings/chapters

Longer essays in certain subjects, like the sciences, might require section headings. However, headings can fragment the flow of the argument. Effective paragraphing will often eliminate the need for subheadings and chapters.

Documentation

Whether you are citing a quotation, an idea, an illustration or Internet information, you **must** document the source. Ensure that you use a major documentation style that is pertinent to the subject from which you topic is drawn.

Length

The most successful essays are in the 3,000 – 3,500 word range. Prune and cut your rough draft as you revise and edit so that your final copy is a crisp, clear, and cogent piece of writing. Remember that words should be weighed, not counted.

Formal presentation

Proofread your essay meticulously from the title page to bibliography. Use computer technology to enhance the layout. An error-free and attractively laid out essay will have a positive impact on the examiner.

Appendix

All material placed in the appendix must be directly relevant to your thesis. This material must be cross-referenced to the development of the thesis.

Technology

The computer is simply a tool and its effectiveness as a tool is determined by how you use it. Evaluate and filter Internet information with caution. Mindlessly downloading data and pasting it into essay format does not constitute critical thinking and may be plagiarism.