



## Salisbury Composite Extended Essay Guide

The extended essay is an in-depth study of a focused topic chosen from the list of available Diploma Programme subjects for the session in question. This is normally one of the student's six chosen subjects for those taking the IB diploma. It is intended to promote academic research and writing skills, providing students with an opportunity to engage in personal research in a topic of their own choice, under the guidance of a supervisor (an appropriately qualified member of staff within the school). This leads to a major piece of formally presented, structured writing, in which ideas and findings are communicated in a reasoned and coherent manner, appropriate to the subject chosen. It is mandatory that all students undertake three reflection sessions with their supervisor, which includes a short, concluding interview, or *viva voce*, with their supervisor following the completion of the extended essay.

### Key features of the extended essay

- The extended essay is compulsory for all students taking the Diploma Programme
- A student must achieve a D grade or higher to be awarded the Diploma.
- The extended essay is externally assessed and, in combination with the grade for theory of knowledge, contributes up to three points to the total score for the IB Diploma.
- The extended essay process helps prepare students for success at university and in other pathways beyond the Diploma Programme.
- When choosing a subject for the extended essay, students must consult the list of available Diploma Programme subjects
- The extended essay is a piece of independent research on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with a supervisor in the school.
- It is presented as a formal piece of sustained academic writing containing no more than 4,000 words accompanied by a reflection form of no more than 500 words.
- It is the result of approximately 40 hours of work by the student.
- Students are supported by a supervision process recommended to be 3–5 hours, which includes three mandatory reflection sessions.
- The third and final mandatory reflection session is the *viva voce*, which is a concluding interview with the supervising teacher.

### Documenting reflections throughout the extended essay process

1. Students should document their reflections so that they are available for secondary reflection later.
2. They should use a format that can be easily accessed.
3. They should record the date and any other contextual information (such as place, time, people present) that may be relevant to how this reflection should be considered in the future.

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### **First formal reflection session**

This initial reflection session should be a dialogue between the student and the supervisor based on the student's initial explorations. It is recommended that the student sends their supervisor an outline of their research proposal ahead of the meeting in order to give the supervisor the opportunity to review their work. This will ensure that the reflection session is focused and productive.

Topics of discussion that should arise during this session include:

- a review of the requirements and assessment criteria for the subject
- a review of ethical and legal implications, if applicable
- a dialogue about possible approaches and any potential problems that might arise
- a discussion of strategies for developing the student's ideas for the essay and expanding the research so that the essay starts to take form
- probing and challenging questions that will help the student focus their thinking; this should lead to the development of the student's working research question
- an outline of the next steps that the student should undertake in order to refine their question; this should take the form of a research and writing timeline.

### **The interim reflection session**

This session is a continuation of the dialogue between supervisor and student in which the student must demonstrate the progress they have made in their research. They must also be able to discuss any challenges they have encountered, offer their own potential solutions and seek advice as necessary.

During this session the supervisor might discuss:

- a completed piece of sustained writing from the student in order to ensure that they understand the academic writing requirements, including referencing formats
- whether an appropriate range of sources has been accessed and how the student is critically evaluating the origin of those sources
- what the student now has to do in order to produce the full draft of their essay, and ways and means of breaking down the task into manageable steps.

By the end of the interim reflection session both student and supervisor should feel satisfied that there is:

- a clear and refined [research question](#)
- a viable argument on which to base the essay
- a sufficient range of appropriate sources
- a clear vision for the final steps in the writing process.

Between the interim session and the completion of the extended essay, students should continue to see their supervisor as appropriate to their needs, although the third and final reflection session should not take place until after the extended essay has been completed and uploaded for submission.

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### Final reflection session (*viva voce*)

The *viva voce* is a short interview between the student and the supervisor, and is the mandatory conclusion to the extended essay process. Students who do not attend the *viva voce* will be disadvantaged under criterion E (engagement) as the [\*Reflections on planning and progress form\*](#) will be incomplete.

The *viva voce* is conducted once the student has uploaded the final version of their extended essay to the IB for assessment. At this point in the process no further changes can be made to the essay. The *viva voce* is a celebration of the completion of the essay and a reflection on what the student has learned from the process.

The *viva voce* is:

- an opportunity to ask the student a variety of open-ended questions to elicit holistic evidence of the student's learning experience.
- an opportunity for the supervisor to confirm the [authenticity](#) of the student's ideas and sources
- an opportunity to reflect on successes and difficulties encountered in the research process
- an aid to the supervisor's comments on the *Reflections on planning and progress form*.

The *viva voce* should last 20–30 minutes.

### Assessment Overview

Criterion A: focus and method	Criterion B: knowledge and understanding	Criterion C: critical thinking	Criterion D: presentation	Criterion E: engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Topic</li><li>• Research question</li><li>• Methodology</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Context</li><li>• Subject-specific terminology and concepts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research</li><li>• Analysis</li><li>• Discussion and evaluation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Structure</li><li>• Layout</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process</li><li>• Research focus</li></ul>
Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks	Marks
6	6	12	4	6

**Total marks available: 34**

Adapted from <https://ibpublishing.ibo.org>