

FIRST REFLECTION

Preparation for the first reflection session

As preparation for their first reflection session, students should do the following.

1. Think about subjects and areas of particular personal interest and do some initial background reading into a subject and topic of their choice.
2. Using this as a starting point, explore a variety of possible research topics.
3. Read the subject-specific section of the *Extended essay guide* for the subject they are interested in, paying particular attention to the nature of the subject and the treatment of the topic.
4. Undertake further background reading and begin to gather information around their area of interest. This exploration should give rise to a variety of topics and questions that students can consider for further research. At this stage it is important that students consider the availability of reliable and valid sources for the topic under consideration. All of this should be recorded in their Researcher's reflection space.
5. Begin developing a research proposal which might include a Mind Map of ideas, an annotated article or preliminary bibliography. Additionally, students must already be thinking in terms of the following questions.
 - Is my topic appropriate for the subject I am considering?
 - Why am I interested in this area and why is it important?
 - What possible questions have emerged from my initial reading?
 - Are there any ethical issues that I need to consider?
 - What possible methods or approaches might be used for research in this area and why?

It is recommended at this point that the student–supervisor relationship is formalized, and the student can consider himself or herself prepared for the first formal reflection session.

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.

NOTE: Following this first session, the student is required to complete the first student comment section of the *Reflections on planning and progress form* and submit it to their supervisor who must then sign and date the form. Please refer to the section "Protocols for completing and submitting the *Reflections on planning and progress form*" for more information.

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Reflecting throughout the research process

Reflection is a continual process. If you are constantly considering the decisions you are making in the extended essay (EE) process, you are better able to avoid the common pitfalls of independent research. Reflection also helps you plan, allowing you to monitor your progress.

The following table identifies three stages in the review process and the kinds of questions you can usefully consider at each. It also suggests what evidence you might use in your reflection sessions to demonstrate your progress and learning.

| Stage | Types of questions you may ask yourself | Evidence from my researcher's reflection space |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Initial: Planning stages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What am I interested in researching and why? • What are my motivations for undertaking research in this area? • How will I begin the research process? • Is my chosen topic appropriate for the subject I have chosen to complete it in? • Do I have sufficient knowledge of the subject area to fulfill the criteria of an EE? • What possible question(s) might I research? • How might I go about undertaking this research? • Do I have access to appropriate sources? • Are my chosen research methods appropriate for the subject I have chosen to complete it in? • Are there any ethical issues I need to consider before pursuing this area of research? • Is there sufficient focus to my research area? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind map® • Annotated section of the <i>Extended essay guide</i> • Annotated bibliography • Annotated photograph, newspaper article, and so on |
| Background reading stage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have I learned about my subject area so far? • What questions are emerging? Are these similar or different to my initial questions? • Given the initial reading I have undertaken on the subject, is my research question appropriate for the subject I am submitting my EE in? • Is my research question manageable within the word limit of the EE? • Will my research question allow me to think critically about the topic I am | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes • Annotated article • Brainstorm of questions • Mind map® of potential challenges and possible strategies |

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| | <p>researching? If it suggests a descriptive response, how might I need to change it to allow for more critical thinking?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any challenges that I need to overcome in order to achieve my desired outcomes? | |
| <p>Interim: Writing stage</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have sufficient data/information to begin formulating an argument? • If I do not have sufficient data/information, how will I go about resolving this? Can it be resolved? • To what extent does the data/information I have relate to my proposed research question? • Given the data/information I have collected, do I need to reformulate my research question? • Has the data/information collected taken me in an unexpected direction? • Do I want to change course now? Is it too late? • Are there still questions/issues that I am unclear how to resolve? • Am I keeping to a schedule with the writing process? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the essay • Annotated sections from books, journals, articles, and so on • Reworked research question • Examples of data/information collected from research |
| <p>Final: Writing stage</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I have a reasoned argument that can be sustained throughout the essay? • Am I able to make coherent links between different points made and the evidence presented? • To what extent have I answered my research question? • What reasons may have affected my ability to answer my research question? • If I have been selective in the evidence presented in my essay, can I justify my choices? • Is there a clear summative conclusion, and does this reflect the discussion that has taken place? • To what extent do I think I have fulfilled the expectations of the extended essay as a task? • Has my research resulted in me changing my perspective or views on the topic in question? • What strategies have I employed that have worked particularly well at this stage of the process? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the main argument • Timeline • Working bibliography |

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| <i>Viva voce</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has my thinking been confirmed or changed about my chosen topic as a result of my research? • What strategies did I employ that proved particularly effective in the research process? • What skills have I developed and how might these be useful in the future? • What improvements might I suggest to my own working practices? • How might different research strategies have impacted my outcomes? • What did I learn about myself as a learner in this process? | |
|------------------|--|--|

Guiding student reflection

In critically reviewing your engagement in the research process, it might help to think in terms of three levels of reflection: descriptive, analytical and evaluative reflection. The table below gives examples of guiding questions to help with this. They are not exhaustive.

| Level of reflection | Example of the kinds of questions students may have asked and answered of themselves |
|---------------------|---|
| Descriptive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I do? • How did I undertake my research? • What were the problems I faced? • Did my approach or strategies change throughout the process? • What have been the high and the low points of the research and writing process? |
| Analytical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was my research successful? • If I changed my approach or strategies during the process, why did I do this? • What did I learn from the experience in terms of my understanding of the subject area and/or the skills needed to undertake research? • How has my understanding of the topic and research process developed throughout the task? |
| Evaluative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I were to undertake this research again, would I do it differently—if so, why or why not? • What has affected this? • If I did do the research again, would I change the theories applied or the methodological approach? Would this have led to a different outcome? • What can I conclude from this? • Were the strategies I used for undertaking my research the most appropriate for achieving my outcomes? • What, if any, questions emerged as a result of my research that I was not expecting? Would these questions influence my approach if I were to undertake the research again? |

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1

Initial reflection session takes place.

2

Student is given a fixed time period in which to complete their first reflection comment. This time period should be short in order to authentically reflect the discussion that has taken place.

3

Supervisor date stamps and signs to authenticate the student comment. If the forms are stored electronically an electronic signature is permissible.

4

Interim reflection session takes place.

5

Student is given a fixed time period in which to complete their second reflection comment. This time period should be short in order to authentically reflect the discussion that has taken place.

6

Supervisor date stamps and signs to authenticate the student comment. If the forms are stored electronically an electronic signature is permissible.

7

Student submits to the supervisor the completed, final version of their extended essay, ready for submission to the IB. Once this is done, the essay is no longer available to the students and no changes are permitted. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that no changes are made after that point if the school allows candidate uploads.

8

The supervisor reads the essay and then arranges for the final reflection session, the *viva voce*, to take place.

9

The *viva voce* takes place.

10

Students complete their RPPF by adding their final summative comments, sign and date the form before passing it to their supervisor.

11

The supervisor uploads the form on behalf of the student into the e-coursework system and adds their summative comment.

12

The supervisor then submits both the mandatory items—the essay and the RPPF—to the IB for assessment as one portfolio.

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PDF forms are not compatible with the Google Chrome PDF viewer plug-in. Chrome users should save the form, then reopen and complete with Adobe reader.

EE/RPPF

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International Baccalaureate
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

Candidate personal code:

Extended essay - Reflections on planning and progress form

Candidate: This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.

The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.

Supervisor: You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.

First reflection session

Candidate comments:

I knew from the outset that I definitely wanted to research Lebanese history, because I am from Lebanon and I think having a personal connection is unique. In our first meeting I wanted to know how to approach the civil war – I asked my supervisor what aspects to focus on, and what the time frame should be (1975 - ?). We decided on discussing the causes of the war, because there is the most room for analysis here. Also, if only the causes are discussed, the essay does not need to go into an in-depth investigation of the actual war. The discussion gave me a better sense of direction for my research.

Date:

Supervisor initials:



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First reflection session

Candidate comments:

I find it very interesting to look into why wars and conflicts occur from a political point of view. I am not so interested in the detailed accounts of battles, but I really enjoy learning about the motivations of political actors in a war or a conflict. So I've decided that this would be an interesting topic for my extended essay. I've made a mind map about the topic and started filling it out based on results from my initial research. I find this a very useful strategy because it makes me more aware of the bigger picture, and it makes it easier to see and make connections between relevant ideas and concepts. I'm starting to get a little nervous about how I'm going to find the time to do all the research and write the essay, because my hobbies outside of school take a lot of time in the evenings. I discussed this with my supervisor who suggested that I make a timetable for myself and then follow it strictly.

Date:

Supervisor initials:

