**IB Extended Essay: Essay Plan—Lesson # 11**

This Lesson

In this lesson you now need to start to plan the essay, continue with further research and familiarise yourself with the detailed assessment criteria. Note this lesson may take a number of weeks to complete. In the next lesson you will begin the writing process.

## **Essay Plan**

At this point in the process you should now be able to produce some form of plan for the essay. This is where you plan out firstly the main sections and then the paragraphs within the main sections.

The main sections for all essays will be:

**Introduction**

**Main body**

**Conclusion**

Each section has a particular role to play and this is what we will cover in the next lessons.

For some essays the main body will be broken down further to include sections such as data collection and analysis but this is dependent on the subject area.

## **Planning tools**

There are many different tools you can use to plan – some of them were introduced to you in Unit 2 Lesson 3 (spider diagrams and mind maps, structured lists, flow diagrams) – so you decide what works best for you. There are some links to additional online tools below.

#### [**Useful websites and planning tools**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

[**Essay map tool**](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/essaymap/)  (Read-Write-Think.org)

[**Essay plan guidance**](http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/learn-skills/essay-writing-skills/plan-your-essay/write-essay-plan)  (Ergo website, State Library of Victoria)

## **Further ideas about structure**

An essay is a bit like the human body – it should have a structure and form and be fleshed out with evidence and argument. So the plan you write is effectively the skeleton giving the essay shape and structure. The following points will help you.

**When planning:**

* The plan should be developed in line with your argument.
* Avoid a story line approach.
* If you are comparing and contrasting two case studies or books it is better to interweave the analysis of the two areas together rather than writing about one first then the other.
* Do not leave all your comparison text for the concluding paragraph – it needs to be in the main part of the essay.

If you are unsure about this or anything else to do with the plan speak to your supervisor.

## **Understanding the IB's assessment criteria**

Back in Unit 1 Lesson 6 you were given an overview of the assessment criteria. It is now essential that you spend more time understanding exactly how your final essay will be assessed BEFORE before you start the formal writing process.

Understanding how your essay will be marked will help you plan it!

### There are four stages to this process.

**Stage 1:**Briefly return to Unit 1 Lesson 6 to remind yourself of the overview of assessment.

**Stage 2:**Review the tables below showing the markbands and each criteria. [Source: Text extracted from the IB Extended Essay Guide website]

**Stage 3:**Unpack - review the additional information to understand what the examiners are looking for and how the criteria are used for marking. [Source: Text extracted from the IB Extended Essay Guide website]

**Stage 4:**Review the Subject-specific interpretations of the criteria. These you will receive from your supervisor. Make sure you have received them.

At all four stages if there is anything you do not understand, then you should consult your supervisor.

ASSESSMENT:

To gain the best understanding as to how you will be assessed, look at the EE marksheet provided at the top of the EE web page: http://seminolecinema.weebly.com/extended-essay.html

#### [**Criterion A: Focus and method**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

#### [**Unpacking the criterion**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

This criterion focuses on the topic, the research question and the methodology. It assesses the explanation of the focus of the research (this includes the topic and the research question), how the research will be undertaken, and how the focus is maintained throughout the essay.

* Does this essay meet the requirements for the subject for which you are registering it?
* Is your research question stated as a question?
* Have you explained how your research question relates to the subject that you selected for the extended essay?
* Have you given an insight into why your area of study is important?
* Is your research question feasible within the scope of the task? Could your research question be “answered” or it is too vague?
* Did you refer to your research question throughout the essay (not only in the introduction and conclusion)?
* Did you explain why you selected your methodology?
* Are there other possible methods that could be used or applied to answer your research question? How might this change the direction of your research?
* If you stated a particular methodology in the introduction of your essay, or specific sources, have you used them?
* Are there any references listed in the bibliography that were not directly cited in the text?

#### [**Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

#### [**Unpacking the criterion**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the research relates to the subject area/discipline used to explore the research question, or in the case of the world studies extended essay, the issue addressed and the two disciplinary perspectives applied, and additionally the way in which this knowledge and understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate terminology and concepts.

* Have you explained how your research question relates to a specific subject you selected for the extended essay?
* Have you used relevant terminology and concepts throughout your essay as they relate to your particular area of research?
* Is it clear that the sources you are using are relevant and appropriate to your research question?
* Do you have a range of sources, or have you only relied on one particular type, for example internet sources?
* Is there a reason why you might not have a range? Is this justified?

#### [**Criterion C: Critical thinking**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

#### [**Unpacking the criterion**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

This criterion assesses the extent to which critical thinking skills have been used to analyse and evaluate the research undertaken.

* Have you made links between your results and data collected and your research question?
* If you included data or information that is not directly related to your research question have you explained its importance?
* Are your conclusions supported by your data?
* If you found unexpected information or data have you discussed its importance?
* Have you provided a critical evaluation of the methods you selected?
* Have you considered the reliability of your sources (peer-reviewed journals, internet, and so on)?
* Have you mentioned and evaluated the significance of possible errors that may have occurred in your research?
* Are all your suggestions of errors or improvements relevant?
* Have you evaluated your research question?
* Have you compared your results or findings with any other sources?
* Is there an argument that is clear and easy to follow and directly linked to answering your research question, and which is supported by evidence?

#### [**Criterion D: Presentation**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

#### [**Unpacking the criterion**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

This criterion assesses the extent to which the presentation follows the standard format expected for academic writing and the extent to which this aids effective communication.

* Have you read and understood the presentation requirements of the extended essay?
* Have you chosen a font that will be easy for examiners to read on-screen?
* Is your essay double-spaced and size 12 font?
* Are the title and research question mentioned on the cover page?
* Are all pages numbered?
* Have you prepared a correct table of contents?
* Do the page numbers in the table of contents match the page numbers in the text?
* Is your essay subdivided into correct sub-sections, if this is applicable to the subject?
* Are all figures and tables properly numbered and labelled?
* Does your bibliography contain only the sources cited in the text?
* Did you use the same reference system throughout the essay?
* Does the essay have less than 4,000 words?
* Is all the material presented in the appendices relevant and necessary?
* Have you proofread the text for spelling or grammar errors?

#### [**Criterion E: Engagement**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

#### [**Unpacking the criterion**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33901/lesson)

This criterion assesses the student’s engagement with their research focus and the research process. It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, after considering the student’s Reflections on planning and progress form.

* Have you demonstrated your engagement with your research topic and the research process?
* Have you highlighted challenges you faced and how you overcame them?
* Will the examiner get a sense of your intellectual and skills development?
* Will the examiner get a sense of your creativity and intellectual initiative?
* Will the examiner get a sense of how you responded to actions and ideas in the research process?

## **Further research**

Now that you have decided on a provisional research question and done some initial research, you might start thinking more specifically about the direction it may take. This might include:

* suggesting possible outcomes of the research
* outlining the kind of argument you might make and how the research might support this
* considering other options if the research available is not sufficient to support a sustained argument.

Throughout this unit you will be doing further research to ensure you have all the information you require. If at any point you are unsure or have questions, reach out to your supervisor.

## **Check-in sessions**

Your supervisor is there to guide and support you in the process, and to help do this you will need to be in touch regularly for what's called 'Check-in sessions'.

Here is what the IB has to say about what is meant by a Check-in session:

*Students are encouraged to meet with their supervisor in between (and in addition to) the formal reflection sessions. Supervision time should meet the needs of the individual student; therefore, the frequency and duration of these meetings will depend on the needs of the student and the supervisor’s requirements. Supervision time may consist of an occasional 10-minute check-in to discuss a timeline or clarification of a comment made by the supervisor. It may also include a more lengthy discussion about particular issues, for example, regarding access to resources. These supervision sessions do not form part of the formal reflection process and do not, therefore, need to be reported on the reflections on planning and progress form. However, they nevertheless form an important part of the supervision process.*

[Source: IB Extended Essay Guide website]

Remember that all meetings with your supervisor are part of the allocated hours so, although you should not be afraid to contact your supervisor, you should not be contacting them on a daily basis.

Also remember you may need to have conversations with subject teachers, the librarian or your extended essay coordinator.

# **TASK: Essay Plan**

Review your essay plan, making sure you can answer the following questions:

* Does your plan match your research question or do you think you need to refine it?
* Is your plan full enough or do you need to add to it to give you greater guidance?
* Are there sufficient materials/resources for you to continue with this idea?

Then submit the following:

* Your completed essay plan.
* 10 bullet points that summarise the 10 most important things you need to remember about the assessment criteria.

Submit either a written document containing this work or a document containing a link to your shared Researcher's Reflection Space.

(Note: This assignment is not graded - it will just be reviewed by your supervisor.)