**IB Extended Essay: Lesson #13—The Main Body**

The main body

In this lesson we will look at the requirements for the main body of the essay.

Here is what the IB has to say:

*The main task is writing the body of the essay, which should be presented in the form of a reasoned argument. The form of this varies with the subject of the essay but as the argument develops it should be clear to the reader what relevant evidence has been discovered, where/how it has been discovered and how it supports the argument. In some subjects, for example, the sciences, sub-headings within the main body of the essay will help the reader to understand the argument (and will also help the student to keep on track). In structuring their extended essay, students must take into consideration the expected conventions of the subject in which their extended essay is registered.*

## **General advice**

So this is the beginning of the big piece of writing!

Don't worry - remember that you have already have a plan and that you have been thinking about this part of the essay for a while. You may want to make some final updates to the plan before you start the writing. You should also have a detailed set of notes from your research to refer back to. Also, don't forget that you won't just be writing during this time; you are still going to be doing little bits of research as you write, to clarify things. So set yourself realistic goals and make a start. Writing a large piece of work is like jumping into a cold swimming pool – the thought of it is worse than the reality!

**Here are some tips to help you on your way.**

* Write your essay in chunks. Although 4000 words feel like a really long piece you will be surprised how manageable it can be if you write it in sections where there is a clear aim.
* Try to keep a rough note of how much material you want to write/present on each theme/section in order to ensure the essay is well balanced. It is really hard to cut essays down if they are over the word limit so keep the beast under control!
* Generally it is probably best to write the essay in the order that the plan is presented as this will give you a sense as to how well the essay is building up.
* Make sure you are writing the essay using academic language and that the language is appropriate.
* To move the essay along and construct an argument try to use a topic sentence opening with the appropriate linking words (also known as cohesive devices or connectives). The topic sentence is usually the first sentence and it explains what the paragraph is about. It may also link with the previous paragraph.
* Keep a good balance of quotes and your own text. While you do need to back up your points with citations and evidence, don’t over quote as the essay will cease to look like you are in control of it.
* If you are adding numerical data be sure to check it is accurate as one small mistake early on in the data might throw the whole essay out.
* Ensure that the essay is complying with ethical guidelines.
* Remember what you learned about citation and apply it.

## **Individual essays**

Remember that the advice here is to some degree generic.  Not everything said above will apply to everybody in the same way at the same time. One of your peers may be also using this course to write their extended essay, but it may look a little different and they may have slightly different priorities, often because of the subject requirements.

If you are in doubt at any stage or have questions, remember your supervisor is there and arrange a Check-in session.

## **Linking words**

A little more now about linking words, also known as connectives or cohesive devices.

Linking words are used as "signposts" to help the reader make the transition from one paragraph to the next. The linking words you use will depend on the way you are developing your argument. The following are ways to develop your essay from one paragraph to the next, and common linking words for each.

#### [**Cause and effect**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33905/practice)

You can discuss the cause in one paragraph and the effect in the next one, or the other way round. In this way you are expressing a relationship or drawing a conclusion.

Linking words: **as a result**, **because of**, **therefore**, **consequently**, **thus**, **for this reason**

#### [**Positive and negative aspects**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33905/practice)

You can contrast the positive and negative aspects of a theme or idea. You might discuss the positive aspects in one paragraph and the negative aspects in the next one.

Linking words: **but**, **however**, **on the other hand**, **although**, **nevertheless**

#### [**Sequence of events**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33905/practice)

Before and after. You can show the next step or the previous step to the event you are discussing.

Linking words: **then**, **after that**, **finally**, **ultimately**, **following**, **before**, **first**, **previously**, **firstly**, **secondly**, **thirdly**

#### [**Illustration**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33905/practice)

You can illustrate or give an example of what you have been talking about.

Linking words: **for example**, **for instance**, **such as**, **that is**

#### [**Extension**](https://learn.pamojaeducation.com/courses/23/module/2259/lesson/33905/practice)

You can extend an idea, add weight to your argument, and/or give further examples.

Linking words: **similarly**, **moreover**, **furthermore**, **in addition**, **not only…but also**.

# TASK: Reflection: Main Body

You should now produce a draft of the main body of your essay.

This should be kept within your Researcher’s Reflection Space and shared with your supervisor when you agree it is relevant. You can use this Journal assignment to share a link to your draft work with your supervisor, but please be aware that they will not be fully reviewing this until you submit your completed essay.

Also take some time here to reflect on the process and to ask any remaining questions you may have about writing the main body.