

Reflection and the EE (for students)

IB Extended Essay

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	● 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?	● Mind map® ● Annotated section of the <i>Extended essay guide</i> ● Annotated bibliography ● Annotated photograph, newspaper article, and so on

Background reading stage	● 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 researching? If it suggests a descriptive response, how might I need to change it to allow for more critical thinking? ● Are there any challenges that I need to overcome in order to achieve my desired outcomes?	● Notes ● Annotated article ● Brainstorm of questions ● Mind map® of potential challenges and possible strategies
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Interim: Writing stage	● 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?	● Introduction of the essay ● Annotated sections from books, journals, articles, and so on ● Reworked research question ● Examples of data/information collected from research
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Final: Writing stage	● 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?	● An outline of the main argument ● Timeline ● Working bibliography
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<i>Viva voce</i>	● 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?	
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