Criterion A: Focus and Method

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.

History Specific Guidance:

Students must choose a topic from the human past that is of a meaningful nature. Topics may not discuss events/individuals/movements which have taken place within 10 years of the writing of the essay. For example, an essay submitted for assessment in 2018 must discuss events prior to 2008. Failure to follow this instruction will limit the grade in this criterion to a maximum of 4.

The topic chosen must be expressed in the form of a research question. The research question must be focused and capable of being discussed effectively within the word limit. Students must establish the historical context and significance of the topic and explain why it is worthy of investigation.

Students must demonstrate that they have selected a suitable range of appropriate and relevant sources. An attempt should be made to use both primary and secondary sources where possible. They should demonstrate both factual material as well as the opinions of historians. These sources must provide sufficient material to develop and support an argument and conclusion relevant to the research question.

Effective planning and a well-focused research question tend to go together. A key indicator of this is that students have chosen a comprehensive range of sources that are relevant and appropriate to answering the research question.

Ten-year rule

If the ten-year rule has not been adhered to, a maximum of only 4 marks can be awarded in this criterion.

If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered, no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion. This applies to history essays that breach the 10-year rule.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	**The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.**
1-2	**The topic is communicated unclearly and incompletely.** ● Identification and explanation of the topic is limited; the purpose and focus of the research is unclear, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered. **The research question is stated but not clearly expressed or too broad.** ● The research question is too broad in scope to be treated effectively within the word limit and requirements of the task, or does not lend itself to a systematic investigation in the subject for which it is registered. ● The intent of the research question is understood but has not been clearly expressed and/or the discussion of the essay is not focused on the research question. **Methodology of the research is limited.** ● The source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are limited in range given the topic and research question. ● There is limited evidence that their selection was informed.
3-4	**The topic is communicated.** ● Identification and explanation of the research topic is communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is adequately clear, but only partially appropriate. **The research question is clearly stated but only partially focused.** ● The research question is clear but the discussion in the essay is only partially focused and connected to the research question. **Methodology of the research is mostly complete.** ● Source(s) and/or method(s) to be used are generally relevant and appropriate given the topic and research question. ● There is some evidence that their selection(s) was informed. **If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.**
5-6	**The topic is communicated accurately and effectively.** ● Identification and explanation of the research topic is effectively communicated; the purpose and focus of the research is clear and appropriate. **The research question is clearly stated and focused.** ● The research question is clear and addresses an issue of research that is appropriately connected to the discussion in the essay. **Methodology of the research is complete.** ● An appropriate range of relevant source(s) and/or method(s) have been applied in relation to the topic and research question. ● There is evidence of effective and informed selection of sources and/or methods.

Criterion B: Knowledge and Understanding

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.

History Specific Guidance:

The essay must show that the student understands the place of the research question in a broader historical context; for example, the Marshall Plan with respect to the origins of the Cold War. In other words, if the focus of the essay is the Marshall Plan, students must demonstrate how this focus is relevant to an understanding of the origins of the Cold War.

The student must demonstrate that they understand and can use accurately historical terms and concepts relevant to the research topic.

Where it is deemed useful to clarify meaning or context, students may provide further explanation or definition of selected terms or concepts.

Ten-year rule

If the ten-year rule has not been adhered to, a maximum of only 4 marks can be awarded in this criterion.

If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered, no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion. This applies to history essays that breach the 10-year rule.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	**The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.**
1-2	**Knowledge and understanding is limited.** ● The selection of source material has limited relevance and is only partially appropriate to the research question. ● Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is anecdotal, unstructured and mostly descriptive with sources not effectively being used. **Use of terminology and concepts is unclear and limited.** ● Subject-specific terminology and/or concepts are either missing or inaccurate, demonstrating limited knowledge and understanding.
3-4	**Knowledge and understanding is good.** ● The selection of source material is mostly relevant and appropriate to the research question. ● Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear; there is an understanding of the sources used but their application is only partially effective. **Use of terminology and concepts is adequate.** ● The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is mostly accurate, demonstrating an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding. **If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than four marks can be awarded for this criterion.**
5-6	**Knowledge and understanding is excellent.** ● The selection of source materials is clearly relevant and appropriate to the research question. ● Knowledge of the topic/discipline(s)/issue is clear and coherent and sources are used effectively and with understanding. **Use of terminology and concepts is good.** ● The use of subject-specific terminology and concepts is accurate and consistent, demonstrating effective knowledge and understanding.

Criterion C: Critical Thinking

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

History Specific Guidance:

In a history essay, "research" refers to a critical engagement with the past through relevant sources. Students must be able to construct, present and support effectively a specific argument or position that provides their response to the research question.

This argument must be supported and developed by an analysis or consideration of the value and limitations of the research material.

Additionally, students must demonstrate that the knowledge gained from their selected sources can then be analysed and, on the basis of this analysis, form an argument and reach a conclusion(s) to the research

Throughout the essay students must present ideas or concepts that relate consistently to the analysis of the research question. The inclusion of ideas or concepts that are not relevant will detract from the value of the analysis and limit the student's ability to score well on this criterion.

The points contained in the argument and analysis must, at all times, be supported by specific, relevant material chosen from the student's research.

Students should not present essays that are wholly or largely narrative or descriptive in nature. These do not provide any evidence of analytical skills and will not score well.

In history, the development of a reasoned argument based on the analysis of historical sources may start with a student stating their position in relation to the question posed. This position must then be supported by evidence and developed into a reasoned argument, which culminates in conclusion(s) being given.

A conclusion summarizes the student's response to the research question. This conclusion must be consistent with the position and evidence presented in the essay. The conclusion may not include material that has not been discussed in the body of the essay.

However, questions that have arisen as a result of the research and may be suitable for further study may be included in the conclusion.

An evaluation of the relative value and limitations of the sources is an integral part of the analysis of the evidence and the development of a reasoned argument. This evaluation should be integrated into the text rather than contained in a separate section of the essay. It will then provide useful information or insight relative to the source or historian's opinion that the student is referring to in support of their argument.

Ten-year rule

If the 10-year rule has not been adhered to, a maximum of only 3 marks can be awarded in this criterion.

If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered, no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion. This applies to history essays that breach the 10-year rule.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	**The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.**
1-3	**The research is limited.** ● The research presented is limited and its application is not clearly relevant to the RQ. **Analysis is limited.** ● There is limited analysis. ● Where there are conclusions to individual points of analysis these are limited and not consistent with the evidence. **Discussion/evaluation is limited.** ● An argument is outlined **but** this is limited, incomplete, descriptive or narrative in nature. ● The construction of an argument is unclear and/or incoherent in structure hindering understanding. ● Where there is a final conclusion, it is limited and not consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. ● There is an attempt to evaluate the research, but this is superficial. **If the topic or research question is deemed inappropriate for the subject in which the essay is registered no more than three marks can be awarded for this criterion.**
4-6	**The research is adequate.** ● Some research presented is appropriate and its application is partially relevant to the Research question. **Analysis is adequate.** ● There is analysis **but** this is only partially relevant to the research question; the inclusion of irrelevant research detracts from the quality of the argument. ● Any conclusions to individual points of analysis are only partially supported by the evidence. **Discussion/evaluation is adequate.** ● An argument explains the research **but** the reasoning contains inconsistencies. ● The argument may lack clarity and coherence but this does not significantly hinder understanding. ● Where there is a final or summative conclusion, this is only partially consistent with the arguments/evidence presented. ● The research has been evaluated but not critically.

7-9	**The research is good.** ● The majority of the research is appropriate and its application is clearly relevant to the research question. **Analysis is good.** ● The research is analysed in a way that is clearly relevant to the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research rarely detracts from the quality of the overall analysis. ● Conclusions to individual points of analysis are supported by the evidence but there are some minor inconsistencies. **Discussion/evaluation is good.** ● An effective reasoned argument is developed from the research, with a conclusion supported by the evidence presented. ● This reasoned argument is clearly structured and coherent and supported by a final or summative conclusion; minor inconsistencies may hinder the strength of the overall argument. ● The research has been evaluated, and this is partially critical.
10 - 12	**The research is excellent.** ● The research is appropriate to the research question and its application is consistently relevant. **Analysis is excellent.** ● The research is analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question; the inclusion of less relevant research does not significantly detract from the quality of the overall analysis. ● Conclusions to individual points of analysis are effectively supported by the evidence. **Discussion/evaluation is excellent.** ● An effective and focused reasoned argument is developed from the research with a conclusion reflective of the evidence presented. ● This reasoned argument is well structured and coherent; any minor inconsistencies do not hinder the strength of the overall argument or the final or summative conclusion. ● The research has been critically evaluated.

Criterion D: Presentation

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.

History Specific Guidance:

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to accepted academic standards in relation to how research papers should be presented. It also relates to how well these elements support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay.

Students may provide a section and subsection structure to their essays, with informative headings. Subheadings should not distract from the overall structure of the essay or argument presented.

Use of charts, images and tables

Charts, tables and images may appear in the body of the essay only if they illustrate or clarify the argument at that particular point. The inclusion of non-relevant or superfluous material will not be rewarded and may actually detract from the argument.

Any tables should enhance a written explanation and should not themselves include significant bodies of text. If they do, then these words must be included in the word count. Students must take care in their use of appendices as examiners are not required to read them. All information with direct relevance to the analysis, discussion and evaluation of the essay must be contained in the main body of the essay. All charts, images and tables must be properly referenced with respect to their origin or source.

Any material that is not original must be carefully acknowledged, with specific attention paid to the acknowledgment and referencing of quotes and ideas. This acknowledgment and referencing is applicable to audiovisual material, text, graphs and data published in print and electronic sources. If the referencing does not meet the minimum standard as indicated in the guide (name of author, date of publication, title of source and page numbers as applicable), and is not consistently applied, work will be considered as a case of possible academic misconduct.

A bibliography is essential and has to be presented in a standard format. Title page, table of contents, page numbers, etc must contribute to the quality of presentation.

The essay must not exceed 4,000 words. Charts, tables and images are not included in the word count. Students should be aware that examiners will not read beyond the 4,000-word limit, or assess any material presented thereafter.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	**The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.**
1-2	**Presentation is acceptable.** • The structure of the essay is generally appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, argument and subject in which the essay is registered. • Some layout considerations may be missing or applied incorrectly. • Weaknesses in the structure and/or layout do not significantly impact the reading, understanding or evaluation of the extended essay.
3-4	**Presentation is good.** • The structure of the essay clearly is appropriate in terms of the expected conventions for the topic, the argument and subject in which the essay is registered. • Layout considerations are present and applied correctly. • The structure and layout support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the extended essay.

Criterion E: Engagement

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, and is based solely on the candidate's reflections as detailed on the RPPF, with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context.

History Specific Guidance:

Students are expected to provide reflections on the decision-making and planning process undertaken in completing the essay. Students must demonstrate how they arrived at a topic as well as the methods and approach used. This criterion assesses the extent to which a student has evidenced the rationale for decisions made throughout the planning process and the skills and understandings developed.

For example, students may reflect on:

- the approach and strategies they chose, and their relative success
- the *Approaches to learning* skills they have developed and their effect on the student as a learner
- how their conceptual understandings have developed or changed as a result of their research
- challenges they faced in their research and how they overcame these
- questions that emerged as a result of their research
- what they would do differently if they were to undertake the research again.

Effective reflection highlights the journey the student has engaged in through the EE process. Students must show evidence of critical and reflective thinking that goes beyond simply describing the procedures that have been followed.

The reflections must provide the examiner with an insight into **student** thinking, creativity and originality within the research process. The **student** voice must be clearly present and demonstrate the learning that has taken place.

Level	Descriptor of strands and indicators
0	**The work does not reach a standard outlined by the descriptors below.**
1-2	**Engagement is limited.** • Reflections on decision-making and planning are mostly descriptive. • These reflections communicate a limited degree of personal engagement with the research focus and/or research process.
3-4	**Engagement is good.** • Reflections on decision-making and planning are analytical and include reference to conceptual understanding and skill development. • These reflections communicate a moderate degree of personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating some intellectual initiative.
5-6	**Engagement is excellent.** • Reflections on decision-making and planning are evaluative and include reference to the student's capacity to consider actions and ideas in response to challenges experienced in the research process. • These reflections communicate a high degree of intellectual and personal engagement with the research focus and process of research, demonstrating authenticity, intellectual initiative and/or creative approach in the student voice.

Extended Essay Draft Comments Form

The following form should be used in parallel with the EE Assessment Criteria Rubrics.

Criterion A: *Focus and Method*	**Marks:** ___/6
Criterion B: *Knowledge and Understanding*	**Marks:** ___/6
Criterion C: *Critical Thinking*	**Marks:** ___/12
Criterion D: *Presentation*	**Marks:** ___/4
Criterion E: *Engagement*	**Marks:** ___/6