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SIXTH FORM



EXTENDED PROJECT  
QUALIFICATION  
SURVIVAL GUIDE



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# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What is the Extended Project Qualification?**

It is an in-depth study which can take the form of an experiment, extended essay, performance or project. It is graded A\*- E. It is an independent learning opportunity unlike anything else available to you in the school curriculum.

## **What skills will it help me to develop?**

### **To list just a few:**

- Independent enquiry;
- Creative thinking;
- Reflective learning;
- Problem solving;
- Self-management;
- Effective participation;
- Team working;
- Structured writing;
- Confident communication;
- Technological usage.

## What will I have to do?

Identify, design, plan and complete an individual project, applying a range of organisational skills and strategies to meet agreed objectives.

Obtain, critically select and use information from a range of sources; analyse data, apply it appropriately and demonstrate understanding of any relevant, connections and complexities of the topic.

Select and use a range of skills, including new technologies (where appropriate), solve problems, take decisions critically, creatively and flexibly, to achieve planned outcomes.

Evaluate outcomes both in relation to agreed objectives, as well as own learning and performance.

Select and use a range of communication skills and media to present evidenced outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format.

## **How should I choose a subject?**

Choose a subject which you are interested in and enjoy. It cannot be a specific area covered in any of your AS or A2 units.

Think about how this may help your university application or show a breadth of interest and knowledge.

Remember that a word limit of 5,000 words is not very much – you will need to limit the area you are investigating.

Think about how to formulate a question to research – be specific about what you want to prove or find out – see the examples in the introductory booklet on the school website under EPQ.

## **How much time should I spend on it?**

It is recommended by AQA that you spend up to 120 learning hours on your project. This includes meetings with your supervisor, planning, researching, organising, writing and drafting. Of these 120 hours, the school offers up to 30 hours of training in research techniques and project management skills, as well as guidance on writing up the project and giving your presentation.

## **When should I start working on the EPQ?**

Now!

## **When is it due?**

See the separate document (Timetable of Key Dates) which is available, along with many other resources, under the EPQ section on the school website.

## **How long should it be?**

All students must submit a written report for assessment of between 1,000 and 5,000 words. The exact length of each written report will depend on the nature of the project, the subject area chosen and the other evidence provided.

A project which consists solely of written work should be approximately 5,000 words; for example an investigation, exploration of a hypothesis or extended essay or academic report. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in other formats should include a report or record of work undertaken which is at least 1,000 words.

## **Who will support me with the EPQ?**

Mr Alexander is the EPQ Centre Co-ordinator. He and other members of the TGS staff also act as EPQ Supervisors and are allocated a Supervisor.

Your Supervisor acts as a guide on the process of the EPQ, rather than as a guide on the content. You can ask Heads of Department and other teachers for suggestions of useful resources.

You should make yourself familiar with the excellent resources on the school website under EPQ. They will answer many of your questions and provide invaluable support.

### **What should the written report contain?**

The written report or record is likely to contain the following:

- sources of and range of information accessed;
- details of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to e-learning materials;
- historical or other research;
- details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks or activities of the project, such as for an experiment, a construction, a performance or research interviews;
- a conclusion which includes a an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, a self-evaluation of your learning performance and decision-making abilities.

### **Is there anything else I must to do?**

Yes:

- You must complete the Production Log (on the school website under EPQ) during your project;
- Deliver a presentation.



## **Can I include supporting material with my project?**

Depending on the subject area or topic chosen, a variety of evidence may be submitted for assessment. Evidence can be provided in any form appropriate to the type of project chosen, and may include:

- an artefact, model or construction;
- recording of performances or activities;
- an audio or multimedia presentation;
- a journal of activities or events;
- a slide or presentation;
- a photographic record of the project.

## **How will it be marked?**

It will be marked by your Supervisor and moderated by the Centre Co-ordinator.

Look at the Marking Criteria and the Grade Descriptors which are on the school website under EPQ.

## WHAT WILL YOUR SUPERVISOR DO?

Supervisors:

- Do not advise on the specific subject matter of the content.
- Meet with each EPQ sixth former to discuss the candidate's initial idea and action plan.
- Agree the project title and proposal. They complete the supervisor section in the Project Approval Form parts A and C.

Supervisors are not given a timetable allocation for the supervision. **This reflects the fact that the onus is on students to seek help when needed and not to expect supervisors to chase them.** EPQ Sixth Formers are expected to communicate with their Supervisor on a weekly basis by email etc and show the initiative. If students need chasing, then the EPQ will be very challenging.

Supervisors:

- Act as critical analysts of the project, commenting on content, organisation and presentation. They are there to help and suggest, but not to do the candidates work!
- Carry out a Mid-Project Review and End-of-Project Review with each student.
- Confirm that a student's presentation took place.
- Endorse each sixth former's Production Log by signing the front page.
- Assess the EPQ according to the Marking Criteria.

## WHAT TO DO FIRST?

**Think:** what areas are you interested in for or what are your interests you're Extended Project?

**Think:** can you put together a title that will allow you to investigate and access the higher-level concepts and skills in the learning outcomes and assessment objectives, i.e. plan, research, analyse, evaluate and explain, rather than simply describe and narrate?

**Think:** is the title and proposed action plan clear and focused on an issue which can be managed within the timescale, available resources and word total?

**Think:** do the title and proposed action plan indicate that you will be capable of investigating and researching the topic or carrying out the activity or task independently?

**Think:** is there a danger that you will be unable to approach the project impartially and in a balanced way?

Once you have worked through the above stages, complete page 5 of your Production Log (Record of Initial Planning) and arrange a meeting with your Supervisor to discuss it.

After this meeting you will be able to complete page 6 (Project Proposal Part A) and page 9 (Planning Review) of the Production Log.

Your Supervisor will then complete page 7 (Project Proposal Part B) and the Centre Co-ordinator will then approve the project area via page 8 (Project Approval Part C).

You are then ready to start the detailed research and drafting!

## WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Write down 3 things that interest you eg 'football', or the idea that 'people have rights'.

1.

2.

3.

Now write down a reason why you are interested in the 3 things you have chosen, eg 'football' – because you play it, 'rights' because you have talked about it in philosophy.

1.

2.

3.

Select one of your interests. Can you think of 3 potential projects for this interest? eg 'football' – women in football, football hooligans or international players in the premiership.

1.

2.

3.

Now develop these ideas further. For each of the 3 potential projects think and make a note of the following:

- i The issues, theories or people that might be involved
- ii The practicality of the idea – will there be enough resources?
- iii Are there any risks?
- iv Do you have the skills for this project?
- v Will you be able to complete it on time?
- vi What areas would you need to research?
- vii Can you think of a suitable question/title?

### **Next:**

Develop one of your projects further by writing a few paragraphs detailing your idea and what it might involve. This may not end up as your final project, but it's a good way to get started.

Finally, share your project idea with someone else and get feedback.

*Option 1*

*Option 2*

*Option 3*

i

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ii

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iii

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iv

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v

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vi

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vii

## Examples of last year's EPQ titles:

How did Eva Peron influence society and politics in Argentina between 1946–52?

Is hypnosis more dangerous than it is useful?

Do the ecological problems in the UK and the UAE need different solutions when it comes to environmentally friendly housing?

Should the NHS care for those with self inflicted illnesses?

Do 'bad boy rock and rollers' behave badly in the public eye to gain new publicity?

To what extent has the policies on homelessness changed throughout the UK as an effect of devolution by the UK government? Could it be said it has brought the greatest conflict?

Should the death penalty be reintroduced in England?

What is the most appropriate source for the derivation of renewable energy within Suffolk?

What is the most effective treatment relating to the pathogenesis and development of Alzheimer's Disease?

A photographic exhibition of biodiversity in Suffolk chalky boulder clay ponds.



## HANDY HINTS

Keep your Extended Project under control – don't get side-tracked or think "I'll put it off until next week".

The Summer Holidays are a vital time to get the bulk of your research done. It is incredibly difficult to complete the whole project in term-time. Where are you going to find 90+ free hours of time during a busy term?

Keep your topic or research question manageable - within the time available and your range of skills.

Keep it in perspective - the Extended Project is worth the same UCAS point score as any AS Level - will help your future education and career. It may also lead to a reduced university offer. The EPQ is something that you will want to write about extensively in your UCAS Personal Statement.

It should be approximately 5,000 words - this may seem long, but in fact it is only about 12 sides of A4.

You are unlikely to change the world with your EPQ; you are not expected to write something totally original, just something new to you.

It should be on a topic that interests you and which you want to find out more about.

Follow the guidelines in the Production Log – remember that this forms a central part of the marking and is not just an ‘add-on’.

Keep checking the Marking Criteria to make sure that your project will fulfil the requirements.

Stick to deadlines – they are genuinely there to help you keep on task and complete on time.

## STEP 1: ACTION PLANNING

Use the SMARTER acronym to help you:

**S**pecific

What exactly will you do?

**M**easurable

How will you know you've succeeded?

**A**chievable

Is it realistic?

**R**esourced

Have you allocated enough time?  
Have you enough information?

**T**imetabled

By when will you achieve each step?

**E**valuated

Keep checking if you are on track.

**R**eviewed

Sometimes changed circumstances mean a modification in the goal is necessary.

## STEP 2: RESEARCHING

### **Scan reading:**

- First flick through a textbook/article – scanning;
- Look at the index;
- Look at the headlines;
- Look at the pictures;
- Look at any summaries at the beginning or end of chapters;
- Stop and glance at anything that interests you;
- Jot down anything you already know – key words;
- Produce a mind map to develop ideas further;
- Always make notes and ask yourself questions.

## Analysis:

Interrogate the author – ask questions as you are reading:

- How do I know this is true?
- If it is true, what else follows?
- Is the conclusion justified?
- What assumptions are being made?
- Is this fact or opinion?
- What's the evidence? If it's fact, is it always true?  
If it's opinion, can I trust the source?
- Can I think of any (better) examples to illustrate the argument?
- Is this logical?
- What personal opinion or conclusion can I draw from this? Is it justified?
- What are the unique and new points?
- What is essential to know and what is just padding?

## STEP 3: ORGANISING THE PROJECT

The average professional writer spends 40% of their time on research and planning, only 20% on actual writing and 40% on revision and re-drafting.

### Writing tips:

Keep to the topic – what exactly is the question or issue that you are addressing?

If it is a topic or problem for which you are proposing an answer, define the issue in the first paragraph, and keep checking back to see if you are sticking to the point.

Gather together the information you need – notes from books, sources from the internet. When you have your notes together try mind-mapping the key ideas.

Now start to add to the mind-map: putting ideas together in groups.

Check back – do the points answer the question or suggest a solution to the problem?

Decide what will be in the beginning, middle and end of the report.

The beginning – the introduction: sets the scene as to what the report is about and lays out the structure your written assignment will follow.

The middle – the main part: develops your arguments and ideas with example, facts, quotations and evidence to back up the argument.

The end – the conclusion: a clever summary answer to the original question, and ties up any loose ends.

## STEP 4: DRAFTING

### **Start with the middle (the main part with all your key arguments):**

Start to write with your organised plan in front of you.

Start with the middle – where you will be developing your arguments. Once the middle is complete then you can finish off by writing a punchy opening and an informed summary ending.

Decide what is the best order for your main points – remember to give each new idea its own paragraph.

All work should be done on a computer so it is easy to redraft and move text around if necessary.

Write up each of the ideas from your mind-map.

### **Writing the end (the conclusion):**

Look back at the draft of the middle. Jot down the 10 most important key words.

Find the shortest way to link them together – that is your ending.

Check that your ending sums up your answer to the question or the issue you are addressing.

Remember this is the last thing to be read before deciding your report grade!

## **Writing the beginning (the introduction):**

Now draft the beginning – this will give the reader the ‘big picture’ of what you’re going to say and introduce the topic issue. It will also signpost the areas you are going to explore in answering the questions you set.

Remember the beginning is the first thing your reader (or examiner) will see.

A punchy introduction will put your reader in a positive mood expecting to agree with your argument.

## **What next?**

Sleep on it. When you read it again you will see points you missed or things you could have explained better.



## STEP 5: EDITING

Is the meaning clear? Have you used the words that describe exactly what you mean?

Read your report out loud. Does it sound good?

Have you used sub-headings that make it easy to read?

Have you used short paragraphs that the reader will want to read, rather than long boring ones?

Have you given examples to bring your ideas to life?

Pay attention to the beginning – does it start with a bang?

Does the start make the reader want to read more?

Keep your sentences short – long sentences are difficult to understand.

## STEP 6: REFERENCING

It is crucial that **as you are researching your project** that you make a note of the following information for every source you use:

- Title of publication
- Address of the website
- Name of the author (or editor)
- Page number
- Publishing company
- Date of publication or place of publication

This information will go into your Bibliography, as well as being referenced in footnotes or endnotes.

Being meticulous with this throughout the whole process will prevent you from being accused of plagiarism.

**Bibliography:** the list of all sources that you have used, referred to or consulted during the course of compiling your Extended Essay.

**For example:**

Alexander Mr. *A History of the Extended Project at TGS*.  
Sudbury, England: Whatever Books, 2014.

When citing a website you must specify:

- Site name
- Homepage
- URL
- Date viewed

**For example:**

The BBC Website

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2935875.stm>

Accessed: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**Footnotes** – these are a way of allowing your reader to check your sources for themselves. They are notes that appear at the foot of the page. Footnotes should be used whenever you refer to the work of another person. Everything that is not your own work must be referenced.

**Endnotes** have the same purpose as footnotes; they simply appear at the end of a document or at the end of a section of a document.

Both footnotes and endnotes can be used in one of two ways, either:

Parenthetical in text system - in other words putting your source in brackets within the text.

Number system - simply using the insert tool or references footer in your word processor to insert a number which refers the reader to your footnote or endnote.

## STEP 7: PRESENTING

The presentation should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project.

The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, presentation software or short excerpts of video material.

This could take the form of a group presentation, in the case of a group project, or a single presentation to the Supervisor and other students.

The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from your Supervisor or others.

## USEFUL LINKS

You will find useful information from the University of Essex on the school website under EPQ. Also:

For advice on the process of writing a project or extended essay:  
[www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/comms/level3/module6/1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/comms/level3/module6/1.shtml)

Step by step guide to essay writing:  
[members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/intro.html](http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/intro.html)

Loads of good advice from the English School at the University of Birmingham:  
[library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.01%20Essays.htm](http://library.bcu.ac.uk/learner/writingguides/1.01%20Essays.htm)

For advice on basic essay writing:  
[esl.about.com/library/howto/htessay.htm](http://esl.about.com/library/howto/htessay.htm)

A very thorough and easy to understand webpage on bibliographies and referencing from the University of Dundee:  
[www.dundee.ac.uk/library/learning/ref/](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/library/learning/ref/)

A very thorough pdf on the Harvard style of referencing and bibliography from the library of The University of Queensland, Australia:

[www.library.uq.edu.au/\\_/sites/default/files/storage/webfile\\_read/files/referencing/HarvardGatton.pdf](http://www.library.uq.edu.au/_/sites/default/files/storage/webfile_read/files/referencing/HarvardGatton.pdf)





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