

Assessment criteria explained

Unpacking the extended essay assessment, criterion by criterion, will help you guarantee a good grade

The IB will assess your extended essay (EE), not your supervisor. This means that your EE will be sent to an IB Diploma examiner who is an expert on the subject you have chosen. The examiner will use the five criteria to assess your essay for a total of 34 marks. The mark that you receive will be converted into a letter grade from A to E, depending on what mark you have received.

This grade is compared with the grade you have received for your TOK presentation and essay (your mark having been converted into a letter grade, A–E, in the same way) to find out how many extra points you will get for your Diploma, as shown in Table 1. Some people fail their Diploma because they receive an E grade in either TOK or the EE (a failing condition).

Not many students fail in this way, but there are some simple steps you can do to make sure that this doesn't happen.

Don't let yourself throw away marks. Criteria A, D and E alone are worth half of the marks available. Understanding what you need to do for each of the assessment criteria will ensure you avoid the pitfalls and score a top mark.

Table 1 How many extra points will you get?

TOK and EE	A	B	C	D	E
A	3	3	2	2	Failing condition
B	3	2	2	1	Failing condition
C	2	2	1	0	Failing condition
D	2	1	0	0	Failing condition
E	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition	Failing condition

Criterion A

Focus and method (6 marks)

Topic: is your topic communicated accurately and effectively? Is the purpose and focus of your research clear and appropriate?

Research question: is your research question clearly stated and focused (your research question must be a question, with a question mark)? Does your completed essay continuously relate to your research question, or have you been sidetracked? Many essays lose marks by not sticking to the question.

Methodology: how are you going to carry out your research? How will you analyse and show your findings? Has an appropriate range of relevant source(s) and/or method(s) been selected and used in relation to your topic and research question?

Criterion B

Knowledge and understanding (6 marks)

Context: is your selection of source materials relevant and appropriate to the research question?

Subject-specific terminology and concepts: is your knowledge of the topic clear and coherent and are your sources used effectively and with understanding?

Criterion C

Critical thinking (12 marks)

Research: is your research appropriate and relevant to your research question?

Analysis of your research: How deep was your analysis? Is your research analysed effectively and clearly focused on the research question?

Discussion and evaluation: is your argument reasoned, effective and focused, and developed from your research? Is your conclusion consistent with your argument? If it is a good one, it may throw up other questions to be answered outside of the scope of your essay's conclusions.

Criterion D

Formal presentation (4 marks)

Structure: the way in which your essay is constructed. Is your essay laid out in the conventional way expected of such essays?

Layout: is your essay set out according to the IB's EE requirements? (Are your pages numbered? Have you used a 12-point, readable font that is double spaced? etc.)

See IB REVIEW, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 30–32 for more on how to get maximum marks for criterion D.

Criterion E

Engagement (6 marks)

This criterion assesses your completed **reflections on planning and progress form (RPPF)** through focus on the writing process:

- How thoroughly have you considered ideas and actions in response to setbacks experienced in your research process?
- Do your reflections show intellectual and personal engagement? See pp. 22–24 for more on how to achieve the reflection requirements of the EE.

References and resources

Full extended essay assessment criteria and grade descriptors (first exams 2018) can be found at:

www.tinyurl.com/ee-criteria

www.tinyurl.com/ee-descriptors

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