

## Extended essay student checklist - *things I must and must not do*

### *Things I must do*

- read the relevant sections of the extended essay guide and follow the advice
- read the criteria
- read previous essays I have written to identify strengths and possible pitfalls
- talk to my supervisor
- start early
- choose a topic I will be enthusiastic and interested in for the course of the project
- let my interest and enthusiasm show
- spend time working out the research question (dry run; imagine finished essay)
- construct an argument that related to the research question
- work out a structure for your essay
- if I get stuck, choose a question I can answer
- stick to deadlines
- plan my research
- record my sources as I go along
- write the abstract only after I've finished the essay
- use the libraries and librarians
- use the appropriate language for my subject
- proofread the final version
- maintain a good working relationship with my supervisor

### and things I must **not** do

- have a broad / vague / too narrow / too difficult / inappropriate research question
- write in a subject I am not studying
- plagiarise
- ignore the criteria
- collect and present material which is irrelevant to the question
- repeat the introduction in conclusion
- cite sources which I do not use
- merely describe or report – use if
- use internet uncritically
- forget to analyse the question



## The extended essay: *what other peoples' experiences tell you*

### **Comments from examiners**

The following are the points most frequently made by examiners across the subjects:

- A well chosen research question is absolutely crucial
- The abstract is a relatively simple exercise and should include all the three required elements
- The conclusion needs to be drawn on the basis of the discussion and should often consider unsolved questions/issues
- An essay should not be simply a collection and description of facts, but make use of them in support an argument and/or personal opinion
- Students should be extremely careful about attribution
- Teachers should make sure that students have adequate research skills for the task chosen, including critical use of the Internet.

### **Basic advice for producing competent essays**

- Read both sets of the criteria very, very carefully and make sure your essay fits them
- Start early and stick to any school deadlines
- Record your sources as you go along
- Use the appropriate language for your subject and proofread
- Keep checking that what you write is relevant to your research question

### **Areas that need to be carefully looked at for excellent essays**

- To choose a topic in which your personal interest and enthusiasm will show
- Be prepared to take some risks, to use your initiative, and be creative in selecting a topic
- In the conclusion, acknowledge and consider the unsolved questions and their possible importance/effects for the area being discussed
- Take a critical and questioning approach to the sources of information
- Have a clear structure for the whole essay in your mind before you start to write it