

## Considering the assessment criteria

Make sure you use the extended essay assessment criteria to remind yourself of the expected elements of the extended essay. Each of the five criteria (A–E) is accompanied by a guiding question that should be applied to the context of mathematics. In this way, you can see how the assessment criteria relate to your own essay. It is important that you also refer to the “[Generic guidance for the extended essay](#)” section in this guide for a broader spectrum of advice on using the assessment criteria to inform your writing.

<b>A: Framework for the essay</b>	Clearly state your research question and ensure your essay remains focused on it throughout. Make sure your mathematics is written well by using an equation editor. This will help you avoid poor mathematical presentation, such as not using a new line for each step in your algebra, or using inappropriate symbols like * for multiplication and ^ for powers.
<b>B: Knowledge and understanding</b>	Showing your knowledge and clear understanding of the mathematics you use is arguably the most important criterion in a mathematics essay. If you have not shown that you really understand the mathematics, this will impact other criteria.  Do not be overly ambitious—an extended essay is not a research paper revealing that you have discovered something profound and new. Understand and explain something that is new to you (in more theoretical essays) or apply some mathematics that you understand well in a situation that is new (in more practical essays).
<b>C: Analysis and line of argument</b>	Avoid the temptation to extend your analysis beyond the realm of your research question—this is likely to lessen the impact of your essay.  In more practical essays, it is better that the techniques you use to analyse your data are decided based on looking at that data, rather than being predetermined. In more theoretical essays, make sure that the mathematical theory described, and the illustrative examples used, remain focused on the research question. This will result in a consistent line of argument.
<b>D: Discussion and evaluation</b>	Clearly discuss the relevance of your findings throughout the essay, not just in the conclusion. Consider the strengths of what you have found and describe any limitations.  In more practical essays, discuss the findings from your data and ensure this informs how you proceed through the essay. In more theoretical essays, explain how the theory you are developing is relevant to your research question. In both cases, ensure that the conclusions you reach are relevant to your research question and are supported by findings in your essay.
<b>E: Reflection</b>	Refer to the “ <a href="#">Generic guidance for the extended essay</a> ” and the “ <a href="#">Reflection and the extended essay</a> ” sections of this guide.

## Arts

**Note:** Before reading the following guidance, read the “[Generic guidance for the extended essay](#)” section in this guide.

### What is distinctive about an extended essay in the arts?

An extended essay in the arts allows you to explore a topic of particular interest to you in dance, film, music, theatre or visual arts. It can include a wide range of dynamic creative practices through which human beings convey ideas, communicate experiences, values and impressions, and develop identity. Any essay in this area should integrate the analysis of primary sources—such as artworks, films, live performances, music concerts, play texts, screenplays, scripts and scores—with disciplined research informed by scholarly

methods, and provide a critical evaluation of the results. Secondary sources, such as books, critiques and magazine articles, interviews, subject journals and websites, must be used as evidential support for your argument.

Ensure that your selection of primary sources—your body of work—is robust enough to sustain an in-depth 4,000-word essay. There is no precise number of sources that will work best, but remember that the sources should enable you to consider not only what they say but also how they say it. The sources should contain enough substance that you can continue to raise and discuss points without overanalysing them or repeating yourself. Determining the best number of sources for your essay will take some effort; rather than focusing on the amount, you might look for complementary sources first—for example, three to four by the same author, artist, musician. As you begin to analyse them, you may realize that three sources yield enough material for effective comparison and contrast; you may also realize that four sources enable you to deepen your analysis.

Each subject poses its own unique set of challenges. Therefore, the approach to the investigation should reflect the research methods most appropriate to the arts subject and topic being studied. These approaches could include the study of aesthetic concepts, historical, social and cultural aspects, and gender-based or post-colonialist readings. In the arts, qualitative research methods that seek to understand the chosen art form within a context are more likely to be used.

Your extended essay presents an opportunity to study art in an international context, broadening your horizons in terms of artistic culture and exploring both the familiar and the new, in the spirit of intercultural understanding.

## Choosing a topic

The arts present strong links to other disciplines, and their richness may tempt students to select topics that are peripheral to the actual arts subject—this is not recommended. It is essential that students answer the question using artistic and contextual analysis and that the work does not diverge into other areas like psychology, history or sociology. To illustrate this, consider a music research question: “How did the Beatles change the music industry in the 1960s?” While the Beatles are musicians, the focus of the research question is the “changes in the music industry”. Therefore, the focus is not on music but on the industry that relates to it.

Students may choose to discuss, for example, a social, political or gender issue arising from an artwork, film or play text. Nevertheless, they must not treat artwork merely as documentary evidence in the discussion of the issue and should focus instead on the artistic meaning and significance of the chosen artwork.

Some topics may attempt to demonstrate the influence of one artist, performer or composer over another or one artistic style over another, but undertaking a comparative essay like this should be considered carefully. While finding similarities between the work of artists is relatively easy, demonstrating an actual influence is complex. For this approach to be successful, a student would need to undertake a rigorous formal analysis and provide supporting documents, such as letters, diaries or interviews, or media articles, to evidence the perceived “influence” clearly. The visual arts example below that explores the influence of Japanese prints on Claude Monet’s artistic practice describes a good approach to such a topic.

## Example topics, research questions and approaches

Subject	Topic and research question	Outline of approach
<b>Dance</b>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Voguing as a response to the rejection of the LGBTQ+ community</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent was voguing a response to the rejection of the LGBTQ+ community and what is its relevance today?</p>	<p>Identify the historical and cultural time and spaces since the late 1800s in which the LGBTQ+ communities were visible and celebrated and additionally faced many barriers.</p> <p>Identify and select appropriate sources for the development of an argument.</p>

Subject	Topic and research question	Outline of approach
		<p>Explore the origin of, and reason for, the creation of voguing by Black and Latino LGBTQ+ communities at that time.</p> <p>Identify leaders and their contributions to the form.</p> <p>Discuss the relevance of voguing inception and why it is important today.</p> <p>Evaluate strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Come to conclusions addressing the research question.</p>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> Gender roles in post-war Germany reflected in the choreography of Pina Bausch</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent does Pina Bausch reflect on societal issues relating to gender roles in post-war Germany through her choreography?</p>	<p>With the help of secondary sources, research the life and work of Pina Bausch and identify the historical and cultural influences on her work.</p> <p>Select specific examples and sources that support Bausch's work and identify the societal issues relating to gender roles in her choreography.</p> <p>Describe and evaluate how successful Bausch's works have been, supporting themes with programme notes, archival materials and critics' writings.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Come to conclusions addressing the research question.</p>
<b>Film</b>	<p><b>Topic:</b> The influence of Italian Neorealist films on the French New Wave</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> How did Italian Neorealist films like Vittorio De Sica's <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> (1948) influence later directors and movements such as Francois Truffaut and the French New Wave?</p>	<p>With the help of secondary resources, research the characteristics of Italian Neorealist films and the French New Wave.</p> <p>Analyse the directing style, production methods and representation of adolescence in <i>Bicycle Thieves</i> (1948) and <i>The 400 Blows</i> (1959). A possible third film, with a contrasting style but influential to <i>The 400 Blows</i>, could be <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i> (1955).</p> <p>Find evidence to support the claim that Italian Neorealist films had an influence on the later French New Wave. Discuss and evaluate this evidence.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Come to conclusions addressing the research question.</p>

Subject	Topic and research question	Outline of approach
	<p><b>Topic:</b> Changing treatment of male and female characters in different versions of films</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> How do different versions of <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> reveal changing attitudes in filmmakers' treatment of male and female characters in light of gender film theory?</p>	<p>Select different versions of <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>. These could be <i>La Belle et la Bête</i> (1946) and <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (2017). A third film could be the animated <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> (1991).</p> <p>Analyse the changing representation of men and women in terms of gender theory, the male gaze, and society in the selected films.</p> <p>Evaluate the attitudes of the filmmakers in the treatment of male and female characters.</p> <p>Illustrate your points.</p> <p>Establish conclusions and evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p>
<b>Music</b>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Eastern European folk elements in Bartók's music</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> How are the Eastern European folk elements that Bartók introduced in his <i>Concerto for Orchestra</i> developed?</p>	<p>With the help of secondary sources, research the characteristics of Eastern European folk music.</p> <p>Find examples to illustrate these characteristics.</p> <p>Identify Eastern European folk elements in Bartók's composition.</p> <p>Analyse how Bartók develops these elements throughout the piece.</p> <p>Find examples to illustrate your points.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Establish conclusions addressing the research question.</p>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> The different classifications of Baroque concertos</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent do structural differences justify the classification of a Vivaldi Baroque era concerto as "Italian School" and a Bach Baroque era concerto as "German School"?</p>	<p>Research the concepts of the Italian Baroque concerto and German Baroque concerto.</p> <p>Select solo concertos by Bach and Vivaldi and justify your selection.</p> <p>Analyse the concertos' structure.</p> <p>Compare and contrast their elements.</p> <p>Provide examples and evidence to support your claims.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Draw a conclusion(s) responding to the research question.</p>
<b>Theatre</b>	<p><b>Topic:</b> The use of costume designs to visually echo themes in theatrical productions</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent do Sara Schwartz's costume designs visually</p>	<p>Research the themes explored in <i>Leonce and Lena</i>, as declared by the director, such as loss of power, beauty, existentialism and self-sacrifice, through the lens of costume design.</p>

Subject	Topic and research question	Outline of approach
	<p>echo the themes explored in the production of <i>Leonce and Lena</i> at the Volkstheater in Vienna, Austria?</p> <p><b>Topic:</b> The use of the body in physical theatre</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent can social discrimination be explored through the body in physical theatre? An analysis of DV8's <i>The Cost of Living</i>.</p>	<p>Analyse the performance of <i>Leonce and Lena</i> produced at the Volkstheater in 2010.</p> <p>Supported by personal interviews, draw close links to the text by Büchner and to Schwartz's designs.</p> <p>Provide examples and evidence to support your claims.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Draw conclusions addressing the research question.</p> <p>Research secondary sources on physical theatre that may range from the general, e.g. the moving body, to the specific, e.g. Lloyd Newson and DV8's own writings.</p> <p>Analyse the performance of <i>The Cost of Living</i>, first identifying the physical metaphors of the broken body and whole body, then linking this to physical characterization techniques.</p> <p>Compare spoken and physical language and their interplay in this production to convey the intended message about physical disability.</p> <p>Provide examples and evidence to support your claims.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Establish conclusions, evaluating to what extent social discrimination can be explored through the body in physical theatre.</p>
Visual arts	<p><b>Topic:</b> The influence of Japanese prints on Claude Monet's artistic practice</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent did aesthetic principles of Japanese prints from the Edo period influence Claude Monet's material and conceptual artistic practice?</p>	<p>Research the characteristics of Japanese prints from the Edo period and Impressionist paintings.</p> <p>Analyse a selection of Monet's artworks, from sequential periods in his life, to study the conceptual and material development of his artworks in terms of the possible influence of aesthetic principles of Japanese prints from the Edo period.</p> <p>Research secondary sources focused on finding evidence to support such influence.</p> <p>Provide examples to support your claims.</p>

Subject	Topic and research question	Outline of approach
		<p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Draw conclusions addressing the extent of the influence.</p>
	<p><b>Topic:</b> The embodiment of the cyclical nature of life and death in work by Joni Brenner</p> <p><b>Research question:</b> To what extent does the <i>Skull Series</i> of compositions by Joni Brenner embody the cyclical nature of life and death?</p>	<p>Research the socio-historical context of Apartheid in South Africa and the art produced post-Apartheid. This will help situate the topic within a wider context, providing a better understanding of Brenner's ideas and the subjects depicted.</p> <p>Analyse the artistic and symbolic aspects of the <i>Skull Series</i> compositions.</p> <p>Evaluate the extent to which the cycle of life and death is embodied in the artworks.</p> <p>Illustrate your points.</p> <p>Evaluate the strengths and limitations of the research.</p> <p>Establish conclusions addressing the extent of the embodiment of life and death in the artworks.</p>

## Researching and writing the essay

To substantiate ideas in the arts, you must critically examine primary and secondary sources. In instances where you are unable to view primary sources in person—such as paintings, performances, concerts, buildings—you must rely on high-quality reproductions, videos and images instead. Images must be used selectively to support the reading and understanding of your essay.

Secondary sources can be used to provide context. They support the points raised in the analysis and illuminate the circumstances that led the artist to make certain artistic decisions. The opinions of specialists, practitioners and professionals, such as artists, curators, historians and critics, may provide different perspectives that will help create a robust line of argument.

When building a compelling academic argument, it is important to select an appropriate strategy. Quoting or summarizing secondary sources is likely to result in limited argumentation. Making use of a good selection of analysed and explained primary sources would be more effective. Ideally, a combination of both helps to develop a more convincing and solid argument.

## Considering the assessment criteria

Make sure you use the extended essay assessment criteria to remind yourself of the expected elements of the extended essay. Each of the five criteria (A–E) is accompanied by a guiding question that should be applied to the context of the arts. In this way, you can see how the assessment criteria relate to your own essay. It is important that you also refer to the “[Generic guidance for the extended essay](#)” section in this guide for a broader spectrum of advice on using the assessment criteria to inform your writing.

<p><b>A: Framework for the essay</b></p>	<p>You should review the existing literature on your topic to inform the construction of your research question and evaluate its relevance. It is recommended that you carefully select a limited number of works (e.g. artworks, performances, play scripts) to support in-depth analysis and discussion within the word limit.</p>
--	--

	<p>The use of images is mandatory in visual arts essays, and they must appear in the body of the essay.</p> <p>It is recommended that essays in other arts subjects include carefully selected visuals—such as screen captures from films, diagrams, scores or set designs—to illustrate and support the developing argument. All such images must be properly identified and cited in the essay, and in a separate list of sources at the end of the essay. All images used must be of a reasonable size and high-quality resolution.</p>
<b>B: Knowledge and understanding</b>	You should use artistic terminology and concepts fluently and accurately. You should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of artistic periods, movements and styles when necessary. Your essay needs to show clear evidence of knowledge and understanding for at least one appropriate context that addresses the topic in a meaningful way.
<b>C: Analysis and line of argument</b>	<p>While there are different ways of approaching an argumentative thread, in the arts it is important to illustrate the points made using examples from the works examined.</p> <p>Another way of constructing a line of argument could be through comparisons of, for example, two or more dance productions, artworks or music scores. However, you should ensure that your comparisons are valid, that they are the product of sensitive and objective analysis, and that the point of making a comparison is clearly explained and significant.</p>
<b>D: Discussion and evaluation</b>	<p>Your response to your research question should direct the reader to evidence, both in the work(s) studied and in the secondary research. It should do this in a balanced manner, considering a range of possible ideas and arguments.</p> <p>You should identify the strengths and limitations of the research in your arts-focused topic and how important these have been in the interpretation of the findings and development of your conclusions.</p>
<b>E: Reflection</b>	Refer to the “ <a href="#">Generic guidance for the extended essay</a> ” and the “ <a href="#">Reflection and the extended essay</a> ” sections of this guide.

## Cross-disciplinary subjects

**Note:** Before reading the following guidance, read the “[Generic guidance for the extended essay](#)” section in this guide.

### What is distinctive about an extended essay in cross-disciplinary subjects?

Separately from the interdisciplinary pathway, you can do a subject-focused extended essay in one of the two DP subjects that are cross-disciplinary: ESS and literature and performance.

The transdisciplinary lens of ESS brings together two subject groups: individuals and societies and the sciences. Meanwhile, literature and performance combines studies in language and literature and the arts.

**Note:** ESS or literature and performance may not be used in combination with another DP subject in the interdisciplinary pathway. This is to avoid the complexity and potential challenges of integrating more than two disciplinary perspectives.

An extended essay in either of these cross-disciplinary subjects will allow you to address a topic of your interest, drawing from the interactions between approaches, theories, concepts and methodologies of their disciplines.