

## Language B

**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 language B?

An extended essay in language B gives you an opportunity to develop your knowledge and understanding of the second language you are studying, and to demonstrate your understanding of the culture associated with that target language. Possible areas to explore include language use, literary analysis or a study of the culture itself. In other words, your language B extended essay can:

- discuss and analyse texts as an inquiry into the way in which language is developed and used by fluent speakers or as literature

**or**

- focus on the culture of a/the country where the target language is one of the country's main languages of communication, illustrated through a distinctive aspect or item specific to that country.

These approaches can also be combined, depending on the nature of your research question.

In analysing language or literature, you will potentially be applying the target language cultural lens. Your essay may be based on any meaningful example of the use of the language, spoken or written, provided that it is sufficiently linguistically or culturally complex, and can generate academic analysis of a well-constructed research question.

Undertaking a language B extended essay does not require advanced fluency and highly developed writing ability in the target language. However, clarity of meaning and the capacity to address the assessment criteria are important.

**Note:** It is not permitted to write a language B extended essay in a language that you are studying for your DP in language A.

Texts that have been translated into the language B language are not acceptable as sources. All texts, whether used as the focus of your extended essay or as comparative examples, must have been originally written or spoken in the language B language.

### Choosing a topic

Your topic should relate to one of the three areas mentioned above—**literary analysis, language use and development** or a **study of the culture itself**. A combination of these areas is also acceptable.

#### Topics on literary analysis

Literary analysis covers a discussion of some aspect of a literary work or works originally written in the target language, for example, a literary technique as found in a particular text, a thematic comparison of two works of different periods, a character study.

Works of fiction studied as literature must be originally written in the target language. Nevertheless, there is no requirement that the setting of the work must also be in a geographic area where the target language is spoken. For example, *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare is set in Italy but was originally written in English, and a work of science fiction or fantasy is often set in other imaginary worlds.

The screenplay of a film (i.e. script and directions) is also acceptable here, but it must be analysed as literature. The discussion should not refer to its cinematographic qualities as these are not language-based; they would likely be more appropriate in extended essays for film or literature and performance.

#### Topics on language use

An extended essay on language use must focus on the analysis of a particular aspect of the development, structure or use of the target language itself, always in relation to its cultural context or a specific text. An example would be a study of how the language of American rap is influencing teenage communication in

the United States (USA), based on specific rap lyrics. In contrast, an investigation of how second-language students learn English, wherever this may occur, is simply inappropriate: the topic does not investigate aspects of the English language itself.

**Note:** The texts you choose to investigate **either** as a literary analysis **or** as a study of language use can include a variety of genres, whether spoken or written. But they must also be meaningful examples of language, such as novels, short stories, speeches, advertisements, plays, screenplays, song lyrics and historical documents. There are many “new textualities” that make for a rewarding study, such as literary blogs, micro fiction or graphic novels. Texts need not be traditional prose fiction or non-fiction to qualify as worthy of literary study; however, the availability of a good range of relevant and valuable secondary sources is essential to support the argument in any topic.

### Topics studying the culture

If you choose a cultural topic, there are two requirements to consider.

1. The topic must focus on a sociocultural issue specific to the target language.
2. The topic must be investigated through its influence on the form or use of the language itself.

**or**

The topic must be investigated through its manifestation in customs or artefacts specific to the country where the target language is spoken.

The test of what makes a “cultural artefact” is that it is a concrete object (not a belief or a movement or a state of being) that reflects the target culture in some specific way. A film may be considered a suitable cultural topic but only when approached and analysed as a cultural artefact in the target language. The film needs to be perceived as a concrete object that reflects specific prevailing or changing attitudes or values of the target culture in that language. This is also true of other visual artefacts such as television series.

It is essential that the study promotes understanding of the target language and/or its related culture. Issues that can have relevance to more than one culture, such as certain social and political issues (e.g. religion, racism, the rights of women), are intercultural and therefore not specific enough. Nor are the influence of linguistic trends that are not specific to the target language alone, such as social media acronyms or the use of emoticons. These are not appropriate for studying as a cultural topic because they do not meet the requirements for **focused and detailed research into the target language and/or culture**. Nonetheless, they may be relevant to an extended essay in language and literature or language A, for example.

### Researching and writing your essay

As you undertake your research and writing, consider the following advice.

- If you have chosen to analyse literature, ensure that sufficient resources are available, including relevant secondary sources. Be aware that a recently published work may not yet have much critical material written about it, so it may be an unsuitable choice. Also, some “young adult” novels may lack sufficient depth and complexity to allow for a detailed analysis.
- It is expected that most resource materials used for your language B extended essay are written in the target language.
- If you have chosen to research a cultural topic, ensure that you have reliable sources of evidence to support your line of argument. It is challenging to produce high-quality research with student-generated questionnaires because these tend to be subjective and lacking in useful, reliable evidence.

Research based on published material is preferable and usually more reliable than research based on unpublished material.

- Even though you are not writing in your first language, be aware that your extended essay is a piece of academic writing and make sure that your tone and register are appropriate; writing that is too informal may detract from the effectiveness of your essay.

## Example topics, research questions and approaches

### Language use

**Topic: Two American presidents, two acceptance speeches—Comparing and contrasting rhetorical techniques**

**Research question:** To what extent do the inaugural addresses of President Obama and President Trump reflect their different uses of Aristotle’s three rhetorical techniques?

**Outline of approach:** Research covers Aristotle’s three techniques, ethos, pathos and logos, as well as a brief background to the purpose of the speeches. Analysis investigates extracts from the two selected speeches, comparing three examples in each of the use of these techniques, the effects intended and how the speeches’ contrasts are reflective of the different personalities and agendas of the speakers.

### Literary analysis

**Topic: The personification of Death as a narrator in *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak**

**Research question:** How does the personification of Death as a narrator provide an empathetic or an objective perspective for the reader in *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak?

**Outline of approach:** A literary examination of the methods employed to develop the personification of Death, including consideration of narrative analysis, discourse analysis and graphical layout, concluding with an assessment of the extent to which these methods have been successful in gaining the reader’s empathy. In addition to a close reading of the novel, literary theory and literary articles are studied as secondary resources to support and deepen the insights given.

### Cultural study

**Topic: The industry of American values—Advertising techniques in the USA**

**Research question:** To what extent does Coca-Cola promote American values in its ads to appeal particularly to American society?

**Outline of approach:** Investigation of three values—optimism, individuality and equality—and how they are characteristic of American society. A study of six advertisements, aired during the Super Bowl, analysed as cultural artefacts, showing the techniques used to promote Coke as reflecting these values. Resources would include texts and articles on advertising techniques, on the Coca-Cola company’s ideology, and on social attitudes in the USA. Images of ads should be included and properly referenced.

**Topic: Political rap and racism in the USA**

**Research question:** To what extent can the song “I’m Not Racist” by Joyner Lucas tell us about currently experienced racism in the USA?

**Outline of approach:** The investigation covers a brief background to political rap in US culture and its focus on racism. The context of the singer and the song is outlined. Then the lyrics are analysed in detail, highlighting cultural topics such as stereotypes, police brutality, social negligence and protest movements. These are compared with news reports, polls and statistics on modern racism to determine whether the song is a reliable reflection of reality. Discussion and analysis include references to the history of racism in the USA, political rap and Lucas, and in particular, the analysis of the lyrics or poetry.

## 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 language B. 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 of this guide for a broader spectrum of advice on using the assessment criteria to inform your writing.

#### A: Framework for the essay

The introduction must include a statement explaining how the topic fits the criteria. A suggestion is to include in your introduction an explanation of how responding to your research question is developing your knowledge and

	<p>understanding of the second language you are studying, as well as the culture related to this. For example, you might explain that English and Anglophone culture are not the same as Western culture. Also, indicate why your topic is worthy of investigation.</p> <p><b>Structural conventions</b></p> <p>Unless there is a specific analysis of an advertisement or artwork to illustrate the culture of the target language, supporting images are generally not appropriate nor useful in the body of your essay. If used, they must be properly referenced.</p> <p>If poetry or song lyrics are the focus of your analysis, all significant extracts and examples should appear in context, in the relevant places in the body of your essay. The full text can be included in an appendix if you feel that is useful, but do note that the examiner is not required to read appendices.</p> <p>Any quotations or titles that are not in the target language must have a translation included.</p>
<p><b>B: Knowledge and understanding</b></p>	<p><b>Understanding—Terminology:</b> When you use specific literary terms, you need to show clearly that you understand their meaning and application to your topic. Try to work terminology into writing your paragraphs. Here are two examples.</p> <p><b>Symbolism:</b> “The symbol of the lighthouse on the clifftop enriches the atmosphere. It is more than a literal light; it also suggests guidance, comfort in the dark and the possibility of finding a safe harbour. At irregular moments in the novel, it appears again, each time suggesting guidance, security or the safe end of a perilous voyage.”</p> <p><b>Irony:</b> “The opening sentence of Jane Austen’s <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> is a good example of irony: ‘It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.’ Austen is mocking the obsession of mothers at that time to find suitable husbands for their daughters, regardless of the feelings of the men or indeed of the daughters themselves.”</p> <p><b>Understanding—Concepts:</b> Use examples and quotations from your research materials to show your understanding of the key concepts you are using.</p> <p>For example, gender roles and social norms: “The strict social and gender norms that were enforced on women at the time [Victorian England] served as the foundation for Jane Eyre’s emergent feminism. Bronte’s portrayal of Jane’s unflinching spirit, her rejection of social norms and her refusal to be restricted to predetermined gender roles serves as a potent mirror of the feminist battles that women of her age had to fight.”</p>
<p><b>C: Analysis and line of argument</b></p>	<p>Here is an example of an analysis of the role of Boxer in <i>Animal Farm</i> by George Orwell:</p> <p>“Orwell uses Boxer to represent the working class, as dedicated but helpless victims of totalitarianism ... He highlights their exploitation by showing how Boxer works long hours without any type of reward. Boxer’s trademark slogan, ‘Napoleon is always right’, shows how workers are not even aware of their miserable reality.”</p> <p>The quote above is part of a line of argument that traces the roles of the main symbolic characters in the novel. All of the characters and symbols are explored independently and then connected in the conclusion to Orwell’s attempt at highlighting the flaws and corrupt ideals that this political system essentially embodies.</p>

<b>D: Discussion and evaluation</b>	<p>An example of <b>discussion</b>: “The film <i>Green Book</i> is a cultural artefact that reflects issues around racism in the southern USA at that time. It goes further and explores the situation of immigrants, in this case Italian, in an interesting contrast with the wealthy Black pianist.”</p> <p>An example of <b>evaluation</b>: “Despite Hurston’s skill of conveying themes through characters in her novel <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>, there is a lack of consideration towards the sensitivity of some readers. The pervasive use of erotic narration in portraying love and marriage can be regarded as highly controversial. However, the portrayal of the emancipation of a young Black woman is relevant to today’s society.”</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.

## Classical languages

**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 classical languages?

An extended essay in classical Greek or Latin provides you with an opportunity to investigate non-trivial, in-depth topics in the context of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.

You may choose to focus either on linguistic features of classical Greek or Latin, or to investigate a particular aspect of classical Greek or Latin literature or of classical Greek or Roman culture and civilization. However, since language, literature, culture and civilization are closely interwoven, it is appropriate for you to study language in the context of literature, culture and civilization, and literature, civilization and culture as presented through the classical Greek or Latin languages.

**Note:** For classical languages, you will submit your extended essay in either English or Spanish, depending on your language of registration.

An extended essay in classical languages requires you to engage with sources written in classical Greek and Latin, so you must also have sufficient proficiency in these.

### Choosing a topic

A suitable topic will normally focus on an in-depth aspect of the language, literature or civilization of the classical Greek and Roman world, ideally a topic where scholarly opinion is divided.

You should keep in mind the availability of sources. If the essay is related to a fundamental and canonical writer such as Virgil, it is probable that you will be able to find a plentiful number of sources. On the other hand, if you focus on a less common topic, you need to make sure that you can support your line of argument with appropriate evidence and source sufficient secondary materials to help you substantiate your claims.

Your brief is to choose a topic that allows you to engage in a deep and focused study of the classical Greek and Roman worlds themselves, displaying your ability to apply the methodology and concepts relevant to classical studies. You should avoid comparisons between classical topics and the way these topics are shaped in modern or contemporary cultural endeavours. A comparison of slavery in Rome with the ways it is portrayed in Hollywood films, for instance, is not an appropriate research topic, nor is examining the use of Greek mythology in contemporary literature or art. An example of a suitably constructed research question would be: “To what extent is Clytemnestra’s murder of Agamemnon presented as justified in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*?”

A well-defined, focused topic helps you to understand the culture and civilization of the classical world in its context. For example, Aeneas and Augustus’ rise to power is a suitable topic to research, since it prompts