

## The Arts: An introduction

An extended essay (EE) in the arts provides students with an opportunity to undertake an in-depth investigation into a topic of particular interest to them. Students working on an arts EE must demonstrate in-depth analysis of the subject matter studied, be it dance, film, music, theatre or visual arts. This understanding must be shown in the form of:

- a coherent analysis and interpretation of their chosen area in relation to a posed research question
- the testing and validation of the research and consideration of its effect on the practice of the investigated area of the arts
- development and exploration in a disciplined and imaginative way of an area of study specifically appropriate to the curriculum area chosen
- a link to a practical dimension.

Each subject area poses its own unique set of challenges. Therefore, the approach to the topic of investigation should reflect the particular methodology most appropriate to the arts subject being studied.

Students should have logical and coherent reasons for selecting a particular topic for their essay, a well-thought-out research question and an approach that allows them to develop a reasoned argument.

## The process of topic selection

Students should initially identify a broad area of inquiry that they are interested in within the Diploma Programme arts subjects: dance, film, music, theatre or visual arts.

While there may be overlap between the subjects in the arts and common approaches, the research topic must clearly relate to one specific arts area. If a student chooses a research area that blurs the boundaries between two arts subjects, they must ensure that their essay's emphasis clearly lies within the arts subject for which they are submitting it. Crucially, the topic selected should reflect each student's particular interest and enthusiasm within that subject area.

Often, their previous experiences help students to decide on their topic.

For some, the inspiration might be work already undertaken as part of the Diploma Programme course. Alternatively, students may choose to focus on something that has not been part of their studies. Their research may also be inspired by a direct experience of a particular artwork, design, composition or performance, or an interest in the work of a particular artist, style or genre.

Students will then need to narrow down their topic to a research question that allows for specificity and detail. The research question also needs to allow for the investigation to make a purposeful contribution to knowledge and understanding in the subject.

For instance, if a theatre student chooses to explore the use of fans in Restoration comedy, the student will need first to analyse the wider cultural context informing the convention's historical and social meanings. Next, the student must illustrate those meanings by discussing the use of the convention in a stage production of a particular restoration play.

After the careful analysis of a topic and its purpose, students can start working on the structure of their paper.

## Literature review—demonstrating knowledge and understanding in context

Conducting literature-based research is an essential element of the EE. Students should review the existing literature on their topic to inform the construction of their own research question and design. Students need to spend time on their literature review (eg by compiling an annotated bibliography) so that they can contextualize their own work. It will also ensure that their essay meets criterion B: knowledge and understanding.

Once they have discussed their choice of topic with their supervisor, students can draw up a research plan, containing the main points to be discussed in the essay. This plan should be flexible enough to allow students to explore the topic in a creative manner, and also to change direction if needed. This may be necessary if students find it difficult to locate supporting material and research data to explore their question.

Students should not be afraid to explore unconventional topics or approaches in their research: originality and creativity are encouraged, as is the use of different research approaches appropriate to their subject area.

## Research question

In designing a research question, students should mainly be guided by their interests, but should also consider the relevance of their research. Their research question should be non-trivial and follow from the existing body of literature on the topic, seeking to explore it in innovative ways. The question needs to be specific and sharply focused, stated clearly on the title page and in the introduction of the essay, and fit into one of the five subjects of the Diploma Programme arts group.

Students need to avoid researching a question that is too narrow or too obvious as this will restrict the formulation of reasoned arguments and may prevent them from meeting the assessment criteria. The research question must set an appropriate research context and encourage an investigative approach to the EE.

A well-constructed research question must be specific, should address an appropriate and relevant area in the field of the arts and try to offer an alternative perspective to previous research findings.

When drawing up their research question, students should consider historical and socio-cultural information to increase their understanding of the context of the arts practice or tradition they are investigating.

It will also help students to read critically their primary and secondary sources to determine which will support their own argument. They must demonstrate skills of critical analysis to access the higher levels of the assessment criteria, and this may mean challenging existing arguments rather than simply agreeing with them.

The research question must be explored using research methods appropriate to the subject. These include qualitative methods, as well as the empirical analysis of arts processes or practices and “finished” work (such as artworks, play texts, notations, live and recorded performances and productions).

Students should be reminded that consulting the relevant subject-specific section is vital to ensuring that their essay meets the requirements for that subject.

## Research methods

The EE’s emphasis should always be on written analysis, interpretation of one or more pieces of art, music, film, dance, etc and the construction, development and evaluation of a sound argument. Therefore, it is vital that the methodology of the essay is tailored to the research question and allows for an in-depth exploration.

When conducting their research, students should analyse the content of primary and secondary sources.

Primary source material includes play texts, live performances, music concerts, textual analysis, original artworks or designed artifacts, films, scripts, screenplays, scores, personal contacts and productions. Reproductions,

videos, films or photographs and internet images of a high quality are also considered as acceptable sources of information.

A secondary source of information refers to research and subject journals, books, newspaper and magazine articles, interviews and websites. The use of other published materials such as sketches, drawings, pictures, plans, reviews and promotional material is encouraged but should not overwhelm the EE to the detriment of the research discussion.

The research outcome of an arts EE should always include a link with a practical dimension. Where relevant and possible, students may wish to consult practitioners and professionals, such as performers, directors, researchers, writers, designers, painters, sculptors, composers or critics; or they may wish to visit theatres, galleries, museums and arts centres.

Supervisors need to ensure that students are aware of their responsibility to properly cite the resources used and check their work for plagiarism. Citations should adhere to the requirements of the IB and be correctly and consistently applied.

## Framework for the EE in the arts

<b>Introduction</b>	An EE in the arts is intended for students who are interested in undertaking research in an area of particular interest to them in the fields of dance, film, music, theatre or visual arts. Qualitative methods are more likely to be used for an arts EE.
<b>Methods most relevant to subjects in this group</b>	<p>Primary methods involve analysis of play texts, live performances, music concerts, original artworks or designed artifacts, films, scripts, screenplays, scores, personal contacts and productions. Reproductions, videos, films or photographs and internet images of a high quality are also considered as acceptable sources of information.</p> <p>Secondary methods include research and academic journals, books, newspaper and magazine articles, interviews and websites. The use of other materials, such as sketches, drawings, pictures, plans, reviews and promotional material is encouraged but should not overwhelm the essay.</p>
<b>Suggestions for possible sources</b>	<p>Use of peer-reviewed journals, newspaper articles, books, e-resources and publications online, specialized academic research engines, unpublished conference papers, previously published essays.</p> <p>Students may wish to interview practitioners and professionals; they may wish to visit theatres, galleries, museums or arts centres.</p>
<b>Particular things to be aware of</b>	Students need to be aware that their work will be checked in terms of the IB's academic honesty policy and so all students must ensure that they are familiar with this document.
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Undertaking an EE is a challenge and so planning is crucial. Students need to start writing their papers early and discuss any emerging difficulties with their supervisor.</p> <p>Supervisors, librarians, practitioners and professionals in the field are a great source of information, advice and support for students.</p> <p>Students writing an essay in the arts should search for primary and secondary sources of information prior to initiating the writing process. The framing of a good research question that is well structured and thought through will aid students in establishing a reasoned argument.</p>
<b>The EE and internal assessments</b>	The EE is not an extension of the internal assessment and students must ensure that they are not using material submitted for any other assessment component as part of the EE submission—see individual subject-specific guidance for more details.

## Overview

An extended essay (EE) in music gives students an opportunity to undertake in-depth research into a topic in music of genuine interest to them.

Music—as a form of expression in diverse contexts, with intent, purpose and meaning—should be at the heart of the essay. It must focus on particular pieces of music, experienced by the student through:

- recordings
- score study or
- performances and concerts.

The student is required to embark on a systematic, disciplined and imaginative investigation of musical works. The basis of that investigation, for the purpose of the EE, is musical analysis.

The outcome of the investigation should be a structured and coherent piece of writing in the form of an academic research paper. It requires:

- an analytical research approach, based on both primary and secondary sources
- formal language, including the use of appropriate subject terminology
- meticulous presentation.

Students also need to display:

- knowledge and understanding of their chosen musical context and genre
- critical thinking in relation to their topic through reasoned arguments, discussion, interpretation and evaluation.

Students do not have to be enrolled in the Diploma Programme music course to write an EE in music.

However, they must be familiar with the different aspects and requirements of the course.

## Choice of topic

Researching and writing their EE allows students to gain a deeper understanding of music. A simple analysis of a piece of music is not enough. Students must also develop critical arguments with the aim of gaining deeper insights into, for example, musical contexts or theory.

Their choice of topic must therefore give them scope to do this.

Sources of ideas may include:

This list is not exhaustive, but is intended for guidance and inspiration.

- The Diploma Programme music course
- Performances or concerts
- Musical cultures students have encountered within their own experience
- Personal contact with composers or performers
- Direct involvement in the making of music
- Recordings (distributed in various forms)
- Other music that has a particular interest, emotional appeal or specific importance for the student

## Topics and research questions for students to avoid

- Research questions that lead to essays that are essentially narrative or descriptive.
- Research questions that are too broad to support effective analysis or argument within 4,000 words. For example, “What is African Music?” or “What influence did Michael Jackson have on the 20th Century?”
- Overly studied themes—they will lead to essays that are obvious or predictable.
- Non-musical topics, such as:
  - the life of a performer
  - the nature and development of instruments or technology
  - lyrics
  - biological, neurological, therapeutic or educational issues.

## Research question

Once they have decided upon their area of investigation, students must develop a focused research question. The question must have a clear musical focus but not unduly restrict the development of students’ research.

For example, the research question: “How is counterpoint used in Bartók’s *Concerto for Orchestra*?” is a good one because:

1. It clearly indicates:
  - the music that will be studied—Bartók’s *Concerto for Orchestra*—a musical source of appropriate scope
  - the compositional element—counterpoint—the focus of the investigation.
2. It does not limit the potential development of the study unnecessarily.

3. The investigation of how counterpoint is used in Bartók's concerto could subsequently inform a student's work for the Diploma Programme music course component of creating.

## Examples of topics

These examples are just for guidance. Students must ensure their choice of topic is focused (left-hand column) rather than broad (right-hand column).

✓	✗
Focused topics	Broad topics
The role of folk music in Bartók's <i>Concerto for Orchestra</i>	Bartók's music
The rhythmic and harmonic aspects in the style of Dizzy Gillespie as evident in pieces X and Y	The features of bebop
Compositional techniques in Balinese gamelan pieces X and Y	The characteristics of Indonesian music
A comparison of the singing styles of Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan, as evidenced by their interpretations of standards X, Y and Z	Understanding jazz singing

## Treatment of the topic

Musical analysis is the starting point of the investigation, but it is not sufficient for completing the essay successfully. Students are also expected to place their analysis in context:

- to relate their findings to the wider field of music and
- if possible, to add their own creative perspective.

Throughout the EE, their arguments must be supported by findings from their research.

At the beginning of the EE, students should:

- clearly state their research question
- outline their methodology for answering it.

## Research methodology

### Primary sources

Musical analysis is the starting point for the research and data collection. This may involve the study of a score or recording. Through their analysis, students identify musical elements and compositional devices and how these have been used.

Primary sources of information for students' initial analysis include:

- recordings
- scores
- concerts
- observation
- interviews with performers
- questionnaires or surveys.

Students should also consider the "bigger" picture. Typical questions may start with "Why?", for example:

- Why has the composer made specific musical decisions?
- Why are specific combinations more effective than others?
- Why does a piece of music work in one context but not in another?

Students may also want to discuss:

- performance conventions and interpretations of the piece
- influences on the piece or its genre
- the importance of the piece in its time.

### Secondary sources

To inform their explanation and interpretation of their chosen piece of music, students should explore what others have said about:

- the piece of music itself

- its musical context or
- other music of the same genre and style.

Sources for this include:

- textbooks
- books about music
- academic music journals
- the internet.

The EE should not be based exclusively on material from textbooks, scripts or the internet.

When choosing their topic, students must ensure that they will have access to a sufficient range of relevant and appropriate sources. If it becomes clear at an early stage in the research that too few sources are available, students should change their topic.

## Developing an argument

Ultimately, students' analysis needs to lead them to formulate a reasoned argument. These questions may help them to do this:

- What are the conclusions and impacts of this investigation?
- What do the results and findings tell us about the field of music?
- What are the lessons learned from the musical analysis of this composition?
- How does it affect other musicians, or my composing and performing studies?

Their conclusion(s) should cover some or all of the following:

- what they have learned from their analysis
- how it fits into the field of research concerning the topic
- any shortcomings of the study and questions that arose but remain unanswered.

To further refine the focus of their topic, students can follow their topic and research question with a statement outlining the research approach they will take to answer it.

## Examples of topics, research questions and suggested approaches

Once students have identified their topic and written their research question, they can decide how to research their answer. They may find it helpful to write a statement outlining their broad approach. These examples are for guidance only.



Topic	<b>Ennio Morricone's film music</b>
Research question	What compositional techniques support characterization in the music Ennio Morricone wrote for the film <i>The Mission</i> ?
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A study of pitch, motives, orchestration and texture used in three pieces from the soundtrack to <i>The Mission</i> (musical analysis).</li> <li>• An investigation to determine and discuss how Ennio Morricone's use of musical elements and compositional devices support characterization in the film (eg comparative analysis, questionnaires, literature review).</li> </ul>

Topic	<b>The music of Astor Piazzola</b>
Research question	What is the significance of Piazzola's <i>New Tango</i> style in the development of the genre?
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of the harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and stylistic elements in "Libertango" by Astor Piazzola to identify important characteristics of his new tango style (musical analysis).</li> <li>• A brief summary of the history of tango to identify how the characteristics have transformed the genre (eg literature review).</li> <li>• An investigation into how the identified characteristics have impacted upon the further development of the style (eg literature review, musical analysis, interview with composers).</li> </ul>

Topic	<b>Musical contribution of the rock group Muse</b>
Research question	How do the musical influences found in pieces X, Y and C by the rock group Muse impact upon the listener experience?
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An analysis of melodic, rhythmic and harmonic elements in pieces X, Y and C by Muse that reveals influences from Chopin, Schubert and Rachmaninoff respectively (musical analysis).</li> <li>• A discussion of how the influence of composers of the Romantic has shaped the musical style of the group (eg literature review).</li> <li>• An investigation into the impact of these influences on the listener (eg through a questionnaire or interviews).</li> </ul>

Topic	<b>Koto music</b>
Research question	To what extent are compositions for Koto by Tadao Sawai distinct in the 20th century?
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A study of three Koto pieces by Tadao Sawai detailing their traditional and innovative elements (musical analysis).</li> <li>• An investigation into the origins of these traditional and innovative elements, what inspired their effective use in these compositions and how they shaped Tadao Sawai’s compositional style (eg literature review, interview with performers of these pieces).</li> <li>• A discussion on whether the chosen compositions for Koto break with Japanese musical conventions and traditions (eg comparative analysis, interviews with performers).</li> </ul>

## Important note on evidence

The EE should be modelled on an academic journal or research paper. The reader should be able to read and understand it without access to external web links, video files, CDs or DVDs.

Examiners will not access any material contained in an external source when assessing an essay (not even in an appendix). If information central to the argument is included in an external link, the examiner will treat it as though the point has not been made.

However, as long as they directly support and are relevant to the EE’s analysis, the following do constitute useful evidence:

- notated examples of music
- score excerpts
- transcriptions
- graphs
- references to an attached score.

## An important note on “double-dipping”

Students must ensure that their EE does not duplicate other work they are submitting for the Diploma Programme. For example, a student’s work for the musical links investigation must not be submitted for an EE. Similarly, the music pieces selected as prescribed works are not acceptable topics for EEs.

## The EE in music and the internal assessment

An EE in music is not an extension of the internal assessment (IA) task. Students must ensure that they understand the differences between the two.

- Students may not investigate pieces for the EE they have chosen to submit for the performing component.

- Students may not submit research on pieces that have influenced the student's submissions for the creating component.

**Supervisors play an important role in guiding students on these distinctions. Students risk their diploma if academic misconduct is detected.**

# Interpreting the EE assessment criteria

## Criterion A: Focus and method

(Strands: Topic, Research question, Methodology)

To successfully meet this criterion, students will choose a topic that focuses on analysis, investigation, discussion and evaluation of actual music, that is, musical source material.

While students may be inspired by their musical encounters and experiences, it is important that the chosen topic is relevant and with a distinct research purpose.

The topic is expressed through a clearly stated research question, which is focused and specific without being unduly restrictive to the development of the research study.

The essay must outline the methodology that is followed throughout the research. It should include:

- musical analysis of performances, scores or transcriptions
- collecting and evaluating data, for example through comparative analysis of:
  - interpretations
  - interviews or
  - questionnaires.

The data collection, analysis and evaluation will lead to critical arguments that reflect the student's deeper insight into the material studied.

Students must refer to secondary sources to place the study into a wider context.

Students also need to demonstrate that:

- their essay and research has been well planned
- the methodology used or the approach to the topic is appropriate to the research question.

## Criterion B: Knowledge and understanding

(Strands: Context, Subject-specific terminology and concepts)

To successfully meet this criterion, students are expected to demonstrate their prior knowledge of the material studied and how the research is developed in relation to existing insights. Thus, the essay must demonstrate an effective and critical understanding of the topic chosen.

Students should show that they have consulted secondary sources and, throughout the investigation, draw on that existing knowledge to:

- support their research
- enrich the argument and findings.

Thus, sufficient musical preparation and understanding are prerequisites for effective research in music, as is fluency in the use of appropriate subject-specific terminology and reference to or application of musical concepts.

Another important aspect of all research and investigation is the reliability and validity of the study. This refers to choice and use of sources, the musical analysis as well as the evaluation of the collected data within the relevant musical context.

The information and evidence presented needs to be critically evaluated. Students must demonstrate critical awareness of the quality, balance and quantity of their sources. They are also expected to show awareness of any limitations or uncertainties inherent in their approach.

Subjective accounts are not appropriate.

Students should demonstrate fluency in the use of appropriate subject specific terminology and reference to or application of musical concepts.

## Criterion C: Critical thinking

(Strands: Research, Analysis and Discussion and evaluation)

Students must be able to interrogate the musical and critical sources selected in order to construct and support a reasoned argument that culminates in a conclusion and answers the research question.

Students should aim to develop their own argument rather than simply adopting the views of critics. EEs that mainly provide viewpoints derived from secondary sources, or that are wholly or largely narrative or descriptive of the material, do not provide evidence of analytical skills and do not score well.

The points contained in the argument and analysis must, at all times, be supported by specific, relevant material chosen from the student's research.

Special efforts should be made to maintain a reasoned, logical argument focused on the research question throughout.

An assessment of the extent to which the research question is answered by the information accessed should form part of the argument.

The conclusion ought to summarize the student's response to the research question and must be consistent with the position and evidence presented in the essay. It should not introduce material that has not already been discussed. Questions that have arisen as a result of the research, and that are considered relevant, may be included.

## Criterion D: Presentation

(Strands: Structure, Layout)

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to accepted academic standards in relation to how research papers should be presented. It also relates to how well these elements support the reading, understanding and evaluation of the essay.

Students may provide a section and subsection structure to their essays, with appropriate informative headings.

## Use of charts, images and tables

Any charts, images or tables from literature sources included in the essay must be carefully selected and labelled. They should only be used if they are directly relevant to the research question, contribute towards the understanding of the argument and are of a good graphic quality. Only selected materials (photographs, images, figures, notation scores) that are central to the argument of the essay should be included in the body of the essay, as close as possible to their first reference.

Special attention is necessary when including score excerpts so that the information needed to read them appropriately is presented, including name of the work, composer, source information, location of the excerpt within the score, recording or performance, clefs, key signatures, tempo, etc. When size permits, it is recommended that the excerpts appear in the body of the essay, in close proximity to the text they illustrate.

Sometimes, the inclusion of a separate annotated score, to be consulted with the reading of the EE, may be the most effective option. This may be included in the appendix of the EE, but students must be aware that any information with direct relevance to the analysis, discussion and evaluation of the EE must be contained in the body of the essay. Examiners are not required to read information in an appendix.

Any material that is not original must be carefully acknowledged, with specific attention paid to the acknowledgment and referencing of quotes and ideas. This acknowledgment and referencing is applicable to audiovisual material, text, graphs and data published in print and electronic sources. For music, students must also reference transcripts of music and live performances as well as include time within a recording or track and bar numbers within a score. If the referencing does not meet the minimum standard as indicated in the guide (name of author, date of publication, title of source and page numbers as applicable), and is not consistently applied, work will be considered as a case of possible academic misconduct.

A bibliography is essential and has to be presented in a standard format. Title page, table of contents, page numbers, etc must contribute to the quality of presentation.

The essay must not exceed 4,000 words of narrative. Students should be aware that examiners will not read beyond the 4,000-word limit, nor assess any material presented thereafter.

## Criterion E: Engagement

(Strands: Reflections on planning and progress)

This criterion assesses the student's engagement with their research focus and the research process.

It will be applied by the examiner at the end of the assessment of the essay, and is based solely on the candidate's reflections as detailed on the [RPPF](#), with the supervisory comments and extended essay itself as context.

Students are expected to provide reflections on the decision-making and planning process undertaken in completing the essay. Students must demonstrate how they arrived at a topic as well as the methods and approach used. This criterion assesses the extent to which a student has evidenced the rationale for decisions made throughout the planning process and the skills and understandings developed.

For example, students may reflect on:

- the approach and strategies they chose, and their relative success
- the *Approaches to learning* skills they have developed and their effect on the student as a learner
- how their conceptual understandings have developed or changed as a result of their research
- challenges they faced in their research and how they overcame these questions that emerged as a result of their research **student** thinking, creativity and originality within the research process.

The **student** voice must be clearly present and demonstrate the learning that has taken place.