

IB English Extended Essay guide - Student planning sheets

Choosing a topic

Answer the following questions to help you choose a topic.

1. What themes, authors, or texts interest you within English A (for example: identity, memory, representation, perspective, gender, language and power)?
2. What key terms, concepts, or literary ideas describe your topic? Use these as search terms for academic databases and critical readings.
3. Which IB concepts (e.g. culture, identity, communication, creativity, perspective) might connect to your chosen topic?
4. What scholarly or critical readings can you find on this area? Use databases like Google Scholar or JSTOR to explore existing criticism.
5. What do these readings reveal about your topic? Highlight useful interpretations, debates, and analytical angles.
6. Choose the topic that interests you most and discuss it with your supervisor to confirm its focus and feasibility.

Writing a research question

Follow steps 1-4 to help you formulate a research question.

1. Identify the text(s) you will analyse.
2. Decide what literary or linguistic aspects you'll explore: structure, narrative, imagery, or style.
3. Identify any critical or theoretical approach (e.g. feminist, postcolonial, psychoanalytic, stylistic).
4. Draft your RQ using "how" or "to what extent" phrasing.
5. Check your RQ against these points:
 - a. Is it focused enough to answer in 4,000 words?
 - b. Does it invite interpretation rather than summary?
 - c. Is it linked to a specific textual feature or theme?
 - d. Does it demonstrate originality and critical thinking?

Text Selection and Analytical Focus Planning Sheet

Chosen Text(s)

1. List your primary text(s) (title, author, publication date).

2. **Rationale for Text Selection:** Why did you choose these text(s)? Consider literary merit, thematic relevance, and potential for analysis.

3. **Analytical Focus:** What literary or linguistic features will you explore (e.g. structure, diction, tone, imagery, symbolism, narrative voice)

4. **Theoretical or Critical Approach:** Which frameworks or theories will you apply?

5. **Supporting Sources:** List critical or scholarly works that inform your argument.

6. **Preliminary Argument**

7. **Potential Challenges:** Identify possible difficulties (word count, unequal text depth, limited critical resources).

8. **Next Steps:** What will you do next (further research, refine RQ, close reading, supervisor feedback)?
