



# Extended Project Qualification Survival Guide

Everything you need to know to complete the EPQ.

Your EPQ Leader: Sophie Matthews

# CONTENTS

Frequently Asked Questions	3
What will your Supervisor do?	6
What to do first?	7
What to do next?	8
Last Year's EPQs	10
Handy Hints	11
Step 1: Action Planning	12
Step 2: Researching	13
Step 3: Organising the Project	14
Step 4: Drafting	15
Step 5: Editing	16
Step 6: Referencing	17
Step 7: Presenting	19
Useful links	20
Appendix 1– the Production log	21
Appendix 2– the Assessment criteria	21
Appendix 3– Grade descriptions	22
Appendix 4 – Timetable & Key dates	23–24

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **What is the Extended Project Qualification?**

It is an in-depth study which can take the form of an experiment, extended essay, performance or project. It is a graded A\* to E. It is an independent learning opportunity unlike anything else available to you in the school curriculum.

## **What skills will it help me to develop?**

To list just a few:

Independent learning;

Creative thinking;

Reflective learning;

Problem solving;

Self-management;

Effective participation;

Team working;

Structured writing;

Confident communication;

Use of Technology

## **What will I have to do?**

Identify, design, plan and complete an individual project, applying a range of organisational skills and strategies to meet agreed objectives.

Obtain, critically select and use information from a range of sources; analyse data, apply it appropriately and demonstrate understanding of any relevant, connections and complexities of the topic.

Select and use a range of skills, including new technologies, solve problems, take decisions critically, creatively and flexibly, to achieve planned outcomes.

Evaluate outcomes both in relation to agreed objectives, as well as own learning and performance. Select and use a range of communication skills and media to present evidenced outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## How should I choose a subject?

Choose a subject which you are interested in and enjoy.

It cannot be a specific area covered in any of your AS or A2 units. Think about how this may help your university application or show a breadth of interest and knowledge.

Remember that a word limit of 5000 words is not very much – you will need to limit the area you are investigating.

Think about how to formulate a question to research – be specific about what you want to prove or find out – *see the examples in the introductory presentation masterclass in the Student's shared drive under EPQ.*

## How much time would I spend on it?

It is recommended by AQA that you spend up to 120 learning hours on your project. This includes meetings with your supervisor, planning, researching, organizing, writing and drafting. Of these 120 hours the school offers up to 30 hours of training in research techniques and project management skills, as well as guidance on writing up the project and giving your presentation.

## When should I start working on the EPQ?

Now!

## When is it due?

See the separate document (Timetable of key dates – Timetable for EPQ Y12) which is available along with many other resources under the EPQ section of the Students shared drive.

## How long should it be?

All students must submit a written report for assessment between 1000 and 5000 words. The exact length of each written report will depend on the nature of the project, the subject area chosen and the other evidence provided.

A project which consists solely of written work should be approximately 5000 words; for example an investigation, exploration of a hypothesis or extended essay or academic report. Projects where the majority of the evidence is provided in other formats should include a report or record of work undertaken which is at least 1000 words.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Who will support me with the EPQ?

Mrs Sophie Matthews is the EPQ Centre Coordinator. She and other staff members also act as EPQ Supervisors and are allocated Supervisor.

Your supervisor acts as a guide on the process of the EPQ, rather than as a guide on the content. You can ask Heads of Department and other teachers for suggestions of useful resources.

## What should the written report contain?

The written report is likely to contain the following:

- Sources of and range of information accessed.
- Details of the range of skills used including, where appropriate, new technologies and/or access to e-learning materials.
- Historical or other research.
- Details of the design, knowledge, understanding and skills used to complete the tasks or activities of the project, e.g. an experiment, a construction, a performance or re-search interviews.
- A conclusion to include an evaluation of the outcomes of the project, and evaluation of own performance of learning and decision making.

## Is there anything else I need to do?

Yes: You must complete the Production Log (AQA) and deliver a presentation.

## Can I include supporting material with my project?

Depending on the subject area or topic chosen, a variety of evidence may be submitted for assessment. Evidence can be provided in any form appropriate to the type of project chosen, and may include; an artefact, model or construction, CD/video/DVD of performances or activities; an audiotape/multimedia presentation, a journal of activities or events, a PowerPoint presentation; a photographic record of the project.

## How will it be marked?

It will be marked by your Supervisor and moderated by the Centre Coordinator. Look at the Marking criteria and the Grade descriptors which are in the appendix.

## WHAT WILL YOUR SUPERVISORS DO?

Teachers supervise Extended Projects if at all possible in their subject area. There may be some students who will be supervised by someone who teaches a similar subject to the one chosen for the project or who has a personal interest in that area of study.

Supervisors will meet with each student to discuss the student's initial idea and how they intend to develop the project (action plan).

Supervisors will agree the project title and proposal and complete the supervisor's section in the Project Proposal Form for each learner.

Supervisors are not given a timetable allocation for the supervision. **This reflects the fact that the onus is on students to seek help when needed and not to expect supervisors to chase them.** You are expected to communicate with your supervisor regularly by email and show the initiative. If students need chasing, then the EPQ will be very challenging.

The role of the supervisor is to act as a critical analyst of the work you are doing, and comment on content, organisation and presentation of the project. They are there to help and suggest, but not to do the work for you

Supervisors will confirm that a presentation by each student took place.

They will carry out a mid-term review and end-of project review with each student and endorse each student's Production Log by signing the front page

Supervisors will finally assess the EPQ according to the Marking Criteria.

# WHAT TO DO FIRST?

**Think:** What areas are you interested in?

**Think:** Can you put together a title that will allow you to investigate and access the higher-level concepts and skills in the learning outcomes and assessment objectives (i.e. plan, research, analyse, evaluate and explain) rather than simply describe and narrate?

**Think:** Is the title and proposed action plan clear and focused on an issue which can be managed within the timescale, available resources and word total?

**Think:** Do the title and proposed action plan indicate that you will be capable of investigating and researching the topic or carrying out the activity or task independently?

**Think:** Is there a danger that you will be unable to approach the project impartially and in a balanced way?

Once you have worked through the above stages, complete Page 5 of your production log (record of initial planning) and arrange a meeting with your supervisor to discuss it.

After this meeting you will be able to complete page 6 (project proposal part A) and page 9 (planning review) if the Production Log.

Your Supervisor will then complete page 7 (project proposal part B) and the Centre Coordinator will then approve the project area via page 8 (project approval part C).

You are then ready to start the detailed research and drafting!

*'The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing' – Walt Disney*

# WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Write down 3 things or ideas that interest you (e.g. 'football', 'human rights')

Now write down a reason why you are interested in the 3 things you have chosen (e.g. 'football' – because you play it, 'rights' because you have talked about it in philosophy)

Select one of your interests. Can you think of 3 potential projects for this interest? (e.g. 'football' – women in football, football hooligans or international players in the premiership)

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Idea			
Why?			
Project 1			
Project 2			
Project 3			



# WHAT TO DO NEXT?

Now develop these ideas further.

For each of the 3 potential projects think and make a note of the following:

- The issues, theories or people that might be involved
- The practicality of the idea – will there be enough resources?
- Are there any risks?
- Do you have the skills for this project?
- Will you be able to complete it on time?
- What areas would you need to research?
- Can you think of a suitable question/title?

## **Now:**

Develop one of your projects further by writing a few paragraphs detailing your idea and what it might involve. This may not end up as your final project, but it's a good way to get started.

Finally, share your project idea with someone else and get feedback.

# LAST YEAR'S EPQs

## Last Year's EPQ Titles

Would giving firearms to pilots prevent acts of terrorism?

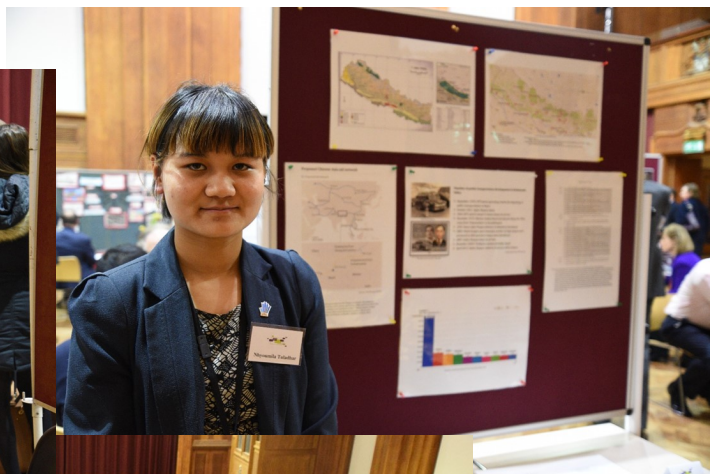
How video games affect the behaviour of young children and teens

How dark matter affects the way we see the universe

Will artificial intelligence supersede human intelligence in the next 100 years?

Uses of satellites and how they have benefited society?

Would implementing railways lines in Kathmandu Valley be beneficial to Nepal



Merchant Taylors' EPQ Presentation Evening – Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016

# HANDY HINTS

- Keep your Extended Project under control – don't get side-tracked or think 'I'll put it off until next week'.
- The summer holidays are a vital time to get the bulk of your research done. It is incredibly difficult to complete the whole project in term-time. Where are you going to find 90+ free hours of time during a busy term?
- Keep your topic/ research question manageable – within the time available and your range of skills.
- Keep it in perspective – the Extended Project is worth the same UCAS point score as any AS Level – this can and will help your future education/career.
- It should be approximately 5000 words – this may seem long, but in fact is only about 12 sides A4.
- You are unlikely to change the world with your EPQ – you are not expected to write something totally original, just something new to you.
- It should be on a topic that interests you, and that you want to find out more about.
- Follow the guidelines in the learning Log – remember that this forms a central part of the marking and is not just an 'add-on'.
- Keep checking the assessment criteria to make sure that your project will fulfil the requirements.
- Stick to deadlines – they are there to help you keep on task and complete on time.

# STEP 1:

## Action planning

Use the **SMARTER** code to help you:

**S**pecific –What exactly will you do?

**M**easurable –how will you know you've succeeded?

**A**chievable –is it realistic?

**R**esourced –have you allocated enough time? Have you got enough information?

**T**imetabled –by when will you achieve each step?

**E**valuated –keep checking if you are on track

**R**eviewed –sometimes changed circumstances mean a modification in the goal is necessary

# STEP 2:

## Researching

### Scan reading:

- First flick through a textbook/article – scanning
- Look at the index
- Look at the headlines
- Look at the pictures
- Look at any summaries at the beginning or end of chapters
- Stop and glance at anything that interests you

Jot down anything you already know – key words. Produce a mind map to develop ideas further. Always make notes and ask yourself questions.

### Analysis:

Interrogate the author – ask questions as you are reading.

- How do I know this is true?
- If it is true, what else follows?
- Is the conclusion justified?
- What assumptions are being made?
- Is this fact or opinion?
- What's the evidence? If it's fact, is it always true? If it's opinion, can I trust the source?
- Can I think of any (better) examples to illustrate the argument?
- Is this logical?
- What personal opinion or conclusion can I draw from this? Is it justified?
- What are the unique and new points?
- What is essential to know and what is just padding?

# STEP 3:

## Organising the Project

The average professional writer spends 40% of his time on research and planning, only 20% on actual writing and 40% on revision and re-writing.

### Writing tips:

1. Keep to the topic – what exactly is the question or issue that you are addressing?
2. If it's a topic or problem for which you are proposing an answer, define the issue in the first paragraph, and keep checking back to see if you are sticking to the point.
3. Gather together the information you need – notes from books, sources from the internet. When you have your notes together try mind mapping the key ideas.
4. Now start to add to the mind map – putting ideas together in groups.
5. Check back – do the points answer the question or suggest a solution to the problem?
6. Decide what will be in the beginning, middle and end of the report. The middle develops your arguments and ideas with example, facts, quotations and evidence to back up the argument. The end should be a clever summary answer to the original question, that ties up any loose ends.

# STEP 4:

## Drafting

### **Start with the middle (the main part with all your key arguments):**

Start to write with your organised plan in front of you.

Start with the middle – where you will be developing your arguments. Once the middle is complete then you can finish off by writing a punchy opening and a clever summary ending.

Decide what is the best order for your main points – remember to give each new idea its own paragraph.

All work should be done on a computer so it's easy to cut and paste and move text around if necessary.

Write up each of the ideas from your mind map.

### **Writing the end (the conclusion):**

Look back at the draft of the middle. Jot down the 10 most important key words.

Find the shortest way to link them together – that's your ending.

Check that your ending sums up your answer to the question or the issue you are addressing.

Remember this is the last thing to be read before deciding your report grade!

### **Writing the beginning (the introduction):**

Now draft the beginning – this will give the reader the 'big picture' of what you're going to say and introduce the topic issue. It will also signpost the areas you are going to explore in answering the questions you set.

Remember the beginning is the first thing your reader (or examiner) will see. A punchy introduction will put your reader in a positive mood expecting to agree with your argument.

### **What next?**

Sleep on it. When you read it again you will see points you missed or things you could have explained better.

# STEP 5:

## Editing

Some questions to ask yourself during the editing process:

Is the meaning clear?

Have you used the words that describe exactly what you mean?

Read your report out loud. Does it sound good?

Have you used sub-headings that make it easy to read?

Have you used short paragraphs that the reader will want to read, rather than long boring ones?

Have you given examples to bring your ideas to life?

Pay attention to the beginning – does it start with a bang?

Does it make the reader want to read more?

Keep your sentences short – long sentences are difficult to understand?



# STEP 6:

## Referencing

It is crucial that as you are researching your project that you make a note of the following information for every source you use:

Title or publication

Address of the website

Name of the author or editor

Page number

Publishers name

Date of publication or place of publication

This information will go into your bibliography, and will prevent you being accused on plagiarism.

**Footnotes** – these are a way of allowing your reader to check your sources for themselves. They are notes that appear at the foot of the page. Footnotes should be used whenever you refer to the work of another person. Everything that is not your own work must be referenced.

**Endnotes** – with the same purpose as footnotes, endnotes simply appear at the end of a document or at the end of a section of a document. Both footnotes and endnotes can be used in one of two ways, either:

- Parenthetical in text system: in other words putting your source in brackets within the text.
- Number system: simply using the insert tool on Word to insert a number which refers the reader to your footnote or endnote.

# STEP 6:

## Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of all sources that you have used, referred to or consulted during the course of compiling your Extended Essay. For example:

Power, J. *A History of the Extended Project at MTGS*.  
Crosby, England: Whatever Books, 2010

When citing a website you must specify: **Site name, Homepage, URL, Date viewed**. For example:

The BBC Website  
[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)  
<http://newsbbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2935875.stm>  
Accessed: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014

### Useful Links:

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/library/about/ref.html>

A very thorough and easy to understand webpage on bibliographies and referencing from the University of Dundee.

<http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/harvard.html>

A very thorough pdf on the Harvard style of referencing and bibliography from the library of The University of Queensland, Australia.

Source: University library: Guide to the Harvard Style of Referencing, July 2008, Anglia  
Ruskin University:

<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

(2010)

# STEP 7:

## Presenting

The presentation should be for a non-specialist audience and use media appropriate to the type of project.

Presentations should include an evaluation of extended project outcomes, including the individual's own learning and performance.

The presentation could take the form of a verbal or written presentation or may involve the use of flipcharts, posters, OHP transparencies, PowerPoint or short excerpts of video material.

This could take the form of a group presentation, in the case of a group project, or a one-to-one presentation to the supervisor and other students.

The presentation should be supported by answers to any questions from your supervisor or others.

# USEFUL LINKS

You will find useful information from the University of Hertfordshire on the students P: drive under EPQ /Masterclasses folder.

Source: 'Writing Your Essay', University of Reading: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/StudyResources/Essays/sta-writingessay.aspx>

(2013)

Source: <http://www.rlf.org.uk/fellowshipscheme/writing/planningandstructure/introductions.cfm>

(Sept 2010)

Source: University library: Guide to the Harvard Style of Referencing, July 2008, Anglia Ruskin University:

<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

(2010)

Source: University of Canberra, Academic Skills Programme: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/learning/critical>

(Sept 2010)

For advice on the process of writing a project or extended essay:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/comms/level3/module6/1.shtml>

Step by step guide to essay writing:

<http://members.tripod.com/~lklivingston/essay/intro.html>

**Loads of good advice from the School of English at the  
University of Birmingham:**

<http://www.english.bham.ac.uk/staff/tom/teaching/howto/essay.htm>

For advice on basic essay writing:

<http://esl.about.com/library/howto/htessay.htm>

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

EPQ AQA Production Log and Specification:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/projects/aqa-certificate/EPQ-7993>

## Appendix 2

The Assessment Criteria:

### EPQ - How is it assessed ?(out of 50)

- **Planning** thoroughly throughout = **10 marks**
- Making use of your **resources** is worth = **10 marks**
- Clearly showing **problems/solutions** and **modifications** to your plan = **20 marks**
- Reflectively evaluating **strengths/weaknesses** of sources/yourself = **10 marks**

#### APPROX. GRADE BOUNDARIES

A\* = 45

A = 40

B = 35

C = 30

D = 25

E = 20

# Appendices

## Appendix 3

### Grade descriptors:

#### **Grade A\***

Students identify their project and produce an effective design and thorough plan. They carry out their project in a highly organised fashion, showing excellent independent working skills and clear evidence of responding very effectively to guidance given. They use a wide range of resources critically, analyse data effectively and apply findings to good effect. They show clear links between sources of information and the themes of their project and fully explore the complexities of the topic. Problems and/or issues are identified, fully explored and addressed. Students select and use a range of skills including, where appropriate, new technologies, to achieve high quality outcomes that fully realise the intentions of the project and to draw conclusions. Students carry out full, in-depth evaluations, showing a high level of insight into how they conducted their project and the limitations of the resources at their disposal. They select and use a range of communication skills to present outcomes and conclusions clearly, in an appropriate format with excellent supporting evidence. Students show a deep and extensive knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions.

#### **Grade C**

Students identify and design their project. They produce a plan that enables them to achieve the overall objectives and to demonstrate some higher level organisational skills. They are able to work independently in carrying out the project and respond to guidance given. Students use a range of resources, analyse data and apply findings. They show links between sources of information and the themes of the project and explore some complexities of the topic. Some problems and/or issues are identified and addressed. A range of skills are employed and the intended outcomes are generally achieved to a competent standard. In their evaluations, students reflect effectively on the final outcome and on their strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their project. They use a range of communication skills to clearly present outcomes and conclusions in an appropriate format with sound supporting evidence. Students show a good knowledge of the project area of study through their responses to questions.

#### **Grade E**

Students identify their project and produce a workable plan. They show some organisational skills in completing the project. There is some evidence that they have responded to guidance given. Students use a limited range of resources, analyse some of the data and apply findings. Some links are made between the sources of information and the themes of the project. Students use a range of skills to partially realise the intended outcomes. They give some thought to the way the final outcomes have emerged and to their own strengths and weaknesses in carrying out their project. Communication skills are used to present outcomes and conclusions with some supporting evidence. Students demonstrate some knowledge of the project area through their responses to questions.

# Appendices

## Appendix 4

### EPQ Timetable

Deadlines	What you need to do to achieve your EPQ	Section of Candidate log book to complete
By end of February	<b>Initial Planning</b> Put together your initial ideas for a project and get oral feedback from your supervisor/form tutor	Record of initial ideas p5
March	<b>Research Period/Project Proposal</b> Research and develop your project ideas into a project plan with a clear title and indication of the sources of information you will be consulting in order to complete your project.	Part A: Candidate proposal p6
Mid-April (after Easter break)	Get feedback and approval from your supervisor. (1 <sup>st</sup> formal meeting with your supervisor)	Part B: Supervisor completes p7 Part C: Coordinator completes p8
Mid-June	<b>Review your research and firm up your plans</b> Write a detailed plan of each stage involved in realising your project. Get feedback from your supervisor. (2 <sup>nd</sup> formal meeting with supervisor).	Planning review p9
July	Get working on your project and doing all the things you have said you will do in your plan.	
Mid-September	<b>Mid Project Review</b> Record the successes, failures, developments changes etc. mid-way through the realisation of your project. Update your project plan to reflect any changes you have made. Get feedback from your supervisor. (3 <sup>rd</sup> formal meeting with supervisor).	Mid-Project Review p10
October/November	Keep working on your project so that it is completed by the deadline.	
Mid-December	<b>First draft completion</b> First completed draft of written project to be submitted to supervisor.	
January 2017	<b>Feedback on draft project</b> Get feedback from supervisor. Take on board comments and complete your final project to be the best of your ability. (4 <sup>th</sup> meeting with supervisor)	

Deadlines	What you need to do to achieve your EPQ	Section of Candidate log book to complete
February 2017	<p><b>End of Project Review</b> You will discuss with your supervisor what still needs to be done; begin planning your presentation. (5<sup>th</sup> meeting with supervisor)</p>	Project Product Review p11
Mid–March 2017	<p><b>Presentation</b> Share your project with others. Rehearse your presentation and get feedback from your supervisor. You will be asked questions related to your project.</p>	Presentation record part A p12
	Present your project to a group of staff or students	Supervisor completes Presentation record part B p13
End of March	<p><b>Summary/ Reflection (200 words)</b> Write a summary of what your project is about and your main conclusion. Reflect on how well your project has gone, what you have learnt, what you would do differently etc….</p> <p><b>Submission</b> All completed EPQ Projects (Candidate log, written report, evidence of resources and presentation) to be submitted to supervisors <b>by end of March.</b></p>	Summary and reflection p14