**Group 1 EE**

**Group 1 Extended Essays**

In order to bring this project more sharply into focus for you, as an English teacher, it would be useful at this point to find the materials on **Group 1** in the guide to the extended essay. Once you have a better sense of potential and likely projects your students might do, things like assessment criteria are likely to have more relevance.

Although candidates in Language A have produced various forms of critical work relating to literature from their earliest reading of literary works, you will need to work carefully with them. For some students a 4000 word essay can be a daunting and lengthy project, so that grappling with an idea about which they are not clear or which is derived from someone else will not help in sustaining this task.

Another thing to watch for is students who come to you close to the school deadline for topics and advisor selection (or after it) because someone told them “I’m sure you can do it in Group 1.” Such students seldom have any idea of what they might write about, and often never come to terms with this sustained task in any effective way.

Finally, you and your department will be working within the larger schedule of the school and while the essays are not due until the spring of the students’ second year, some time will need to be devoted to setting up internal deadlines for such elements of the task as:

• choosing advisors and topics, and the following stages such as

• outlines or plans

• drafts,

• completed essays and abstracts.

**Basic parameters for Extended Essay in Group 1**

\*On pp. 34 and 35 of the guide, you will see that there are two categories for essays in

Group 1:

• **Category 1** These essays will be written in the relevant language A. They will deal with literature from countries where that language is spoken and written.

• **NB** Students should be steered away biographical topics.

• **Category 2** These essays will be written in the relevant language A and are comparative. **They must include one work originally written in the relevant language A.** The other work would then be written in another language and “probably studied in translation.”

\*The study needs to be a l**iterary** one.

\*The works included **may** be **works studied in class**, but must include relevant wider reading and independent study.

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\*The essay should not be an interdisciplinary study.

\*The essay should include both “building on the wisdom of more experienced critics”**and**

the student’s own analysis of the literary work.

\***NB** Précis and plot summary will not suffice for a good essay in this subject.

The foregoing is a kind of summary of what have often proven to be the problematic elements in the writing of Group 1 Extended Essays.

**Essay process & Assessment**

On page 13 of the guide, the expected “Research Process” for the essay is helpfully summarized.

A **question** that often arises about Group 1 essays is the use of **primary and secondary sources**. The “literary topic” required in this group Is almost invariably the study (or

‘research”) of one or more literary works. These constitute the “primary source.” Secondary sources (“established critical comment”) will also be part of the research.

Some system of **academic referencing** must be used consistently by the student. The choice of system is up to the school; many literary scholars use MLA guidance, but others are certainly available.

**Recurrent issues**

**Recurrent issues, questions and answers related to Group 1 Essays**

**1. Essay length**

Teachers will need to provide the stated recommendations, p. 15 of the guide, and help students estimate and address how their topic will play out in those parameters, what to include in the word count and how to work with a system of academic referencing. It is important that teachers familiarize themselves with the following pages (15-19) so that the work of their students is done to IB standards.

**2. Choosing a topic**

An experienced Extended Essay examiner says that the most important duty a supervisor has is to help a student choose an appropriate topic. That would no doubt be confirmed

by any experienced teacher who supervises essays. A **good topic in Group 1** is one that offers possibilities for a sustained **argument**. It is a project that can be done well in 4000 words. Students should be closely questioned and advised before they embark on either close study of the texts or research. A process of questioning is crucial so that time is not wasted. For many this project looms in the student mind as something equivalent to a

PhD thesis, and these notions need to be modulated as well.

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**3. How much supervisory time is appropriate?**

Aside from getting students started on a productive path, there will need to be guidance

(not editing) along the way. It involves:

• Making sure the student stays close to the essay. Long time lapses between work tend to double the workload as any graduate student who has completed a thesis will tell you.

• Insuring that students keep track of their research in some form so that they have it at hand when they are completing the essay. Here it is well to have the research preserved in the chosen form of academic referencing.

• Good organization should be stressed at each stage. Sometimes it helps students if a stage-by-stage consultation is available; other students will want to present a complete “large” draft and then refine it.

• **An abstract** is both an unfamiliar term and practice for students at this level. They need to be shown how to do one that performs its function in the prescribed length, 300 words.

• Completing a Cover Sheet is part of the supervisor’s responsibility as is the “Viva

Voce” or concluding interview. The guide covers the latter on pp. 20-21.

• **Given all these aspects, it is unlikely that even strong students will need fewer than 4-5 hours** of contact time with the supervisor; weaker students may need more than that.

**Useful to consider**

**What else is useful to consider?**

• Students need to concentrate on the primary text, not present a compendium of secondary sources as their Extended Essay.

• Close use of the primary text will appear in ample citations, well contextualized and commented upon. Students need to be discouraged from planting an ample garden of “quotes” whose context and purpose are indiscernible for the reader.

• Proofreading is becoming a lost art. It needs to be done before the essay is finally submitted.