

Turn the Extended Essay from burden to benefit for your students

Top Tips for Extended Essay Supervisors: Language B

Whilst being a huge challenge for most IB Diploma students, the Extended Essay can also offer immense educational value. As a unique component of the IB Core, it helps prepare students not only for academic life or work beyond school, but encourages personal growth and intellectual curiosity.

Are you supervising an Extended Essay student in a Language B topic this year? Undoubtedly, like all EE Supervisors you'll want to know that you are doing what you can to create an environment which allows students to explore, research, reflect, and really show off what they can do. If you're new to the Supervisor role or are familiarising yourself with how the new criteria affects a Language B topic in particular, then this subject-specific guidance from Aude Paulin will help to keep you on track and ensure your students (and you) can start, survive and succeed on the EE journey.

1 Begin with the non-negotiable

Help students choose a topic in which the target language or culture is central to the investigation. A topic is not automatically suitable simply because it mentions the target language or includes a cultural product from a target-language country. For example, a study of 'English-language films in my country' may focus mainly on the student's own country rather than on an English-speaking culture. This clear connection is the essential starting point for every Language B Extended Essay.

2 Connect students' interests to the course

Begin with what interests and motivates each student, then help them connect that interest clearly to the target language or culture. If students are unsure where to begin, the five Language B themes can provide useful starting points for developing possible topics.

3 Prioritise sources in the target language

Discuss what makes a source relevant, reliable, and appropriate for the research question. Encourage students to use sources in the target language throughout the research process, rather than relying mainly on translations or sources in their first language.

4 Set appropriate expectations for language

Draw students' attention to language errors that make their meaning difficult to understand. However, do not expect complete grammatical accuracy: these are Language B students and should not be assessed as native speakers.

5 Encourage a varied selection of authentic sources

Help students move beyond websites by exploring different types of target-language sources, such as films, books, songs, newspapers, and podcasts. Where appropriate, interviews with speakers from the culture being studied can provide first-hand perspectives and deepen students' understanding of their topic.

6 Discuss cultural representation

Give students time to consider how a culture is represented, and sometimes misrepresented in their sources. Encourage them to question generalisations, compare different perspectives and use particular care when writing about a culture that is not their own.

Aude Paulin is the author of *Your Extended Essay Guide: Language B*, the first in a new series of subject-specific guidance for the IB DP Extended Essay published by Elemi. Aude is an experienced international educator of French B, examiner, and EE Coordinator with a special expertise in AI and its use in society. See sample pages from this and other guides in the series on www.elemi-isp.com.