



Learning in England ∞ What is the EPQ?

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The Extended Project Qualification is a recent and very exciting innovation. Pupils will undertake a Project, usually during their Lower Sixth year/Year 12, on a question of their choice which may or may not be related to their A Level subjects. It would be useful to choose a topic that relates to future studies. Pupils will spend up to 120 hours over the academic year, on their Project. That is in the order of three to five hours a week.

Normally the school will supervise and support the pupil in deciding what to do and check the progress, from time to time. It would be wise to complete the Project by the end of the second term of the Lower Sixth. If your school does not offer an EPQ we can register you with a school that is willing to support you.

“I was doing Economics, Geography and Biology and wanted to answer the question “Can mangoes be grown commercially in Britain?” I concluded that they could not, because of the significant investment required, the vagaries of the weather, and the long time before there was an economically viable harvest. Undertaking the Essay in the Lower Sixth as an EPQ was very good fun and linked all three of my A Level subjects together. It was a very helpful way of developing independent learning skills, my use of time, research, and writing up in a well-structured way. I gained points which could be added to my university application and the question was something I could be confident in talking about at an interview.”¹

There are three parts to completing the Project

- a 5,000-word Essay, or a product - such as a performance, or piece of art, or film, or model. You can choose in what media to present your Project.

¹ A current undergraduate

² These other titles are taken from the CIFE website; and the SGGS website.



- a Production Log explaining how you went about the research and overcame difficulties and problems
- an Oral Presentation about your Project to a small group of fellow pupils and supervisor.

An A* in the EPQ is worth 70 UCAS points, an A 60, B 50, C 40, D 30 and an E 20.

Other titles found on the Internet include:

- > “The use of light in architecture, looking at its development through European architectural history and examining contemporary technical developments.” When this student was interviewed for a place at Cambridge University, she spent most of her time discussing her EPQ.
- > “The use of satire in the work of the Italian author Dante.”
- > “At what age should children make their own decisions about their own medical treatment?”
- > “To what extent does Japan's diet contribute to their long-life expectancy and how does this compare with the USA and the UK?”
- > “To what extent can Hydrogen be considered a preferable alternative to the current commonly used fuel sources?”
- > “Write and produce an educational play about HIV and how it affects people emotionally and physically.”
- > “Will wind energy be efficient enough in 25 years’ time to cope with the demand for sustainable energy?”²



What skills do I need to complete the EPQ?



You will need to develop an ability to

- * be self-motivated, and self-disciplined
- * have an overview and plan how to address each aspect
- * research
- * manage your time effectively
- * record what you did at each stage

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