

Criterion E: reasoned argument

For all three categories of group 1 essays, students should be aware of the need to give their essays the backbone of a developing argument. Personal views should not simply be stated but need to be supported by reasoned argument to persuade the reader of their validity.

For categories 1 and 2 literature essays, a straightforward description of a literary text through plot summary or narration of the action does not usually advance an argument and should generally be avoided (although, where a little-known text is under discussion, a brief description may be appropriate).

For category 3 language essays, straightforward descriptive or narrative accounts of a text or texts that lack critical analysis do not usually advance an argument and should be avoided.

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

For all three categories of group 1 essays, appropriate application of analytical and evaluative skills is the use of persuasive analysis and argument to support a personal interpretation. Second-hand interpretations that are derived solely from secondary sources will lose marks under this criterion, as will purely descriptive essays that list examples of literary (categories 1 and 2) and language (category 3) motifs but fail to critically analyse them.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

For all three categories of group 1 essays, there is no single acceptable style for essays, which may be well-written in different ways—with, for example, different degrees of personal emphasis, some writers using the first person and others preferring a more impersonal mode of expression. Clarity and precision of communication in a group 1 essay includes the correct use of language.

Criterion H: conclusion

For all three categories of group 1 essays, “consistent” is the key word here: the conclusion should develop out of the argument and not introduce new or extraneous matter. It should not repeat the material of the introduction; rather, it should present a new synthesis in light of the discussion.

Criterion I: formal presentation

For all three categories of group 1 essays, this criterion refers to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or do not give references/citations for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory (maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1).

Criterion J: abstract

For all three categories of group 1 essays, the abstract is judged on the clarity with which it presents the three required elements, not on the quality of the research question itself, nor on the quality of the argument or the conclusions.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

For all three categories of group 1 essays, this criterion allows examiners to reward work that shows initiative, creativity and insight, even if the essay does not achieve the highest standard overall. Routine essays on well-worn topics will not score highly under this criterion.

Group 2

These subject guidelines should be read in conjunction with the “Introduction”, “Outline” and “Details—all essays” sections of this guide.

Overview

A group 2 extended essay is intended for students who are studying a second modern language. Students may **not** write a group 2 extended essay in a language that they are offering as a language A1 for their diploma.

There are 3 categories of group 2 extended essays:

- Category 1—Language
- Category 2—Culture and society (a or b)
- Category 3—Literature.

Students should put the category in which they have presented their essay alongside the subject in which it is registered on the cover sheet of the extended essay, for example, English B Cat: 2 (b); German B Cat :3; Spanish B Cat : 1.

A group 2 extended essay provides students with the opportunity to develop their awareness and knowledge of the language studied, and their understanding of the culture concerned. This is achieved by enabling students to pursue their interest in the language through research based on texts (taken to be any meaningful piece of spoken or written language, for example, an article, a book, a play, a poem) or on specific cultural artifacts (such as works of fine art or architecture, films, radio or television programmes, or popular music).

The extended essay must be written in the language for which it is registered (the target language). It must be focused on matters related to the target culture.

The extended essay is a **research essay** and the assessment criteria emphasize the importance of research skills rather than linguistic proficiency. Although a certain level of ability in the language is obviously desirable in order to undertake a group 2 extended essay, fluency is neither a prerequisite nor a guarantee of success. In fact, students who are fluent in the language but who do not demonstrate the required research skills will definitely achieve a lower mark than students who are less fluent but who fulfill the other assessment criteria.

Choice of topic

As indicated in the “Overview” section, a group 2 extended essay aims to develop students’ knowledge and understanding of the target language and culture. Any proposed topic that will not further that aim should be rejected. The essay should consist of the study of an issue in one of three categories: language, culture and society, or literature. Combinations of these are also permissible. Each category has specific requirements that are described in this section. In addition, students should ensure that their topic:

- is worthy of investigation. For example, “Does tourism have a future in Switzerland?” or “Is the wine industry an important source of income for France?” would be too trivial for an essay of 4,000 words.
- is not too broad and allows for an effective treatment within the word limit. Topics such as “Racism in France”, “The theatre of the absurd”, or “A history of the French language” would need to be given a sharper focus.
- provides them with an opportunity to develop an argument and to demonstrate critical analysis and personal judgment rather than just knowledge. Topics that are merely descriptive or narrative, or that only summarize secondary sources (such as “French cheeses”, “The Provence region”, “The events of May 1968 in Paris”), should be avoided.

In each category the examples given are for guidance only.

Category 1: language

The essay should be a specific analysis of the language (its use, structure and so on) normally related to its cultural context or a specific text.

Language	French
Topic	Language laws in Quebec
Research question	To what extent has Bill 101 contributed to increasing the prevalence of the French language in Quebec?
Approach	An investigation into the effect of Bill 101 on the status of the French language in Quebec.
Language	Japanese
Topic	Foreign words (<i>gairaigo</i>) in Japanese
Research question	Do young people use more words of foreign origin than older people?
Approach	A survey of younger people and older people. Results are compared for knowledge of foreign words, frequency of their use and attitude towards their use.
Language	Spanish
Topic	Alternative use of the forms “vos” and “usted” in the Spanish of the Rio de la Plata (River Plate) region
Research question	To what extent have differences between formal and informal usage disappeared from the language used in the Rio de la Plata region?
Approach	An investigation into the language of young people from Buenos Aires in the Rio de la Plata region in a range of communicative situations.

Category 2: culture and society**A: essays of a sociocultural nature with an impact on the language**

The essay should be an analysis of a cultural nature that describes the impact of a particular issue on the form or use of the language.

Language	French
Topic	Language and feminism
Research question	Should feminine forms of more job titles be created in French to reflect shifting gender roles?
Approach	An examination of the linguistic and sociological arguments for and against the feminization of more job titles in French.
Language	Japanese
Topic	Language for family members
Research question	Does Japanese need new words to describe non-traditional family relationships as society changes?

Approach	A commentary on how the use of the words "shujin" and "kanai" have changed, together with an examination of the social factors that may require new linguistic terms for family relationships to be created.
Language	Spanish
Topic	Language and discrimination
Research question	To what extent does the language used by groups of young students from a secondary school in Buenos Aires reflect racial discrimination?
Approach	A sociolinguistic investigation into the way language used by young people reflects attitudes of discrimination present in contemporary society.

B: essays of a general cultural nature based on specific cultural artifacts

The essay should be an analysis of a more general cultural nature but specific to a country or community where the language is spoken. Topics that are too broad and could apply to many cultures (like globalization, the death penalty or eating disorders) are inappropriate.

Essays of a general cultural nature must be based on specific cultural artifacts. Cultural artifacts in this context are understood to include a wide variety of phenomena, ranging from works of fine art to newspapers, magazines and cartoons, to films, television programmes and popular music.

Language	French
Topic	Social criticism in the songs of MC Solaar
Research question	What is the nature of MC Solaar's rap critique of modern French society?
Approach	An investigation into the thematic content of MC Solaar's songs.
Language	Japanese
Topic	Adverts in the Japanese media
Research question	How and why do Japanese advertisers use such a high proportion of non-Japanese models in advertising?
Approach	An analysis of adverts targeted at the youth market seen over a one-month period, together with an analysis of how these are targeted, and possible reasons why the images used are chosen.
Language	Spanish
Topic	Representation of women in tango
Research question	Which roles do women play in tango lyrics?
Approach	A critical and thematic analysis of a corpus of tango lyrics to reveal female roles.

Category 3: literature

The essay should be an analysis of a literary type, based on a specific work or works of literature exclusively from the target language. In the case of a comparison of texts, **all** texts must originally have been written in the target language.

Language	French
Topic	Haitian politics as depicted in works by Dany Laferrière and Gary Victor
Research question	Does Dany Laferrière in <i>Pays sans chapeau</i> share the same point of view on Haitian politics as Gary Victor in <i>La Piste des sortilèges</i> ?
Approach	An investigation into the similarities between the ways these two writers treat this theme.
Language	Japanese
Topic	Pastoral references in Kenji Miyazawa
Research question	What role does the natural world play in <i>Chumon no ooi ryoriten</i> ?
Approach	A commentary on the literary devices used by the author, together with the effect these have on the work.
Language	Spanish
Topic	Fictionalization of history in Abel Posse's novels
Research question	How does Abel Posse construct an imaginary history in his novel <i>El largo atardecer del caminante</i> ?
Approach	A textual analysis to reveal the narrative techniques used by the author to make the plot contrast with the order of chronological events.

Treatment of the topic

The student should demonstrate an understanding of the issues raised by the research question and offer an objective, balanced analysis of these issues. The essay must be presented as a coherent argument, supported by relevant examples. Essays that are simply descriptive are unlikely to achieve a high mark.

In the case of an essay of a general cultural nature, the student should focus on, and research, what makes the topic specific and unique to the country or countries concerned. The student may draw relevant comparisons with another culture, if appropriate. However, it is essential that the focus remains on the culture of the language concerned. The purpose of comparisons is to shed light on the specific cultural issues raised by the research question of the essay.

Students may choose to analyse texts in a detailed literary fashion, or they may use literary texts as a means of exploring the target language or its culture and society.

Whenever questionnaires have been used or statistics presented, the student must show an understanding of the results and be able to interpret them with reference to the issue. A copy of any questionnaires or surveys should be included as an appendix.

If photographs and/or illustrations have been used, they should be labelled, explained and justified in the context of the topic.

Interpreting the assessment criteria

Criterion A: research question

The research topic can often be best defined in the form of a question. It may, however, also be presented as a statement or proposition for discussion. It must:

- be specific and sharply focused

- be stated clearly early on in the essay
- fit in one of the categories (language, culture and society, or literature), or be a combination of these.

If the topic does not meet the requirements of one of the three possible categories (for example, if an essay of a general cultural nature is not based on specific cultural artifacts), a maximum of level 1 is awarded. If the research question is not related to the target language/culture/literature, level 0 is awarded.

Criterion B: introduction

The introduction of the essay should be brief. It should focus on the research question and how it relates to existing knowledge of the subject. The student's personal experience or particular opinion is rarely relevant here.

For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, the introduction should make clear how the chosen topic is specific or of special interest to the target culture.

For category 3 (literature) essays, lengthy accounts of the historical or biographical context of a literary text should be avoided, as they usually do not help to explain the significance of a topic in a satisfactory manner.

Criterion C: investigation

Students must use authentic sources, mainly written in the target language. In the case of literature-based essays, all texts must have originally been written in the target language. Literary quotations must also be in the target language of the essay (that is, taken from the original works and not from translations).

Students are encouraged to look critically at the secondary sources that they read. The proper planning of an essay should involve interrogating secondary sources in light of the research question, so that the views of critics are used to support the student's own argument, and not as a substitute for that argument. It may thus be helpful for a student to challenge a statement by a critic instead of simply agreeing with it.

For category 3 (literature) essays, the relevant information to support the argument of the essay should mainly come from the primary text (although consulting a range of secondary sources may also be helpful).

If students make use of Internet-based sources, they should do so critically and circumspectly in full awareness of their potential unreliability.

Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

Students must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the topic chosen, together with its context: historical, social and cultural, as well as academic.

For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, this knowledge should be based at least partially on primary sources. (Primary sources are specific cultural artifacts, data and interviews. Secondary sources are textbooks, published criticism, articles and so on.)

For category 3 (literature) essays, the quality of the student's understanding of the primary text(s) is the main concern.

Where the topic of the essay is not related to the target language/culture/literature, level 0 is awarded. Where the topic of the essay is not convincingly related to the target language/culture/literature, level 1 is the maximum that may be awarded.

Criterion E: reasoned argument

Students should be aware of the need to give their essays the backbone of a developing argument. Personal views should not simply be stated but need to be supported by reasoned argument to persuade the reader of their validity.

For category 1 (language) and category 2 (culture and society) essays, a mere compilation of facts or a description of events does not suffice.

For category 3 (literature) essays, students should be aware that straightforward description of a literary text through plot summary or narration of the action does not usually advance an argument and should generally be avoided (although, where a little-known text is under discussion, a brief description may be appropriate).

Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills appropriate to the subject

Appropriate application of analytical and evaluative skills here is the use of persuasive analysis and argument to support a personal interpretation or point of view. Second-hand interpretations or viewpoints that are derived solely from secondary sources will lose marks under this criterion, as will purely descriptive or narrative essays.

Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject

Clarity and precision of communication in group 2 essays includes the correct use of vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, as well as the selection of an appropriate register and style.

There is no single acceptable style for essays. They may be written with, for example, different degrees of personal emphasis, some writers using the first person and others preferring a more impersonal mode of communication. Whether a style is appropriate or not depends on the common practice in each different language or culture.

Criterion H: conclusion

“Consistent” is the key word here: the conclusion should develop out of the argument and not introduce new or extraneous matter. It should not repeat the material of the introduction; rather, it should present a new synthesis in light of the discussion.

Criterion I: formal presentation

This criterion relates to the extent to which the essay conforms to academic standards about the way in which research papers should be presented. The presentation of essays that omit a bibliography or that do not give references for quotations is deemed unacceptable (level 0). Essays that omit one of the required elements—title page, table of contents, page numbers—are deemed no better than satisfactory (maximum level 2), while essays that omit two of them are deemed poor at best (maximum level 1).

Criterion J: abstract

The abstract is judged on the clarity with which it presents an overview of the research and the essay, not on the quality of the research question itself, nor on the quality of the argument or the conclusions.

The abstract should be written in the language of the extended essay. Elements such as personal information about the student and his or her reasons for choosing the topic should not be included in the abstract.

Criterion K: holistic judgment

Qualities that are rewarded under this criterion include the following.

- Intellectual initiative: Ways of demonstrating this in group 2 essays include the choice of topic and research question, and locating and using a wide range of sources, including some that may have been little used previously or generated for the study (for instance, transcripts of oral interviews).
- Insight and depth of understanding: These are most likely to be demonstrated as a consequence of detailed research, reflection that is thorough and well informed, and reasoned argument that consistently and effectively addresses the research question.
- Creativity: In group 2 essays, this includes qualities such as inventive approaches to linguistic, cultural or literary analysis, and new approaches to popular topics.