

## Overview

An extended essay (EE) in language acquisition gives students an opportunity to:

- develop their awareness and knowledge of the target language they are studying
- demonstrate their understanding of the culture associated with their target language.

The essay requires students to carry out research based on:

- texts (taken to be any meaningful piece of spoken or written language, eg an article, a book, a play, a poem), or
- specific cultural artifacts, eg works of fine art, architecture, films, radio or television programmes, or lyrics from popular music.

The essay is intended for students who are studying a second modern language. It must be written in the language for which it is registered (the target language) and focus on matters related to the target culture.

Students may **not** write a language acquisition EE in a language that they are studying for their Diploma Programme as language A literature, or language A studies in language and literature.

Students are assessed on the basis of their skills in research and analysis, not their language proficiency.

Language acquisition EEs are divided into three categories:

Category 1	A specific analysis of the language (its use and structure), normally related to its cultural context or a specific text.
Category 2	A socio-cultural analysis of the impact of a particular issue on the form or use of the language: (a) based on an examination of language use (b) an essay of a general cultural nature based on specific cultural artifacts.
Category 3	An analysis of a literary type, based on a specific work or works of literature exclusively from the target language.

## Cultural artifacts

For 2(b), “cultural artifacts” include anything concrete or tangible that helps to give insight into the target culture and language, such as:

- **Written documents:** newspapers, magazines, news headlines, articles, books (other than literary), cartoons, adverts, leaflets, brochures or manifestos, laws or policies, historical documents or records.
- **Spoken documents:** screenplays, radio or television programmes, song lyrics, interviews.
- **Visual documents:** works of fine art, architecture (buildings, monuments, etc), films, stamps.
- **Cultural icons:** fashion items and accessories (as a manifestation of culture), food items, dishes (as a manifestation of culture), brands (as a manifestation of culture).

The following do not qualify as cultural artifacts: political events (elections, referendums), historical events, social movements (eg riots), social issues (unemployment, immigration, racism, school violence, the role of women in country X, etc), towns or regions (“travel guide” essays), (minority) ethnic groups, media trends, styles of music, sports, traditions, institutions (school systems, political parties, etc).

At submission, the category of the Language B essay must be identified.

Students undertaking the language acquisition EE must have sufficient proficiency in the language to be able to address the assessment criteria. However, superior fluency is neither a prerequisite nor a guarantee of success. The EE requires students to demonstrate skills in research rather than language.

Students who are fluent in the language but who do not demonstrate research skills will score lower than students who are less fluent but fulfil the other assessment criteria.

### Clarification on the use of non-fiction in a Language B EE:

Works of fiction and non-fiction can be considered as part of literary investigations provided that the works in question are of literary merit. Candidates should ensure that the work that they wish to investigate has a body of established literary criticism before deciding that the work is worthy of investigation. The availability of secondary sources to support arguments is vital to fulfilling criterion C (Critical thinking).