

Treatment of the topic

The research and writing process

- Language acquisition EEs can require more planning than those written in a student's first language.
- Students should read and annotate secondary material written in the target language as this will help with vocabulary and expressions when they come to write the essay. Writing their annotations in the target language will also help.
- Students should draw up a section-by-section essay plan. They should then spend some time gathering:
 - the information they wish to include
 - the vocabulary and structures in the target language they require to convey this information.
- Students should seek guidance from their EE supervisor and/or language teacher regarding the conventions for academic writing that are particular to the target language.

Analysis of primary and secondary sources

Students should be engaged with the analysis of **primary** and **secondary** sources.

Primary sources

This refers to original texts and can be any occurrence of “communicative language”.

- literary—eg books, book chapters, novels, essays, poems, stories, plays
- media—eg interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines, articles
- general—eg historical documents, speeches, advertising, theatre, informal conversations.

Secondary sources

This refers to a scholarly work written about the student's primary source.

Secondary sources include books, journal articles, essays and reviews of the primary author's work. They may also include writing about the author's life, or the genre and techniques relevant to the student's primary source(s).

Culture

If their topic is of a general cultural nature, students should focus on what makes the topic specific to the region, country or countries concerned.

Students can make comparisons with another culture if this helps to answer the research question.

However, they must remain focused on the culture of their target language.

Use and analysis of texts

Students may choose to:

- analyse texts in a detailed literary fashion, or
- use literary texts as a means of exploring the target language or its culture and society.

Quantitative research methods

If students use questionnaires or present statistics, they must show that they:

- understand how the questions were constructed
- can explain the results.

The students must be able to analyse and interpret these results with direct reference to their topic. An example of any questionnaires or surveys used should be included as an appendix.

Photographs and illustrations

Students must label and explain any photographs and illustrations they include. They must also justify their use in relation to the topic.

Examples of topics, research questions and suggested approaches

Once students have identified their topic and written their research question, they can decide how to research their answer. They may find it helpful to write a statement outlining their broad approach. These examples are just for guidance.

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	Idiomatic expressions: geographic influence on the French language
Research question	To what extent does geography influence the use of French idiomatic expressions?
Approach	An investigation into the use of idiomatic expressions in Francophone countries that reflect the local geography.

Language	Mandarin
Topic	The influence of information technology on Mandarin vocabulary
Research question	How has the common terminology of information technology been incorporated into everyday Mandarin?
Approach	A study of the use of foreign terms compared to native terms in information technology and how those terms have become accepted in standard Mandarin.

Language	Spanish
Topic	Social differences: the use of the diminutive (–ito) form in Quito
Research question	To what extent is the extensive use of the diminutive –ito in Quito, Ecuador, a reflection of class and/or ethnic differences?
Approach	An investigation into the use of the diminutive form in daily conversations among local inhabitants of Quito, Ecuador.

Category 2—culture and society

2(a): Essays of a socio-cultural nature about the impact of a cultural change on language

The essay should consist of a cultural analysis of the impact of a particular issue on the form or use of the language.

Language	Arabic
Topic	The effects of globalization on language and social media in the Middle East
Research question	How has the globalization of social media like Twitter affected the increased usage of political language among students in two international schools in the Middle East?
Approach	An examination of the use of political concepts and terminology by international students in the Middle East through engagement in social media like Twitter.

Language	Japanese
Topic	The relationship between language and changes in society: the case of the Japanese family
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 “ <i>shujin</i> ” and “ <i>kana</i> ” have changed, together with an examination of the social factors that may require new linguistic terms for family relationships to be created.

Language	Dutch
Topic	The language of discrimination in Dutch popular media
Research question	How do the various terms used to refer to foreigners and immigrants in popular media reflect various shades of discrimination in Dutch society?
Approach	A socio-linguistic investigation into the connotation of the various terms for immigrants and other non-Dutch people used widely within Dutch society that reflect shades of discrimination towards particular racial or ethnic groups.

2(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 be specific to a country or community where the language is spoken. Topics that are too broad and could apply to many cultures (such as globalization, the death penalty or eating disorders) are inappropriate.

Essays of a general cultural nature must be based on specific cultural artifacts.

Language	Portuguese
Topic	Social tension in Brazil in the 1960s as depicted in the lyrics of selected popular protest songs performed by Zelia Barbosa
Research question	To what extent did songs of protest reflect the growing social tensions in Brazil under the military dictatorship in the 60s?
Approach	An investigation into the thematic content of Brazilian protest songs.

Language	Japanese
Topic	Women’s traditional roles in Japan and the role the media plays in perpetuating them
Research question	To what extent are Japanese advertisers perpetuating traditional views of women’s roles in Japanese society?
Approach	An analysis of the role of women in television adverts shown at peak family viewing times.

Language	English
Topic	Racial profiling and the perpetuation of stereotypes: a case study of the Arizona Senate Bill 1070
Research question	To what extent does Arizona Senate Bill 1070 and other similar legislation in Arizona reflect the state’s targeting of specific minorities for “profiling”, thus perpetuating common stereotypes?
Approach	An analysis of Arizona Senate Bill 1070 as a catalyst for racial profiling of Mexicans in Arizona.

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	North African symbolism in <i>L’Etranger</i> by Albert Camus
Research question	How does Camus use sensory imagery in his novel <i>L’Etranger</i> ?
Approach	An analysis of the images of the setting and physical elements that reveal the emotional distance of Meursault.

Language	Japanese
Topic	Mystery and suspense: an examination of Akagawa’s novel ##### (<i>Mikeneko Holmes</i>)
Research question	How does Jiro Akagawa create suspense in the detective novel##### (<i>Mikeneko Holmes</i>).
Approach	A commentary on the techniques used by the author to create suspense and thereby intensify the element of mystery in##### (<i>Mikeneko Holmes</i>).

Language	Spanish
Topic	The use of narrative voice in Mexican novels
Research question	How does Juan Rulfo effectively use both first and third person in his novel <i>Pedro Páramo</i> to merge the worlds of the living and the dead?
Approach	A textual analysis to reveal the narrative techniques used by the author to create the “magical” atmosphere of the novel.