

The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Year 11 Transition Activities

What makes this different to every other subject you will take?

- The whole qualification will be done within 1 year. In fact most of you will have completed it by March.
- There is very little taught content, just a little at the start and at key points through the project.
- You will work independently, organising your own work and time to best suit your own project.
- You won't get homework set. It's down to you to manage your time. And you won't get anything marked until at the end – though your work will be monitored throughout.
- You get to choose what your project is on. This means that you can pick something you are really interested in, though your supervisor (this is your teacher) has to agree it and 'sign it off'.

What is the EPQ?

Basically the EPQ is an extended piece of research and writing on a topic of your choice, where you are in charge of the direction it goes in. You will be mentored through it, and your supervisor will talk to you regularly about how it is going and offering advice. It is very like the sort of learning you will do at university, if you choose to go there, and if you do it properly it will really stretch and challenge you in new ways. You will earn a lot about research processes and how to plan and write a piece of high quality writing.

There are two main types of project that you can do, depending on your personal preference and how you like to work. You will have to choose which one suits you best.

Type 1: A 5000 word written project (most students do this), or

Type 2: An artefact, along with a 1000 word written project

What's an artefact?

The artefact route is something that might appeal to someone who is quite practical or creative, or who wants to develop or learn a new skill. It involves the creation of something physical – maybe a short story, a piece of music or artwork, for example. Past artefacts include an illustrated short story written and bound as a children's book, a set of architectural designs, a patchwork quilt and a primary school science teaching resource.

What can't the project be on?

Well, you aren't allowed to do a project on something you are already doing in one of your other subjects. This is against the rules. It can be an extension of something you have looked at, but it's got to be new work. A lot of students do their project on something they are really interested in that they don't study at all, or on something they want to study at university or do for a future career. You also can't do the project on anything illegal or immoral – your supervisor will look very dimly on things if your project was to build a bomb, for instance. Your supervisor will work with you to arrive at something that is suitable, so don't worry too much.

What makes up the finished project?

The finished EPQ is made up of several separate components, which all contribute to the marks you get:

1. The Production Log – this is a record of your 'journey' through the project, from start to finish. More on this in September.
2. The 5000 word project, or artefact with 1000 word project.
3. The appendix – this contains things like a bibliography, examples of your research and so on.
4. The presentation – at the end you need to do a short presentation to your class on your project. Lots of students worry about this but they all find it really easy and the class will be really supportive of you because they've all got to do it. Good news is, it isn't recorded or filmed!

Okay, so now you know what the EPQ is, let's get started on some work that will help you in September.

TASKS

Over the next few weeks you should start to think about potential project topics or artefacts you might want to consider for September. Between now and the Summer, you should think about 4 different possible project ideas and do some research into each. Each topic idea should take a couple of weeks.

Project Ideas (2-3 hours work, spread over two weeks, for each idea)

- Think of a 4 possible ideas you could base your project on. These could be things you have studied at GCSE and want to know more about, or something completely new. Have you always wanted to know more about black holes or how stars are formed? Or ancient Babylonian mathematics? Or how to make a piece of furniture? Anything you like that interests you, really.
- Spend some time doing some research and make a few notes. This is likely to be online as we are all in lockdown. Keep a note of the sources you use for your information.
- Write 500 word (approx.) review of each topic, summarising your initial research and whether you think it might or might not be suitable for doing as a project in September.