

Extended Project Qualification

What is it? Counts as half an 'A' level, A2 standard. You get to write an extended essay (5,000 words) **on a topic of your choice**, or, you produce an artefact and write a report (3,000 words). You also make a presentation about your findings.

Expectation of **100 hours independent work**, however, you will be allocated a supervisor and there is a compulsory taught element.

Why do it? It really helps for university admissions – some universities offer lower grades; it can count for points; it's very helpful for personal statements and subsequent interviews. It also helps study skills. Research by the University of Southampton (2019) suggests EPQ students are more likely to gain a first class or 2:1 honours degree and perform on average 3.1% better than those students who don't.

How do I go about doing it? You should start by reading around your topic and when school starts up again we will meet up and try to focus your study.

Benefits – access to University Library (hopefully), a first real chance to conduct a study academically, the chance to study in-depth a topic you are interested in.

What topic do you choose?

Best advice – either think about what you would like to study at university (looks very good on a personal statement) *or* choose a topic that you always wanted to study but never gave yourself the chance (academic fulfilment).

Types of questions – these are all actual questions by former students at Durham Johnston

An exploration of the theories underpinning aerodynamic engineering in formula one cars and wind tunnels and a practical application of these in testing my models in a wind tunnel I made and one I used at Durham University.

Is 'Shame' culture still an appropriate way to understand the Japanese attitude to sexual crime?

Research report, titled 'Habitat Preferences of Willow Tits in County Durham'

What is the best way of improving the B1284?

Historically, how important has film been to the North Korean propaganda machine?

To what extent was modern capitalist society moulded by the exploits of the Dutch Republic, and in particular the Dutch East India Company, in the 17th century?

'Were the most significant motives behind the First Opium War political, social or economic?'

How do I go about this whilst on lockdown?

The internet is your friend (but please don't just read Wikipedia) – look at the link below from page 40 – 100 useful internet sites (all free)

https://www.uea.ac.uk/documents/2654296/15970856/1_EPQ+E-book.pdf/43d0f300-4cdf-e6f5-e7da-19695914f93e

Please feel free to read the rest of the document as it will come in useful.

For other starting advice – this university has a free webinar section that will come in useful

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/study/webinars>

Also you should sign up to this course (it's free so don't pay for it though – if you do, all you'll get is a certificate)

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/research-project>

Also have a look at Durham Uni's advice

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/4schools/programme/ks5/resources/>

Here's a step by step guide to starting a project

1. Most important thing is that you are interested in the topic you are writing about. If you can't think of a topic think about what you want to study at university – then go from there.

2. Then you need to look for stuff – if I'm interested in the capitalist economy I might start by going to a (virtual) bookshop and seeing what's available (i.e. book reviews). I might look at a non-fiction review section in a broadsheet newspaper i.e.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/jun/14/a-history-world-seven-cheap-things-rak-patel-james-moore-review>

3. I might read this and think I need to challenge what I've just read (I can do this by using the internet, asking friends, emailing university departments, asking teachers). I might come across this;

<https://www.diplomaticourier.com/posts/book-review-a-splendid-exchange-how-trade-shaped-the-world>

4. I might think I'd like to write an EPQ about whether global trade is good. At this point I might look at the bibliographies of the two writers and see what looks interesting (I might go to the university library to see if I can find them). I might come across this (it's in the Patel bibliography);

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/29/ha-joon-chang-23-things>

5. At this point you are on your way – there is a clear direction and you clearly know where you are going.

6. Where you will need to go after this is thinking about a question to answer – but that can be done after you have read the books above. You might find that there is something intriguing in one of the

three books. You might look for reviews on the books on the internet or in the university library and see what controversies others have said. You might notice something in the newspapers like this;

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-45899310>

7. You might decide that the question you'd like to write about is 'Will tariffs benefit the US economy?'

8. You can use the three books to give theoretical depth to the question. You can also look for more material that's out there to support/refute your question.

9. At this point you'll want to talk to a supervisor – i.e. me!

Another way of starting a project

1. Have a think about what subject you'd like to study at University
2. Have a look at the websites of top local universities and find your subject

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/>

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/>

<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/>

3. See if you can find something there that interests you.
4. If there is a contact point write an email asking what type of question might be suitable for an EPQ, or as a sixth form student looking to start academic study in the area.