



UNIVERSITY
of York

**GETTING AHEAD
IN YOUR EPQ**



**A SKILLS GUIDE
FROM THE
UNIVERSITY OF YORK**



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HELLO!



Doing an EPQ is your chance to demonstrate your skills as an independent thinker and researcher. It is also your chance to really explore a topic you have a genuine interest in, something you're enthusiastic and passionate about. You will develop key skills, such as managing your time, presentation skills and report writing – things that will help you at university as well as in the world of work.

"Your EPQ helps you gain skills and confidence in your abilities as an independent researcher. For me, I developed really strong time-management skills that came in extremely handy for settling into my studies at university. I was also able to draw on the planning skills I gained to help plan my recent dissertation."

"I loved making all the decisions in my project, defining my research question, exploring the evidence and developing my own conclusions for the report."

This Guide

Developed in partnership with University of York students who completed an extended project when they were in school or college, this handy guide takes you through the various skills you will develop whilst doing your EPQ.

Each of you will be at different stages of your project. Use the contents to find the sections most relevant to you.



You will need to download a 'QR Reader' from your phone's APP store. Use this to scan the QR codes throughout this booklet.



TOP TIP:



Already have your research topic? Great – check out Section 2 which gives you lots of hints on how to narrow your ideas to a specific question. These tips will also help you review your question if you already have one.



*“Be realistic and
amend your timetable
as you go. Sometimes
plans change, and
that’s ok!”*

SECTION 1: GETTING STARTED: WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Planning your Extended Project

Planning is a big part of working on any project and is often under-emphasised. This is an extended project – so it requires quite a bit of planning to help keep you on track. Sometimes when you have a long time to work on something, it's easy to let time pass and have not done very much work at all! That's why it's good to have a think about how you want to use the time you have available. So get yourself off to a great start, and make a plan!



Developing a timetable for your project

HERE'S OUR QUICK GUIDE TO PUTTING TOGETHER A USEFUL AND REALISTIC TIMETABLE:

- » Think about how you work best. What time of day are you most productive? Do you like to have weekends off? Make sure your timetable works for you
- » Find out key dates and mini-deadlines from your tutor and build your work around meeting these goals
- » You'll be working on this project alongside your other subjects so remember to add in any other deadlines/busy times you have for non-EPQ work
- » You might find it helpful to work backwards from the EPQ deadline.
- » Setting deadlines earlier than those set by your school can be useful to help you feel ahead of the game
- » Make sure you factor in breaks. Everyone needs a break now and then to give you chance to unwind and perhaps reflect on what you have achieved so far

REMEMBER!



Your EPQ is assessed on a range of criteria, not just the final product! Check what you have to do for **your** project, and see what templates are available through your school first. Make sure you stay up to date with all elements of the project.

SAMPLE TIMETABLE

Plan you own time periods and fill in each column

Aims					
EPQ Deadlines					
Other work					
Time off					
Remember!					

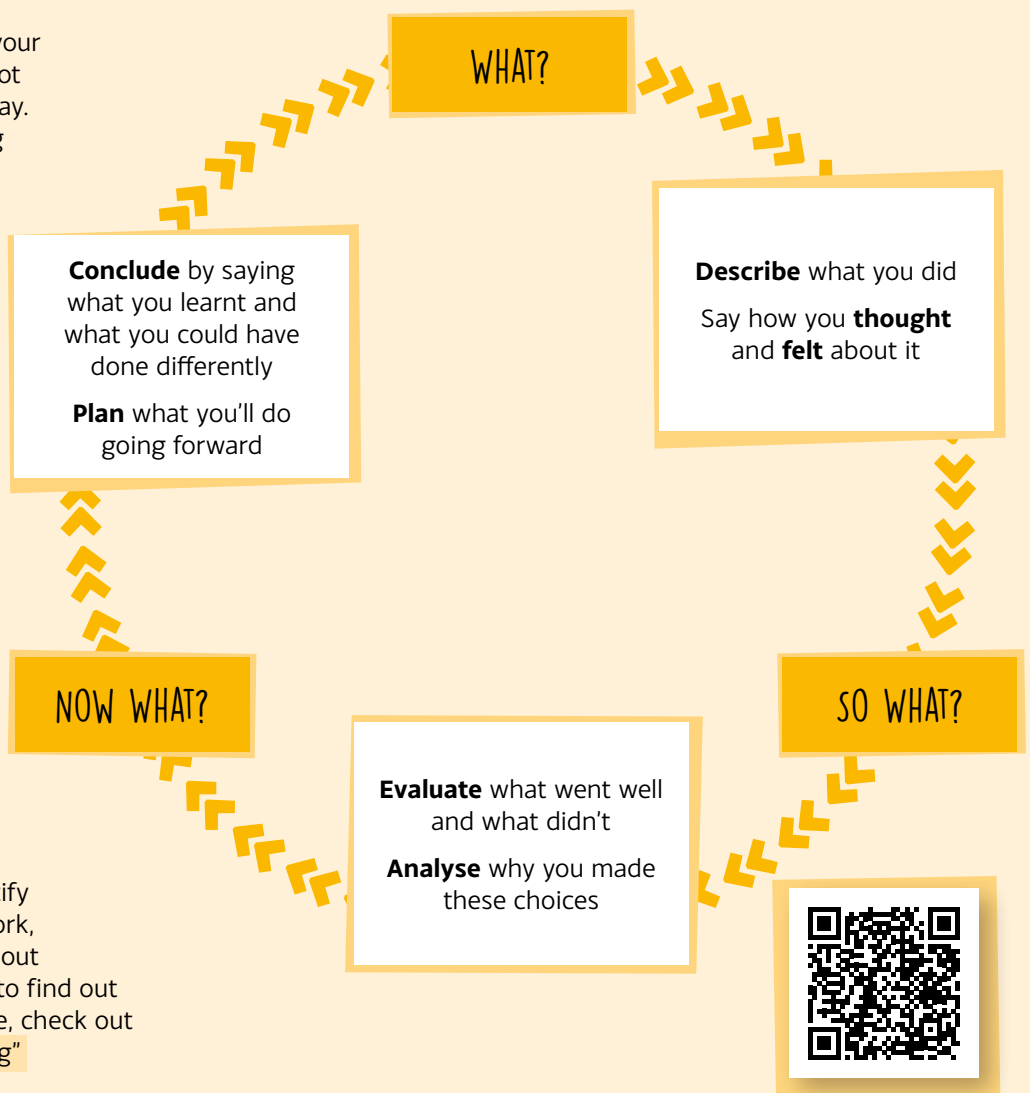
Your Reflective Journal



Your reflective journal is a place for you to say **what** decisions you've made throughout the Extended Project, as well as **why** you made these decisions. This requires you to be evaluative throughout, which basically means you need to **describe** and **reflect** on the process.

Reflecting on our experiences is a really helpful way to critique our choices and actions. That simple process of writing down notes about 'what we did and why' will not only help us keep track of the project's progress, but also help us reflect and make sense of anything we may have struggled with. It's also super useful because chances are your memory isn't as good as you think it is... So, write everything down as you go - you'll thank yourself later.

You might be given a template for your reflective journal, but if not we've got some ideas to help you along the way. Here's a handy guide for developing a reflective journal to help you get the most out of this part of the process:



Using these 'What?', 'So What?', 'Now What?' questions, you can start to break down your overall experience into smaller chunks that you can then explore in more detail. This will help you go back through the process and identify the different aspects of how you work, and what you might like to think about changing in the future. If you want to find out a bit more about the reflective cycle, check out our Skills Page on "Reflective Writing"

STICKING TO THE PLAN

Working independently on a lengthy project can be really enjoyable, but also frustrating at times; some days it might just feel really hard to get motivated. See Section 7 for some tips on pushing through procrastination.

Once you have a plan... let's get going with developing your ideas...



SECTION 2: GETTING GOING: DEVELOPING YOUR IDEA

Narrowing your focus and deciding your research question

Choosing your topic can be both an exciting and daunting experience. You may have a clear idea of what you want to focus on or, like many other students, have only a vague idea of a subject area. You may even have a bold and ambitious plan but you are unsure if this will be accepted by your examiner. This is all part of narrowing your focus – and once you have narrowed down your ideas a bit, you can start developing a Research Question.

"RESEARCH QUESTION"

This is the question that your Extended Project will seek to address, either through a report or the development of an artefact!

TIPS FROM OUR STUDENTS

- » Find something you are interested in, but think outside the box – think beyond what you have already studied. You might want to link it to something you hope to study at university
- » Think of something that might not have been researched before
- » What is current? Look at what is in the news – what is happening now?
- » Be ambitious but think about access to information, and the time you have to do your EPQ
- » Don't rush through this part of the process. Take your time – it's important to get this step right.

TOP TIPS



Struggling to get started?
Here's some help:

- » Free-writing is a great way to get started, especially if you are prone to procrastination. Set your timer for 5–10 minutes and have a 'brain dump' – write everything you know about your topic within that time. Do not stop to think or worry about spelling, just keep writing. This helps to unlock ideas and get you thinking.
- » Get creative and develop a brainstorm on a large piece of paper. Use colours, words and images to 'mind map' your idea visually.
- » Use *Who, What, Why, Where, When and How (WWWVWH)* questions to help you.
- » Once you have an idea of what you are interested in, you can decide what kind of project your EPQ will be: Artefact? Experiment? Essay?

- » Think carefully how to title your project (i.e. how to write the Research Question).

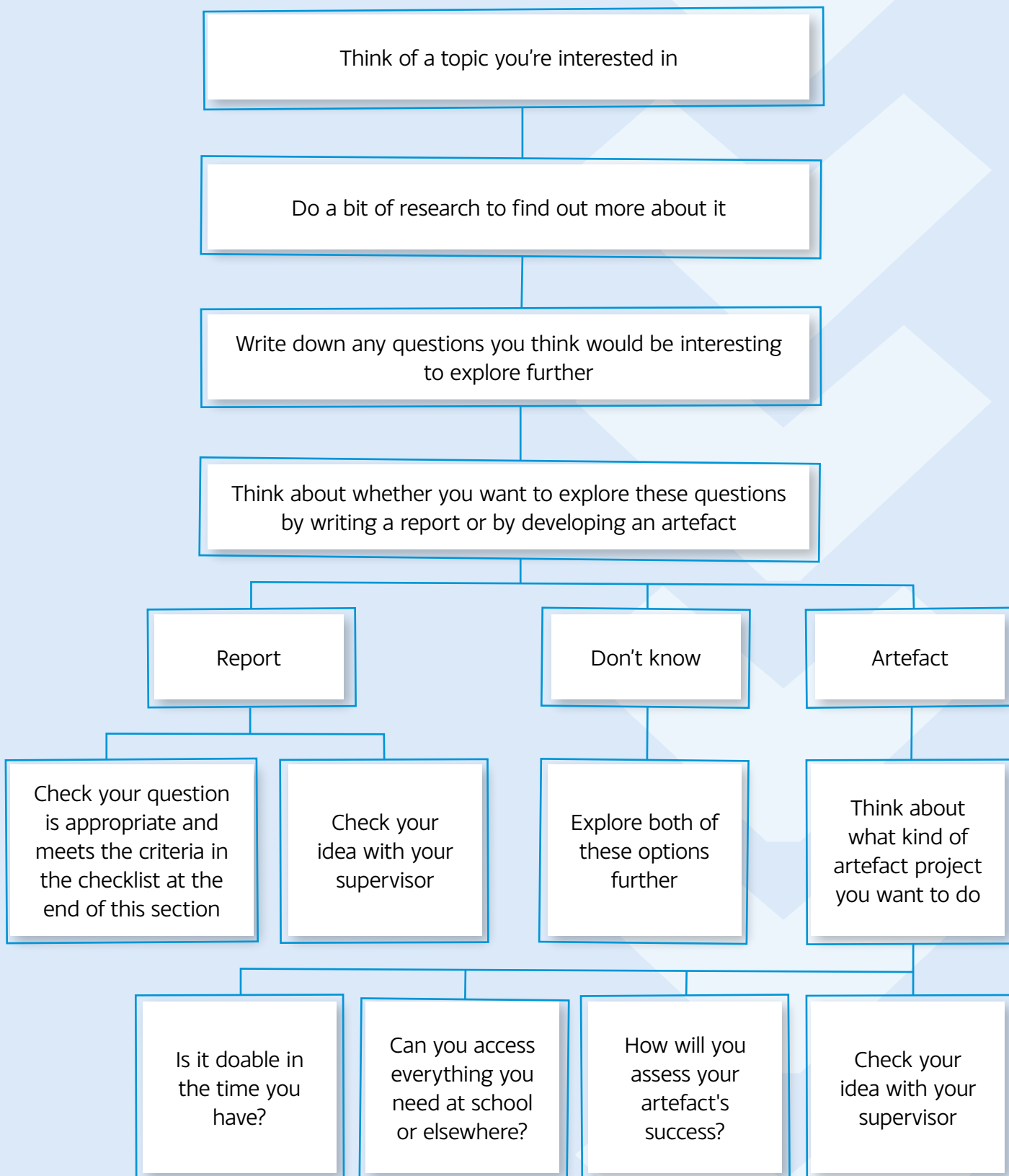


- » Five minute video on choosing a research topic.



How should I decide what kind of project to do?

HERE'S A FLOW CHART TO HELP!



Narrowing the Research Question

Now you've got some ideas for an area you're interested in, and have thought about what kind of project you'd like to do, it's time to start developing your Research Question. Here's an example of a student working through this process:



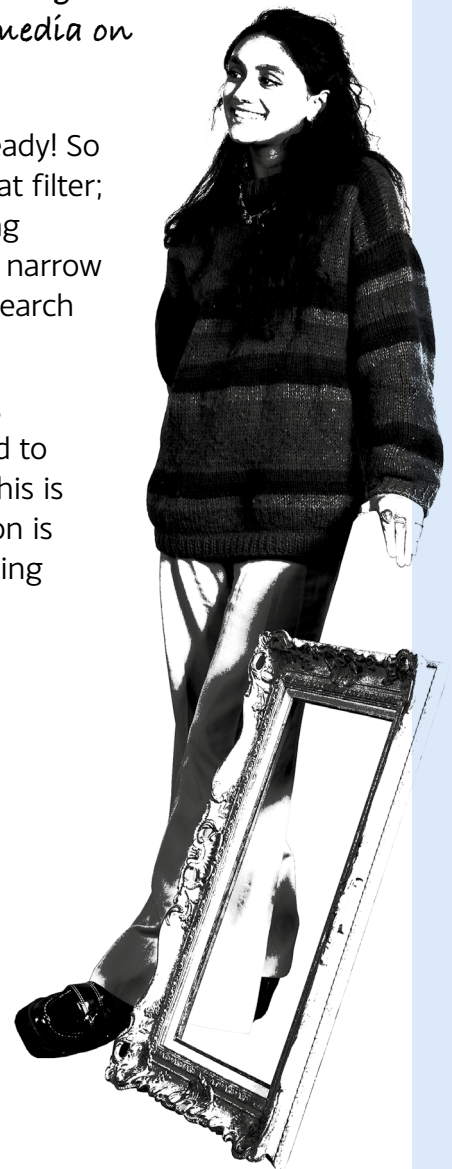
Ok, I've got a broad topic in mind... 'Social media and body image'. But I'm not sure what kind of question I could ask?

- » Without doing any research, write down what you know about the topic already - what interests you about it?



I use social media a lot, and I know that people talk about the impact things like face-tune and other filters have on their self-esteem. Lots of my friends feel very insecure that they don't look perfect. I've also heard some pretty negative stories about the impact of social media on young people's mental health...

- » You've started narrowing down your ideas already! So far you've got loads of possible topics: Snapchat filter; body image; social media; mental health; young people's self-esteem. That's a lot of stuff! Let's narrow it down a bit more by doing a bit of online research and using the WWWWWH questions.
- » By doing a quick scan of the research that has already been done on this topic, you've started to identify where the gaps in the evidence are! This is important, so you can justify why your question is worth answering. Next thing to do is start jotting down some possible research questions.



Who	Who can I write about? Who could benefit from this research? Who is affected by this issue?	Young people / boys / girls
What	What kind of research has already been done? What has been under-explored? What issues am I interested in?	Negative impact of social media on body image / confidence / happiness / mental health.
Where	Which areas can I explore within my topic? Am I likely to face any challenges accessing the required information/resources?	Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, twitter, other social media / UK, US, comparative?
When	What are the timeframes I can consider? What contexts can I explore?	During adolescence, young adulthood, during school, at home.
Why	Why is this issue worth investigating? Is the issue timely? Does that matter?	Social media is popular. Filters change the way people look. It's important to know what impact social media is having on people.
How	How did I decide to explore this topic? How will doing this research contribute to my field of interest?	How it affects body image, confidence, self-esteem. Useful to know how it makes people feel about themselves to be able to offer help.

IDEAS FOR POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

To what extent can it be argued that the use of social media impacts teenagers' negative body image?

Assess the link between the level of use of Instagram and negative body image.

Compare and contrast how male and female students use Snapchat filters and the impact this has on their body image.

Should owners of social media sites do more to regulate the content shared by its users? Critically discuss with reference to the impact of social media on young peoples' happiness and mental health.

Are Snapchat filters contributing to negative body images among adolescent men in the UK?

» Now you've got some ideas down, you can start really digging in to whether any of these questions will work for your extended project!



I can't cover every social media platform because that would be too much. Snapchat and Instagram make the most sense because they are image based. When I google it, lots seems to be written about Instagram so maybe I should focus on Snapchat filters... they're also pretty popular at the moment. And I could focus on teenage men too, because most of the stuff I've found looks at teenage girls. It seems like there's less about body image too, and more on mental health, so I'll focus on body image.

To what extent can it be argued that the use of social media impacts on teenagers' negative body image?

This is too broad – I wouldn't know where to start!

Assess the link between the level of use of Instagram and negative body image.

There's already a lot out there on this topic

Compare and contrast how male and female students use Snapchat filters and the impact this has on their body image.

There's a lot out there about girls; it would be more interesting to focus on young boys' experiences of this

Should owners of social media sites do more to regulate the content shared by its users? Critically discuss with reference to the impact of social media on young peoples' happiness and mental health.

There's so much about mental health, but the regulation stuff is pretty new and might be hard to research.

Are Snapchat filters contributing to negative body images among adolescent men in the UK?

This looks like it might work!

TOP TIP:



Research is messy! No matter what stage you're at with your Extended Project, you can always review and refine your question. Once you begin your more detailed research into the topic, you might find the question needs editing slightly. Don't worry if this is the case; it's pretty common in research. After Section 3, you can always return to Section 2 to review your question until you are happy with it.



Got it: "Are Snapchat filtered images contributing to negative body images amongst adolescent men in the UK?"

- » This is a great question because it's specific and it has a focus that hasn't already been written about extensively, so there is space to include new stuff.

EPQ TITLE CHECKLIST

- My question does not have a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer
- My question allows me to explore the topic from a range of perspectives
- My question contains all the info needed to understand what my project is about
- My question is one which encourages me to research and analyse the topic, not just describe it
- My question isn't one I have already answered in other school work
- My question is something I am interested in exploring further!

NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page below the 'NOTES' header.



"I didn't find it helpful to just type my research question into Google. Because you need to think carefully about the credibility of sources, it's much better to use Google Scholar."

SECTION 3: GETTING STUCK IN: EXPLORING THE RESEARCH

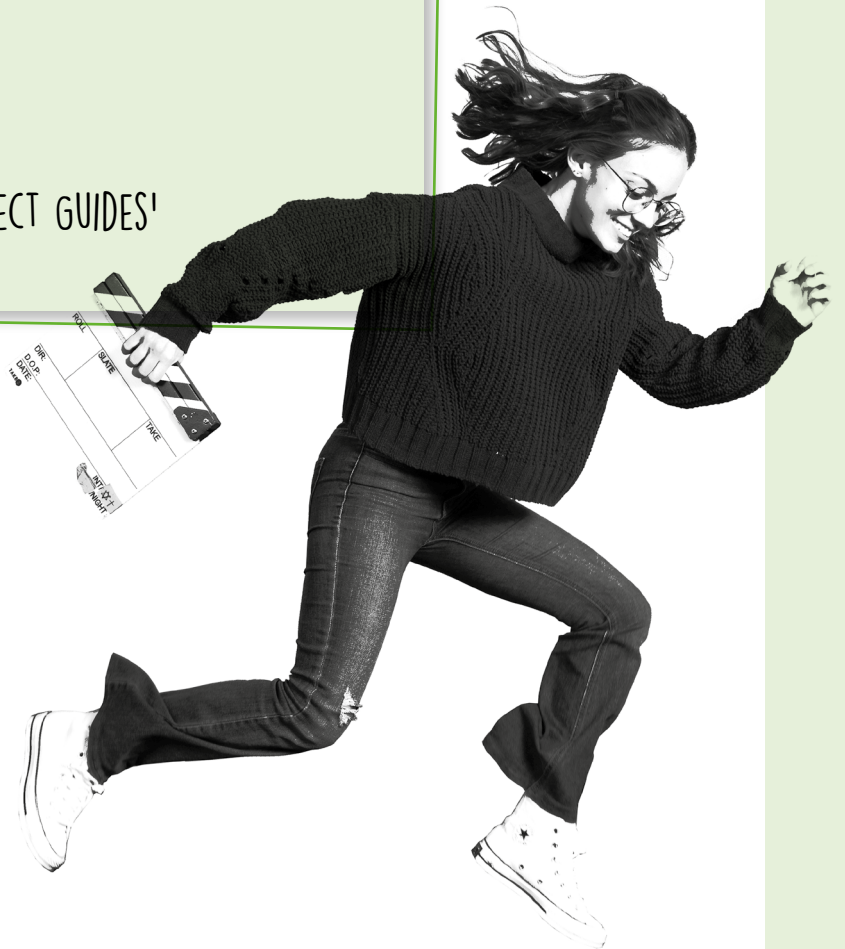
Researching and finding credible sources

Once you have chosen your topic, you need to look for relevant resources to help inform your project. Depending on your topic, these might include books, journals, web pages, videos, tutorials, or a whole range of other items. But with so much information available to us online nowadays it can be tough to know where to look first. You will no doubt begin your search using Google – but how much can Google help you find relevant and credible sources? This section will guide you through our top tips for searching through the literature.



Top tips for searching the literature

1. SMARTER RESEARCHING TIPS
2. DEFINING CLEAR SEARCH TERMS
3. ACADEMIC GOOGLING
4. THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK'S 'SUBJECT GUIDES'



1. SMARTER RESEARCHING TIPS:

Before you do anything, it's really useful to know a bit more about how online searches work! Here's some handy notes to show how you can search online much more effectively:

Ways to search online effectively

Keywords

Working from your Research Question, identify the keywords you want to search for when looking for resources relating to your EPQ topic

TOP TIP:

Use the 'Search Terms' template on the next page to look for variations of these keywords too



"Quotation marks"

If you want to search for an exact phrase, most sites suggest you use "**quotation marks**" to narrow your search to only include a specific phrase

Truncation *

Perhaps you want to explore a word that could have a range of variations, all of them applicable to your research. Adding on an asterisk to the shortest version of the word can help return results for all versions

E.g. **child*** would show results for **child, child's, children, children's, childhood**

Wildcard ?

This kind of search is useful if you have words that sometimes vary in their spelling. Different sites may ask you to use different symbols to search for a 'wildcard', such as a ? or #

E.g. colo?r for **colour / color**, or wom#n for **women / woman**

AND OR NOT

Searching for this **AND** that will narrow your search results by searching for both terms together

Searching for this **OR** that will broaden your search results by searching for either term

Searching for this **NOT** that will narrow your search results by excluding a term

Plural(s)

Adding an s in brackets, i.e. (s), at the end of a word that might be useful to have the plural is another good way to refine your search strategy.

2. DEFINING CLEAR SEARCH TERMS: (EXAMPLE)

What to search for isn't always as straightforward as you think! Using our example research question: **"Are Snapchat filtered images contributing to negative body images amongst adolescent men in the UK?"**, here's how you might start breaking down the search terms and thinking of different words we could search for, which relate to our topic:

Search Terms: body image, adolescent men, filtered images, UK

Body image

"body image" "body-image" "body satisfaction" "body confidence"
"body image disturbance"

negative **AND** "body image" "body image" **OR** "body-image"

Adolescent Men

adolescent teen* young male boy man men

adolescent **AND** male teen* **AND** male **NOT** female

Filtered Images

image(s) picture(s) selfie(s) "self-taken picture" "self-portrait" filter*
"photo filter" lens*

Snapchat **AND** filter

UK

Great Britain United Kingdom England
Northern Ireland Scotland Wales

Northern **AND** Ireland United **AND** Kingdom Great **AND** Britain



TOP TIP:

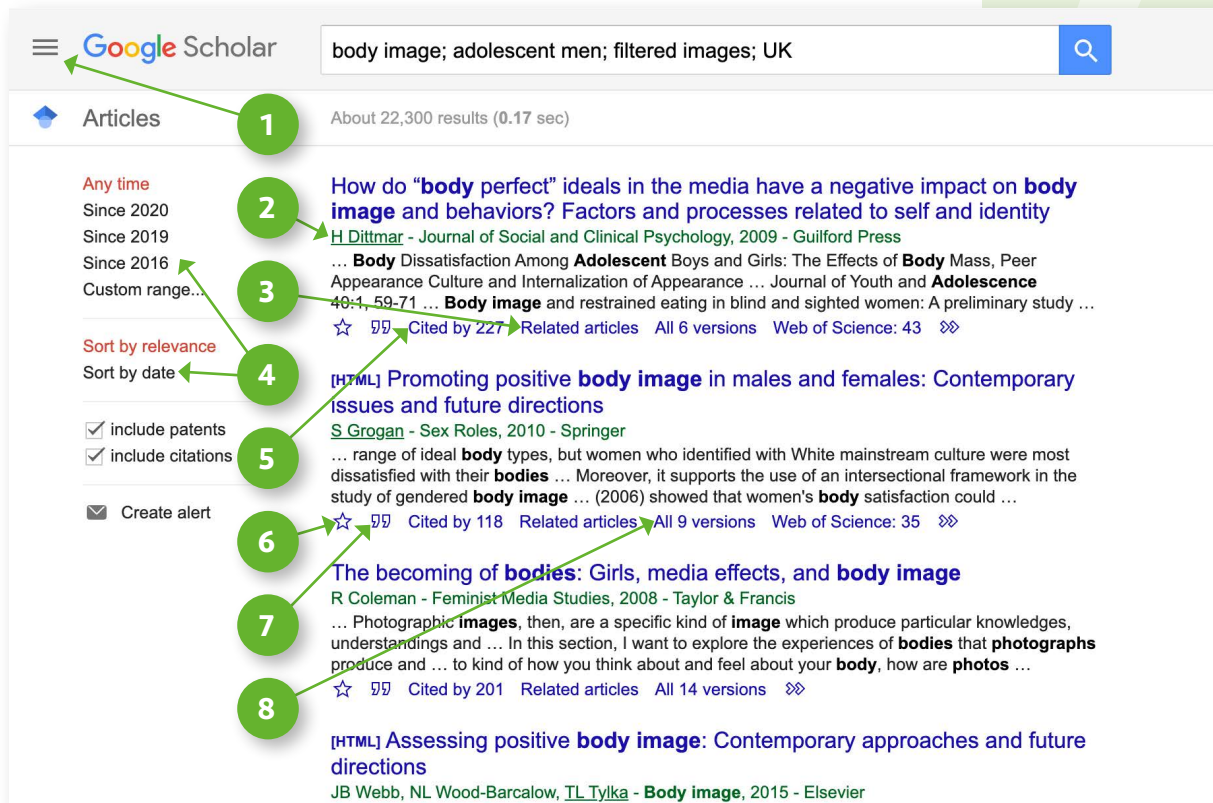


To ensure you find credible sources, know how to ask questions of the literature/ sources. Use this handy Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking.



3. ACADEMIC GOOGLING

Now we know what we're going to be searching, the next question is where do we go to find resources? Google Scholar is actually a good place to start. Armed with all of the information from our first two tips, we can search as broadly or narrowly as we like! Here's an example, showing what search terms we have included, and what all the info in our 'results' tells us about the resources found.



1. Click here to find your library of advanced search function.
2. Underlined authors have a profile in Scholar, click on the link to see what else they have written.
3. 'Related articles' can help you find similar sources.
4. Apply date limits to your search.
5. **Cited by** shows a list of articles, or other works, that have cited this article. Scholar also suggests related articles.
6. Click on the star to add items to your library (you will need to be signed in to a Google account to do this).
7. Click here to see how this source might be referenced.
8. All nine versions may help you find a free version for something usually behind a paywall.

TOP TIP: 

Check out the University of York's resources on using Google Scholar.



4. THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK'S SUBJECT GUIDES

Check out our **Subject Guides** for information on where to find the best resources for your subject area, many of which are free to access.



But how do I know I have found a 'good source'?

Now you have started to gather together some useful resources, you have to start thinking about whether they are actually *good* resources. This might sound like a difficult task but using the ScrapCat mnemonic is a really simple and useful way to help you assess the credibility of web resources.

Suitability	Is it too basic/ advanced?	If you can't understand it – don't include it! If it's GCSE-level, dig a little deeper
Content	What other things are on the site?	Is it a credible site? Are the articles peer-reviewed? Is it biased in any way?
Reliability	Is there supporting evidence?	Does the author cite credible sources to support their claims?
Authority	Known author or anonymous ranter?	Is the author an expert in the field you're exploring? Look them up!
Purpose	Are there commercial interests?	Is this source likely to be promoting a certain point of view?
Currency	Is there a date? Are there dead links?	Is the information still relevant today or is it outdated? Has it been updated?
Audience	Aimed at specialists or general public?	This will also help you understand if it's neutral or biased (see purpose & tone)
Tone	Is it emotive or objective?	Are there signs that the author is writing from a personal point of view?

"It took me a little bit of practice to assess the credibility of online sources but SCRAPCAT was a really useful tool to remind me."

You might also find it helps to keep a Source Evaluation List. Here's a useful template for one using the SCRAPCAT guide above.

	SOURCE			
S	Suitability			
C	Content			
R	Reliability			
A	Authority			
P	Purpose			
C	Currency			
A	Audience			
T	Tone			
	Should I use it?			

TOP TIP:



This is also a really useful way of keeping track of all the sources you explore, which will make writing up your bibliography/reference list a breeze!

Ok, I've found some credible sources. Now what?

Once you begin looking for sources, you'll probably find there's loads of information out there! You can't possibly read it all, so make sure you spend your time finding and engaging with resources which will help you with your project. Here's some tips to help you get the most out of your reading:

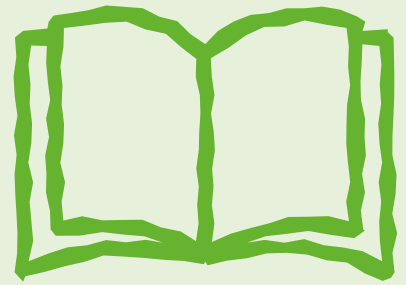
1. Scan the text first to make sure it's actually **relevant**. A good way to check this is to read through the introduction of a book chapter, or the abstract/introduction/conclusion of a journal paper. If it's an online resource you can usually search for your keywords within the text.
2. Once you're sure it's a useful resource you can dive in properly and read over it more carefully.
3. Take notes as you go. It helps to engage in both **active reading** and **critical reading**.

"ACTIVE READING"

Reading actively here means making a conscious effort to understand and evaluate the source for its relevance to your own work!

"CRITICAL READING"

Reading critically doesn't mean focusing on only the negative parts of a source. When you read a source 'critically' it means you shouldn't simply accept what the author claims; instead you ask questions and make judgments of it.



TOP TIP:



Revisit your notes as soon as possible after making them, so you can check they make sense and that you've understood what you've read! We forget a lot of information even in just a couple of hours. So, return to notes while the material is fresh in your mind.

GETTING STUCK IN: EXPLORING THE RESEARCH

4. Don't try to write everything down - you'll find the notes aren't as helpful if you do this. Remember, you want to get the gist of the topic or the main points and make sure you understand them.
5. Using your own words is best too, as it helps you process things and helps avoid **plagiarism** later when you start writing up your project. Section 4 covers referencing to help you avoid plagiarism.
6. Effective note-taking involves organising your notes with your project title in mind. If you do this, then when you come to planning and writing your EPQ, lots of the hard work will already have been done.
7. There are loads of useful tips out there on different note-taking techniques, so make sure you find the style which suits you best.

See the University's useful note-taking guide.



USE A COMPARISON MATRIX

When reading different sources, it might help you to keep a visual record of your reading so you can see at a glance how you have made connections between the different sources. You will be able to present the information in a way that suits you, but begin by summarising each source in each box, then use your own key to illustrate the connections made between each.

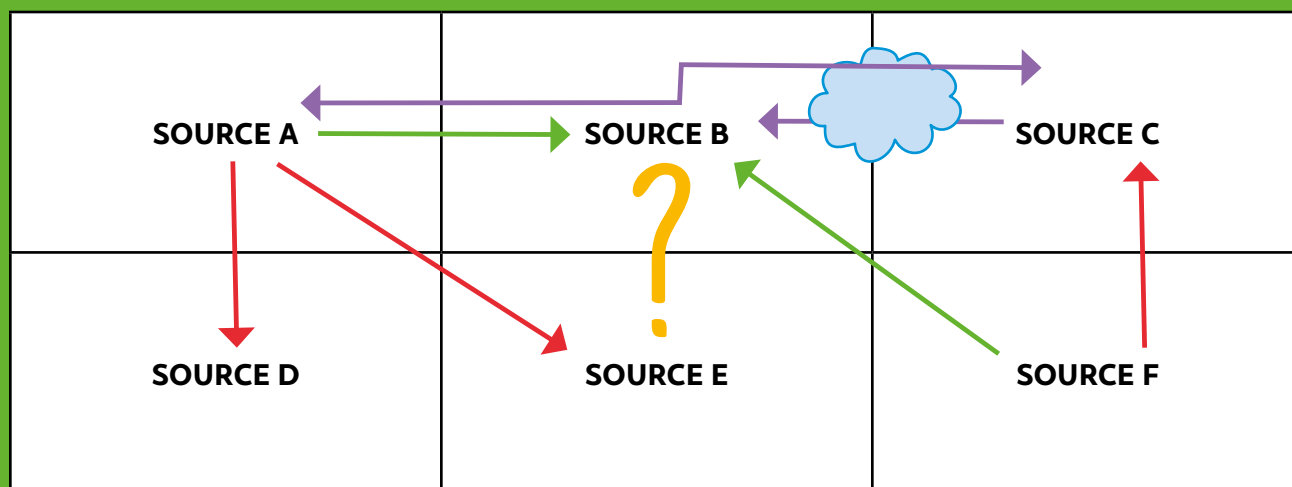
In the example shown:

Red arrows: 'these sources disagree'

Green arrows: 'these sources agree/complement/reference each other'

Purple arrows: 'I need to think about these more'

You can use other symbols such as crosses, question marks or think bubbles too.



REMEMBER!

You can return to Section 2 to review your question until you are happy with it.



NOTES

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



SECTION 4: GETTING ON WITH REFERENCING: HOW TO CITE YOUR SOURCES

Referencing is a core skill at university, and one which most students can feel quite anxious about. Your EPQ is an excellent opportunity to learn the basics, so if you do choose to go to university you will have a good idea of what referencing is and how to do it.



What is referencing?

A requirement of academic writing is that you acknowledge where your ideas come from by citing the sources you have read. This needs to be done both within your work and by providing a list of references or a bibliography at the end. Your tutor will give you lots of guidance on how to do this but this section offers some hints and tips to help you.

Why do we reference?

Many students worry about plagiarism but if you follow good academic practice you can avoid falling into the pitfalls that make even accidental plagiarism more likely.

We reference:

- » To distinguish our writing and ideas from the writing and ideas of other people
- » To support our arguments with evidence
- » So your marker can see how widely you have read and whether you fully understand the work

"PLAGIARISM"

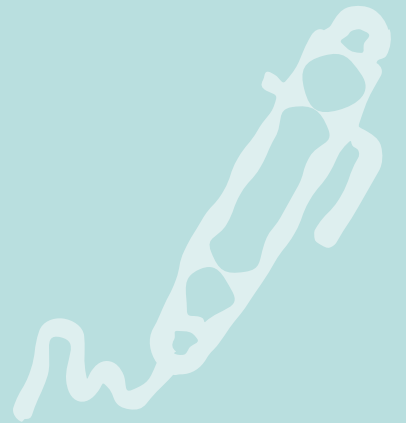
This is when authors take credit for other people's ideas. This can be intentional or accidental. But it can be easily avoided by developing key skills in note-taking, managing your time, academic writing and referencing.



When and what do we reference?

- » When describing or discussing information shared by someone else.
- » When using tables, statistics, diagrams, photos and other illustrations.
- » To give weight or credibility to an argument supported by you in your assignment.
- » To show where direct quotations or definitions originate.
- » When paraphrasing or summarising another person's work.

QUOTATION	PARAPHRASING	SUMMARISING
<p>Quotations are the exact words of an author, copied directly from a source, word for word. Quotations must appear with quotation marks, and they need to be cited with in-text citations and in your Bibliography / Reference List</p>	<p>Paraphrasing is stating an idea or passage in your own words. You must significantly change the wording, phrasing, and sentence structure (not just a few words here and there) of the source. You still need to include an in-text citation when paraphrasing, as well as citing the source in your Bibliography / Reference List</p>	<p>Summaries are significantly shorter than the original material, and they take a broad overview of the source material as a whole. A summary must be cited with in-text citations and in your Bibliography / Reference List</p>
USE QUOTATIONS WHEN...	PARAPHRASE WHEN...	SUMMARISE WHEN...
<p>You want to add the power of an author's words to support your argument</p> <p>You want to disagree with an author's argument</p> <p>You want to highlight particularly eloquent or powerful phrases or passages</p> <p>You are comparing and contrasting specific points of view</p> <p>BUT - don't rely on them too much! Make sure you include your own 'voice' in your essay</p>	<p>You want to clarify a short passage from a text</p> <p>You want to avoid overusing quotations</p> <p>You want to explain a point when exact wording isn't important</p> <p>You want to explain the main points of a passage</p> <p>You want to report numerical data or statistics</p> <p>BUT - make sure you present this in your own words so as not to plagiarise</p>	<p>You want to establish background or offer an overview of a topic</p> <p>You want to describe knowledge (from several sources) about a topic</p> <p>You want to determine the main ideas of a single source</p> <p>BUT - make sure you have fully understood the breadth of the information you are summarising</p>



TOP TIPS FOR EXCELLENT REFERENCING:

- » **Note-taking** – when taking notes, always include the source as the title and summarise the notes in your own words. If you do include quotations, make sure these are obvious (e.g. write them in a different colour). Remember to look at the university's useful note-taking guide mentioned in Section 3!
- » **Managing your time** – students are more likely to plagiarise if they are running short on time. Plan your work so you can meet deadlines easily – see Section 1 for tips on effective planning!
- » **Academic writing** – learn to summarise the work of others in your own words and reference the sources as you write. You will use citations, where you directly refer to the author in the sentence.
- » **Using sources** – as much as possible, avoid quoting sources directly and instead summarise arguments in your own words (voice). You are not aiming to describe each source in detail, rather you will be using sources critically to support your argument.
- » **Know your referencing style** – different subjects favour particular referencing styles. At the University of York, our students are required to refer to our extensive referencing resource to help them reference. See for yourself [here](#).
- » **Keep on top of your references** – list all the sources used in your work at the end of the essay, in your Bibliography/Reference List (normally in alphabetical order, surname first – check out the Harvard and Chicago reference styles below).

"CITATION"

In-text citations are included in the main body of your essay to show the reader exactly where your information has come from. The reader will then be able to find the full details of the source in your reference list/bibliography!

REFERENCE LIST / BIBLIOGRAPHY

A reference list is not the same as a bibliography! A reference list only includes sources used in your essay, whereas a bibliography may include resources not cited in your essay.

"Referencing is an important skill not just for the EPQ but for writing at university too. It can seem scary/daunting at first but once you get the hang of it, it becomes much easier"




But how do I actually cite stuff?

There are lots of different styles of referencing, and which you use in your Extended Project is up to you (unless your school has asked you to use a specific style). The first example below uses the Harvard referencing technique.

Harvard referencing style

Harvard referencing is the most popular referencing style. It is typically used in the Social Sciences, but may also be used in other subjects such as Biology. Check the University of York's referencing website mentioned above.

When reading and making notes, it's a great idea to note down the following information for each source, preferably in the order shown. This will be how you write each source in your Reference list.

TOP TIP: 


Always remember to note this important information as you read and make notes, even if you only note a few things down from that source. It is so much harder to reference when you have to go back and find the source!

BOOK	JOURNAL	WEBSITE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Author(s) (surname, initial) » (Year of Publication) » Title » Edition » Place of Publication » Name of Publisher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Author(s) (surname, initial) » (Year of Publication) » Title » Journal title » Volume # » (Issue #) » Page numbers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Author(s) (surname, initial) » (Year of Publication) » Title of webpage » Name of website [Online] » Full URL » (Date accessed)



When writing, and where you directly refer to another author's work, your **in-text citations** will look something like these examples:

In-text citation	In-text citation for a direct quote	In-text citation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Wykes and Gunter (2004) suggest an individuals' body image is connected to a range of factors, including emotions, feelings and self-esteem, as well as their actual body shape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It has previously been suggested that other forms of media have also impacted on body dissatisfaction, particularly the mass media who "are seen as a particularly potent and pervasive source of influence" (Dittmar, 2009: 2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In the UK, the latest figures from Statista estimate between 58-62 percent of people use social media on a daily basis, with those in younger cohorts found to be accessing these sites more frequently (Johnson, 2020).

TOP TIP: 

Note that when you include a direct quotation, you must also include the page number.

Your **Reference list** (Bibliography), at the end of your report or essay should look like these examples:

BOOK	JOURNAL	WEBSITE
» Wykes, M., and Gunter, B., (2004) <i>The media and body image: If looks could kill</i> , London, Sage Publications	» Dittmar, H., (2009), How do "body perfect" ideals in the media have a negative impact on body image and behaviors? Factors and processes related to self and identity, <i>Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology</i> , 27(1): 1-8	» Johnson, J., (2020), Social media usage in the UK – Statistics and Facts, Statista [Online] https://www.statista.com/topcs/3236/social-media-usage-in-the-uk/ (Accessed 15 April 2020)

Chicago referencing style

Chicago referencing uses footnotes. This is typical in the Arts and Humanities, subjects such as English or History. Check the University of York's referencing website mentioned above.

Footnotes

You can automatically insert **footnotes** into your document – you can usually insert these by selecting a button in your tool bar – or you can use the shortcut of **alt+ctrl+f**.

When using Chicago referencing, when you directly refer to another author's work, your **in-text citations** will look something like these examples:

Footnote (mid-sentence)	Footnote (end sentence)	Footnote (quote)
In fact, Kant believed that Enlightenment (freedom from self-imposed immaturity, otherwise known as the ability to use one's understanding on his or her own toward greater ends) ⁶ was a divine right...	Later modernists began to acknowledge the fragmentation, ambiguity and larger chaos that characterized modern life but, perhaps ironically, only so they might better reconcile their disunified state. ⁸	Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, on the other hand, argue that the Internet is an exemplar of the rhizome with "an indeterminate and potentially unlimited number of interconnected nodes [that] communicate with no central point of control." ²

GETTING ON WITH REFERENCING: HOW TO CITE YOUR SOURCES

In the footnotes, the information you need to include will be the following:

BOOK	JOURNAL	WEBSITE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Author(s) (full name),» Title» (Place of publication:» Name of Publisher,» Year)» Page (if a quote)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Author(s) (full name),» "Title"» Journal title» Volume, Issue» (month, year) or (year)» Page(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Author (if available)» "Title of webpage,"» Name of website section,» Website» Last modified date/ Access date» Full URL

Here are some examples of how these would look in your footnotes:

BOOK	JOURNAL	WEBSITE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Zadie Smith, <i>Swing Time</i> (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 315–16	<p>Peter LaSalle, "Conundrum: A Story about Reading," <i>New England Review</i> 38, no. 1 (2017): 95.</p>	<p>"Privacy Policy," <i>Privacy & Terms</i>, Google, last modified April 17, 2017, https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/</p>

Shortened Footnotes

- » Author Surname,
- » Shortened Title
- » Page number

- » Author surname
- » "Title of article"
- » Page number

- » Website name
- » "Title of webpage"

Example

Smith, *Swing Time*, 320.

LaSalle, "Conundrum", 101.

Google, "Privacy Policy"

IBID:

You may also use the term *ibid* (from the Latin *ibidem*, meaning "in the same place") where you have used the same source for footnotes one after another – so your footnotes may read:

1. Zadie Smith, *Swing Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2016), 315–16.
2. Smith, *Swing Time*, 320.

Shortened Footnotes: Once you have put your first full footnote in for a source of information, you can then use a shortened version after to save time and space.

Remember: when reading and making notes, **note down the following information for each source**, preferably in the order shown. This will be how you write each source in your Bibliography:

Reference list entry

This is very similar to the footnote but with slight changes of the order of the name (surname, first name) and other slight formatting differences.

- » Author(s) (surname, first name),
- » Title.
- » Place of publication:
- » Name of Publisher,
- » Year.

- » Author(s) (Surname, first name),
- » "Title of article"
- » Title of Journal
- » Volume, Issue
- » (Month, Year)
- » Page(s)

- » Author(s) (Surname, First name)/Website
- » "Title of Webpage"
- » Name of website section,
- » (Last modified date/ Access date)
- » Full URL

Example

Smith, Zadie. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press, 2016.

LaSalle, Peter "Conundrum: A Story about Reading" *New England Review* V38, no. 1 (2017): 95.

Google. "Privacy Policy" *Privacy & Terms*. Last modified April 17, 2017. <https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>

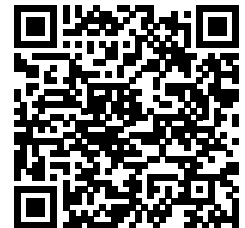
WANT TO PRACTICE?

Try out these referencing exercises!



REMEMBER!

Everything you need to know about referencing can be found on the University of York's excellent Referencing website.



TOP TIP:



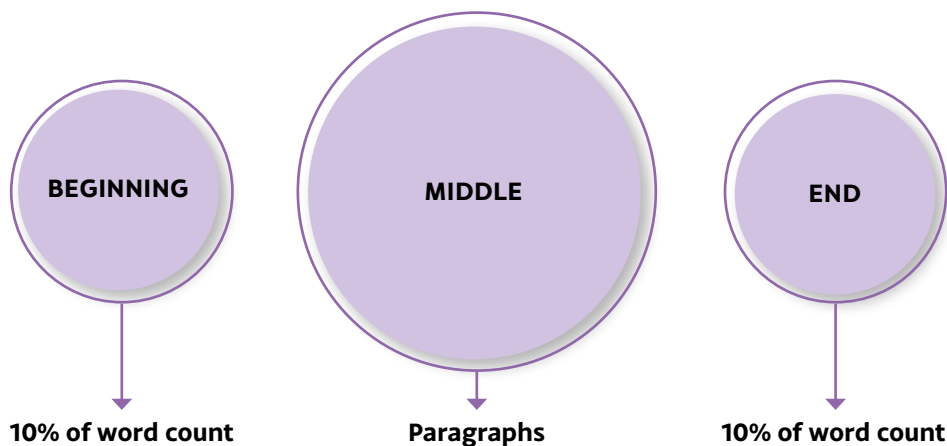
Whichever referencing style you choose, the most important thing is to be consistent throughout your essay and stick to it!



SECTION 5: GETTING IT WRITTEN: STRUCTURING YOUR REPORT

Structuring your writing

Now you've finished carrying out your research, and you have all of your notes, it's time to start writing up your report. This might feel like a bit of an overwhelming task - we know there's nothing worse than staring at a blank page wondering where to start. So here are some tips to help you break down your report into smaller, more manageable, chunks.



Here is the basic structure of almost any piece of written work: it will always have a beginning, a middle, and an end. In academic writing, this is usually referred to as the introduction, the main body of the work, and the conclusion. Lots of students ask how much they should write in each of these sections. The image here offers a rough guide for how much of your word count to allocate to each part of your report.

TOP TIP:

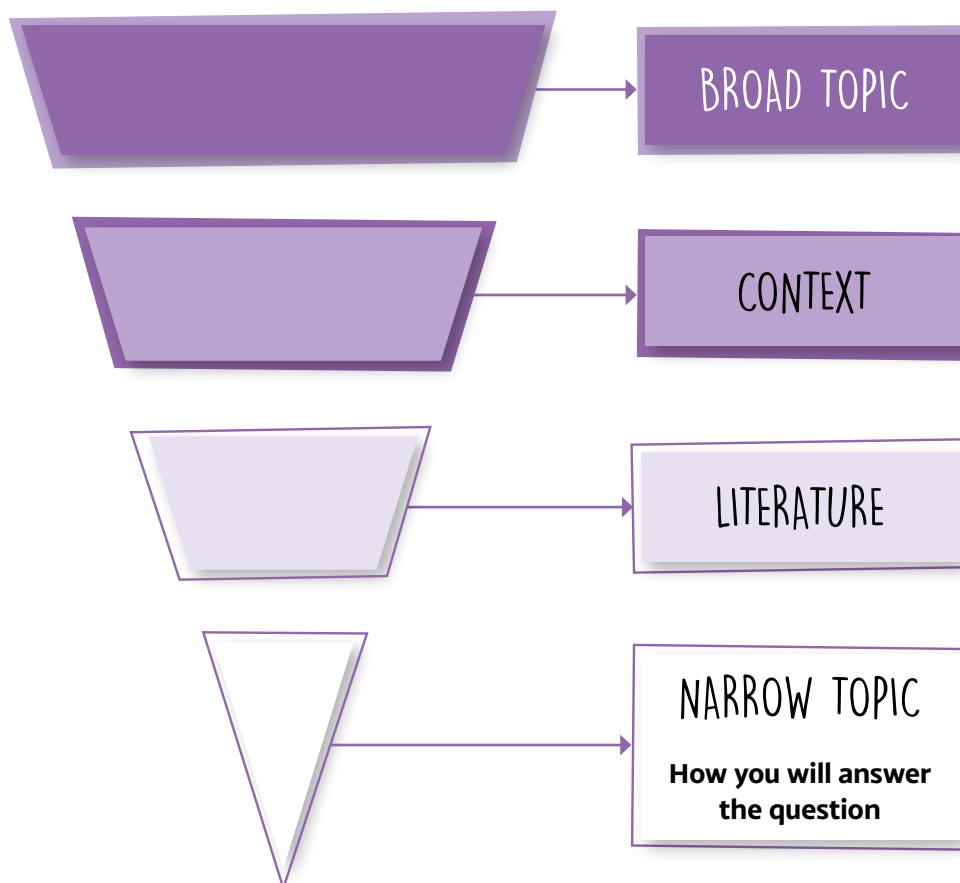


Make sure to check with your tutor how much you are expected to write for each section of your report.

Writing the introduction

The introduction is where you set out to the reader what you are going to talk about throughout the rest of the essay. You can use it to:

- » Present an **engaging first sentence** to introduce and draw the reader into the discussion by introducing the **broad topic**
- » **Establish the overall context** and explain the relevance and significance of the research question to that topic
- » Provide **comments and background** to give a history or some information regarding the topic, based on the wider literature
- » **Signpost** to the organisational structure of the essay, to show how you will answer the research question.



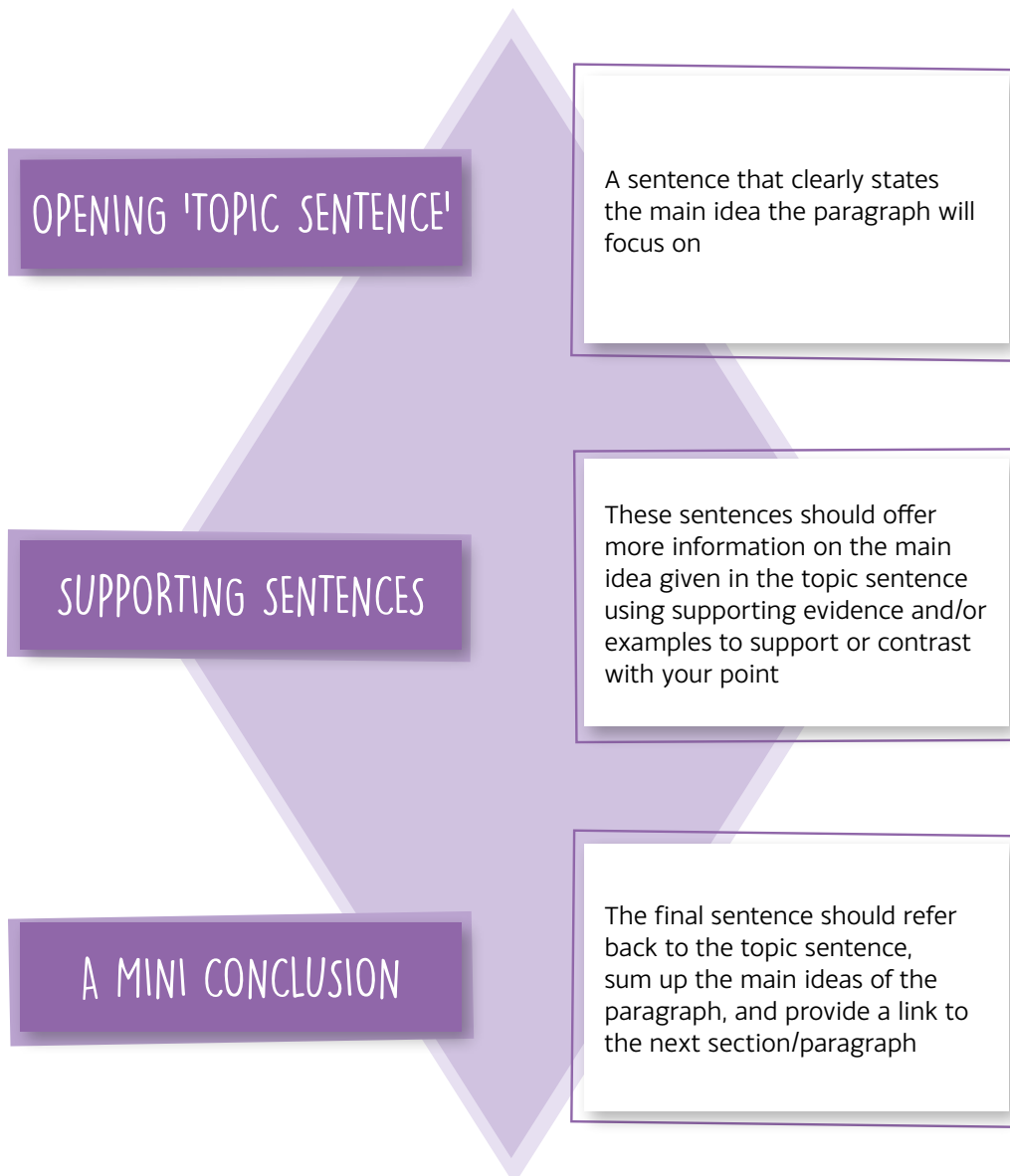
TOP TIP:



(Re)write your introduction **last!** This helps you avoid lengthy introductions and lets you make sure the introduction fits the report you have now written

The Main Body: Paragraphs

How you decide to structure the main body of your report will depend on the kind of project you do. You might want to give your paragraphs their own sub-headings, you might not. But whatever you do, you're going to need to use paragraphs – and paragraphs themselves require a bit of structuring. Here's how to plan your paragraphs:



REMEMBER:

- » A paragraph is a group of sentences that develop one topic or idea
- » The topic of one paragraph should follow logically from the topic of the last paragraph and should lead on to the topic of the next paragraph
- » The paragraphs fit together to *develop* an idea – they add information, explanation, examples and illustrations

TOP TIP



It helps to PEEEL your paragraphs:

Point

Provide a point to the paragraph
This should link in with the previous paragraph using connective phrases

Explain

You then need to contextualise the point.
Explain a little about it.

Examples

Introduce some examples.
Draw on your research, remembering to cite your sources!

Evidence

For instance, statistics or studies, depending on the topic.
This will also include more citations, referencing source material.

Evaluation

Weigh up what has been said in the paragraph.
Then identify an issue which you can then go on to discuss next

Link

It needs to link to the next paragraph as best as you can.
This sentence concludes this paragraph.

TIPS:

- » **Basic rule:** Keep one idea to one paragraph
- » **Relevance:** Ask yourself - is the information relevant to the topic sentence?
- » **Keep it critical:** Check: have you been more descriptive than critical? Think: in what ways does the evidence support or contradict your argument in this paragraph?
- » **Answering the question:** Again, is all the information wholly relevant? How does it contribute to your answer to the question?



Writing your conclusion

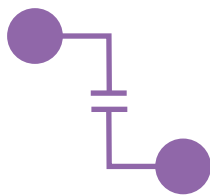
A conclusion is crucial to provide the reader (marker!) with a sense of closure on the topic. Your conclusion should:

- » **“wrap up”** your project
- » **demonstrate** to the reader that you accomplished what you set out to do
- » Show **how** you have reached this conclusion.

You could think of your conclusion in this way:



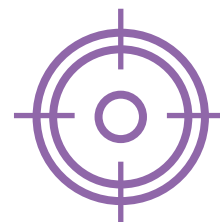
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Fresh rephrasing of research question | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Summarise or wrap up the main points in the body of the essay » Explain how ideas fit together | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Final words » Connects back to the introduction » Provides a sense of closure |
|---|---|---|



A conclusion is the opposite of the introduction



Remember that the introduction begins general and ends specific



The conclusion begins specific and moves to the general

Finalising your writing

TOP TIP:



Whether 1000 or 5000 words long, it's important to make sure you give yourself plenty of time to work on drafting and redrafting your report. This can often take more time than you think, so remember to plan accordingly. Putting all of those steps into practice, you should be able to map out your report plan to follow this kind of structure:

INTRODUCTION

Research question
*This essay will explore
...and conclude that...*

MAIN BODY

Remember paragraph structure

Point
Explain
Examples
Empirical evidence
Evaluation
Link

CONCLUSION

Rephrased research statement
*The evidence I have
considered suggests that...*

TOP TIP:



Proofread your work

When you're writing your first draft it's really easy to make mistakes. Typos are pretty common, and sometimes you might use the wrong word or put your punctuation in the wrong place. So it's a really good idea to check through your work and make sure it's presentable - this is called **proofreading**. This can take some getting used to but if you leave plenty of time to read through your work thoroughly before handing it in, you reduce the risk of losing marks for mistakes you might have missed. If you've put all the work in researching and writing, you owe it to yourself to make sure it looks good too!

"PROOFREADING"

When you proofread, you're actively looking for mistakes in your writing. Make this process easier by reading your work out loud to yourself - this will help you catch more of the spelling errors or typos and can help with sentences that don't quite make sense. It is very easy to miss these mistakes when reading silently to yourself.

HERE ARE SOME STUDENT-RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES TO CHECK OVER YOUR WORK:

- » Read your work out loud to yourself. This is a great way to check your punctuation is in the right place, and that what you've written actually makes sense.
- » Print your work and use a pointer to go through each line of text, word by word, checking everything is correct. You can circle things you're unsure about and return to them afterwards to edit them.
- » Proofread your work several times, each time looking for a different kind of error. For example, on the first read through you could look out for typos, and on the second read through you could keep an eye out for grammar problems or whether sentences 'sound okay'.
- » Swap your work with a friend and proofread each others' work; it's very easy to spot errors in other people's work, but less easy with your own.
- » Once you've finished a complete draft of your essay, put it to one side for a day or two and then return to it - it helps to read things through with 'fresh eyes'!

Finally...

Use this handy checklist to check your work:

EPQ FINAL DRAFT CHECKLIST

- My essay has been informed by a range of relevant sources
- My essay cites all of these sources each time they have informed my work
- My essay is structured well with clear paragraphs throughout, including an introduction and conclusion
- My essay makes sense - I've given it a proofread, checked it flows well, and that it's grammatically correct by reading it out loud to myself!
- My essay fully answers my Research Question
- I have referenced all of my sources in full at the end of the essay in my Bibliography/Reference List

So - your report is complete... now it is time to think about how to **present** it...move on to **section 6!**



SECTION 6: GETTING GOOD AT PRESENTATIONS

What makes a good EPQ presentation?

For your EPQ presentation, as with any presentation, the key is to **Plan, Prepare** and **Practice**. How you put together your own presentation is really up to you, and for most Extended Projects you can either do a **presentation with slides** or a **poster presentation**. We will take you through our top tips for both kinds of presentation in this section, as well as some helpful advice for how to feel confident about delivering it to an audience.

Before we get into the different types of presentations, we need to think about what needs to be included within it.

What could you talk about?

Your interest in the topic

You chose this topic, so tell the audience why! What was it about this issue that made you want to explore it further.

Narrowing the research question

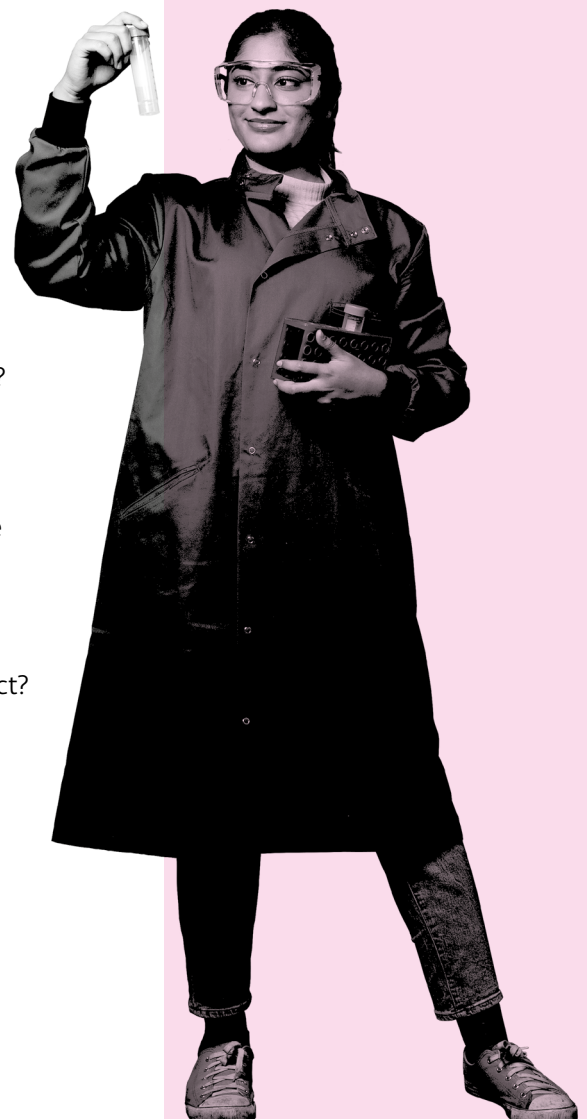
As well as talking about your chosen topic, you could also talk about how you developed your research question: what other topics and questions did you consider, and why did you settle on the title you did?

Your findings / the final product

What was the end result of your project? What did you find? Was there anything surprising to come from the project?

If you did a **report**: were you able to answer your research question in full?

If you did an **artefact**: how did you evaluate the success of your product?



Any challenges you faced

No piece of work is without its challenges! Ask yourself: What hurdles did you have to overcome to complete your project? Was it easy to access all the resources you needed? Are there any limitations to your project (be honest about these - having limitations does not mean your findings are not still very valuable!)

A reflection on the overall experience

Here you can talk about the impact this piece of work has had on you and your own abilities as a researcher. You might ask yourself: What skills did you develop through completing the project? Did you achieve what you wanted to? Could the project be explored further in future? What advice would you give to other students starting their EPQ now?

Q&A

Leave some time at the end of your presentation to let people ask you questions about your project.

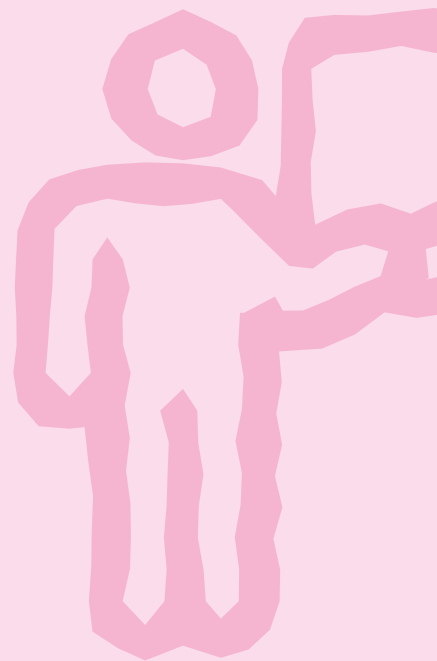
Designing your presentation

Deciding *how* to present your project findings in the presentation gives you the chance to get creative! To start with, you might need to decide if you want to do a presentation with slides, or a poster presentation. This may depend on the format your tutors decide on, but the rest is up to you! Here are some ideas for how to get started.

A presentation with slides

There are lots of different options when it comes to putting together a slide-based presentation. PowerPoint; Google Slides; Keynote; Prezi; and others too, but whichever you decide to use, we've got some top tips to help you put together a presentation that is fun for you to deliver, and fun for people to watch.

- » Avoid lots of text - it's hard to read a slide that's full of text. It's also boring for the audience to have you just read out a paragraph of text on a slide! Break down your key points into short bullet points, and elaborate on these in your own (well-rehearsed!) words.
- » Don't be scared to be creative - but make sure you're communicating your key points clearly.
- » Use interesting visuals - one of the great things about using slides is you can share pictures, videos, charts, graphs or other images with your audience. But keep animation to a minimum - or leave out altogether as it can be very distracting.
- » Choose a simple font, and make sure it's not too small - people in the audience need to be able to read it!



A poster presentation

Some schools and colleges hold a poster presentation session instead of individual presentations using slides. This is an excellent opportunity to get really creative and do something you probably don't usually get to do.

But Caution! A poster is not a chance for you to put your essay on the wall! Instead, this is a chance to develop some different skills in:

Using Software

There are lots of different tools you can use to create your poster. Each one allows you to be creative in different ways. PowerPoint, Publisher, or perhaps something like Canva.

Editing

The poster is a visual summary of your entire project. However, this needs to be a focus on the highlights and not huge chunks of information.

Making Decisions

This means you will be making decisions on what information to include. This can seem quite tricky at first because you will want to include everything. Make sure you plan some time for this part.

Being Clear

It is essential to get your point across as **clearly as possible**, so consider this question carefully:

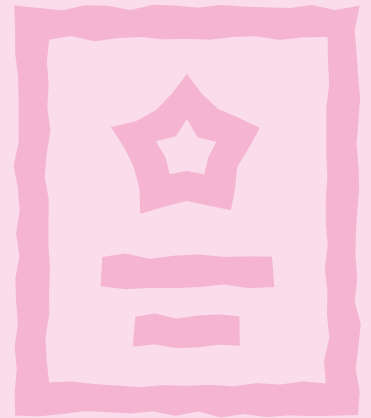
What is your **Key** message?

- » What **must** your audience know?
- » What's **good** to know?
- » What's just **nice** to know?

Be sure to include all of the 'musts', as many of the 'goods' that you can, and, if there's room, some of the 'nice'!

REMEMBER, HOWEVER YOU PRESENT YOUR WORK... !

You will still need to include references for work by others, this includes images, graphs etc.



TIPS FOR CONFIDENT PRESENTING



Even the best presenters are nervous – why? Because they care about their work and they want the presentation to go well. Here are some tips from our students to help you present as confidently as you can:

“Go and have a look at the room you’ll be delivering your presentation in. Being able to visualise the room as you practice at home will help ease the nerves on the day”

“Get there early and check all of the equipment you need is available and working”

“Avoid falling into the trap of just reading out your slides or poster – use these as a guide, but try not to depend on them to provide everything you want to say!”

Also:

- » Practice saying your presentation out loud, by yourself or in front of your family. Try and do this at least twice, but the more practice the better – you will feel much more confident delivering your presentation if you practice as much as possible beforehand. Ask your peers to practice presenting with you.
- » If you are feeling nervous you might find it useful to write down your most important points on cue cards. Try using small cards, and include only the key information you want to mention
- » Address the audience when you present your work. Remember the audience wants you to do well – they are on your side!
- » Speak up and speak clearly – try not to race through your presentation. Take your time to communicate your ideas clearly to the audience
- » Time yourself giving the presentation during your practices and make sure you stick to the time allocated



REMEMBER



Have a **KEY** message you want to communicate through your presentation.

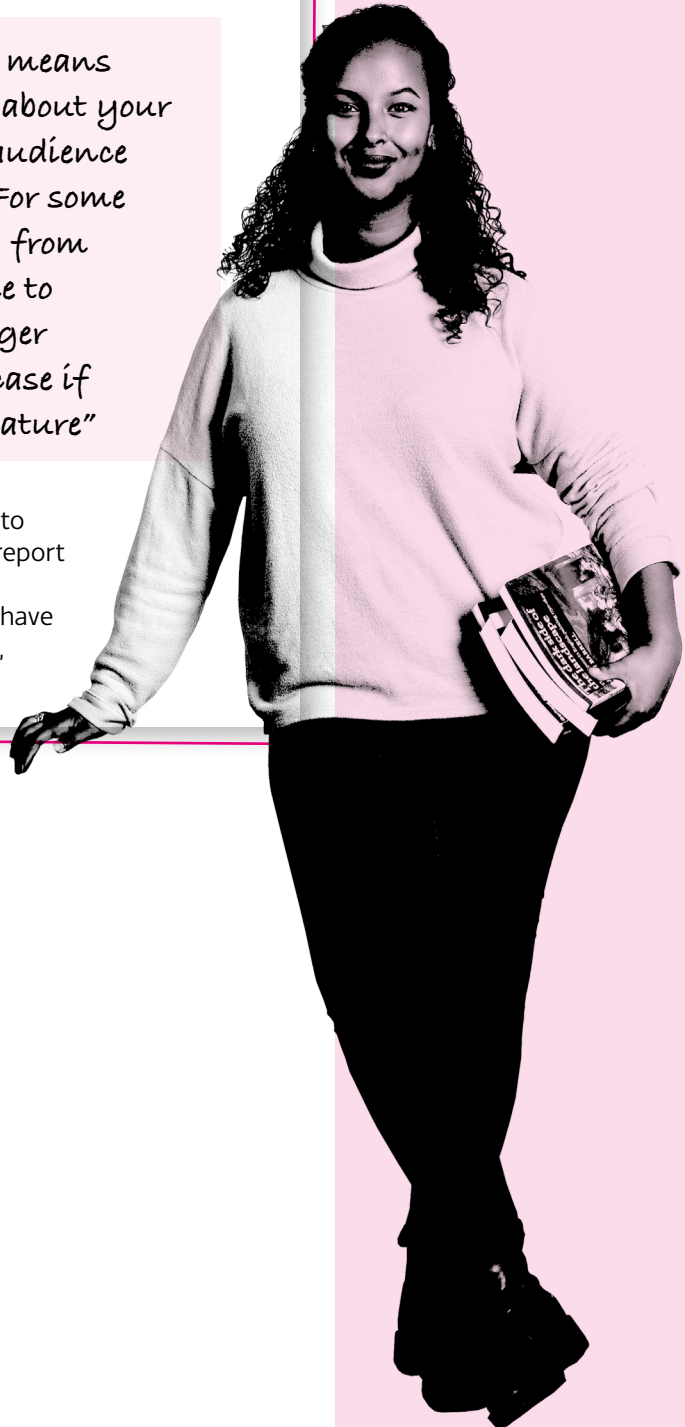
As long as you **Plan, Prepare** and **Practice**, you will be able to deliver a great presentation, and hopefully enjoy doing so too!

If you want to find out more about planning and delivering presentations, there are some great resources on this [University of York skills page](#).



“Some schools opt for a viva. This means talking to a very small audience about your EPQ. You can expect your small audience to ask you searching questions! For some students, perhaps those suffering from anxiety, a viva might be preferable to preparing a presentation for a larger audience. This might also be the case if your EPQ topic is of a sensitive nature”

So... you have planned your EPQ, decided on what to focus on, carried out some research, written your report and learned how to reference. You are all ready to present your work. How do you feel? You may still have some questions - so turn now to **our final section**, our **FAQ**.





SECTION 7: GETTING HELP: FAQ AND SOS

FAQ

Hopefully this guide has done its job and helped you work your way through your EPQ. We have not been able to cover absolutely everything in this short guide, so just in case you have any further queries, here are some answers to the most frequently asked questions from students carrying out their EPQ:



Q: *How many hours of work do you have to do for an EPQ?*

A: You need to spend a minimum of 90 hours on your project - meaning time-management and planning is particularly important! See **Section 1** of this book for more help with this.

Q: *How do I know if my title is ok and not too broad or too narrow?*

A: Deciding on a topic and developing a doable research question is a really important part of the process and shouldn't be rushed. We go through this in detail in **Section 2** and would recommend you give our process a try.

Q: *I'm doing an artefact for my EPQ: do I still have to write a report?*

A: Yes - you will need to write a report. This should include a breakdown of the decisions you made throughout the development of your artefact, including how these were informed by your research into the topic. The format of this should follow the outline given in **Section 5** of this guide. You will also need to cite any sources drawn on and produce a Bibliography/Reference List at the end of the report, too (see **Section 4** for help with this). You will also have to do a presentation of your project (see **Section 6**).

Q: *What is the word limit for an EPQ report?*

A: How long your report is will depend on the kind of project you decide to do. If you choose to do a report, then this should be around 5000 words. If you decide to do an artefact then, though you will still have to write a report, it is likely to be considerably shorter but should be no less than 1000 words.

Q: *How many sources do I need to include in my report?*

A: Lots of students want to know **how many** sources they should use to inform their work. The short answer is, there is no exact ideal number! You should explore a wide-range of sources - as many as you need to feel confident you have really **demonstrated your understanding** of the range of ideas and arguments surrounding your topic.

SOS

Things not quite going to plan? Don't panic! We've got some extra help to get you back on track.

Pushing through procrastination

Working independently on a lengthy project can be really enjoyable, but also frustrating at times; some days it might just feel really hard to motivate – we've all been there! Here are a few things you could try to help you focus:

- » Switch off your phone, or at the very least your notifications; put it on silent; leave it in another room: reducing distractions will really help you to focus on your work.
- » Write a to-do list, and get started by completing a small task. Don't avoid the big tasks for too long, though – you'll have to do them eventually, so why not get working on one now! It'll feel great to cross something off the list.
- » Just start writing! The first thing you write down might not always be very good, but the feeling of actually getting something written is great. You can always edit and delete things later; it doesn't need to be perfect for the first draft.

This University of York page has some more great tips to help you to stop procrastinating!

Missing deadlines

Whether it is a deadline you set yourself or a deadline set by your school, falling behind on your original plan can feel pretty rubbish. Instead of worrying, let's be proactive and set some new targets to catch up!

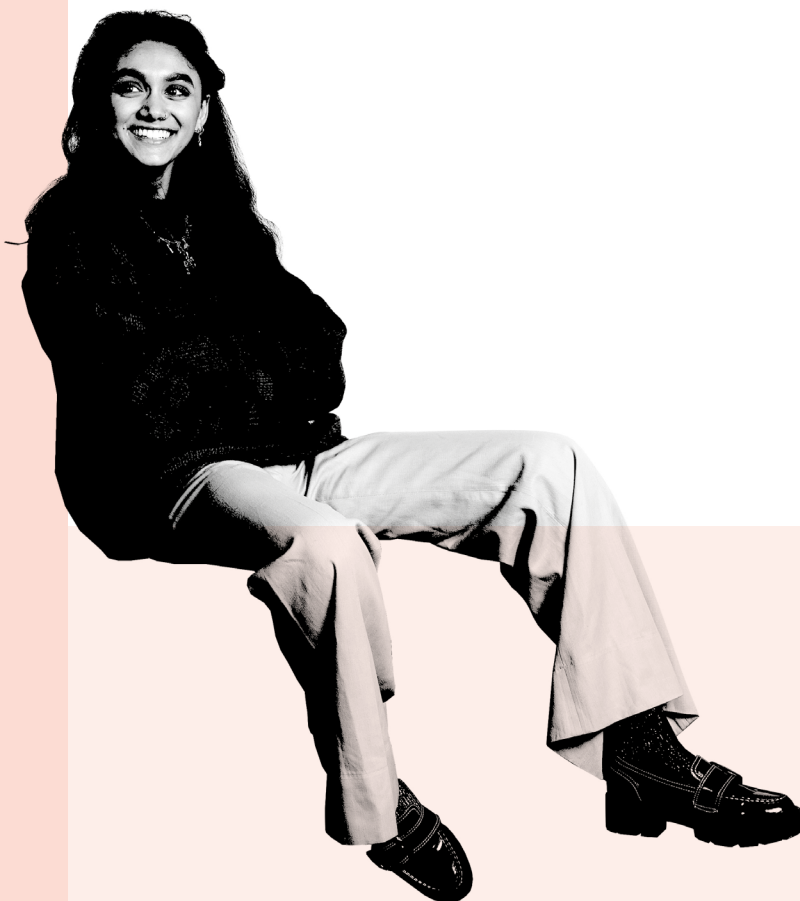
- » If you're stuck on something, sometimes it helps to go back a step and reflect on the options available to you moving forward on the project.
- » Change the plan: Maybe the project has changed shape a little from the start? It's okay to return to the beginning... work with your tutor to help you.
- » Try to avoid this in future by building some flexibility into your timetable. Don't give yourself tight deadlines, and allow extra time for each task.



Feeling lost

Not sure where to start? Hit a wall?

- » Ask for help! Talk to your tutor, your family, or your friends – sometimes just talking about your concerns with someone can be really helpful
- » **Take a break:** This probably sounds like the opposite of what you need to do if you are worried about falling behind, but actually stepping back from the situation means you can return to it the next day with a new perspective
- » Go back a step and ask yourself: are you feeling lost because you're not sure **what** to do, or because you're struggling with **how to** do something? Maybe you can have a re-think and change direction a bit? Or perhaps you need help learning a new skill to be able to complete the project?



Building good habits

It is never too late to change your approach! Maybe you have struggled to get going but now that you are ready to dive in, that feeling of 'being behind' is stopping you. Instead of worrying about what you should have done, think about what you can do now to get back on track:

- » Put together a realistic new plan. Start by working through this book again, and map out how long you have to complete each task required to complete the EPQ
- » Include small achievable goals and aims, rather than the dreaded 'deadlines'
- » Plan to back up your work as you go, just in case your computer or memory stick breaks
- » Try not to compare your own progress with other students. Remember, each student's Extended Project is unique to them, and carried out according to their own individual timetable.

Managing your time

For more helpful tips on time management, have a look at this:
[University of York online resource.](#)

"Know things
will change!
Research is
messy!"

Whatever kind of project you decide to do, remember that the EPQ is all about you completing an *extended project*: managing your time, organising your ideas, developing your production log, structuring your report, and delivering your presentation are all key parts of this. We hope this guide will help you work through these key skills, and that you enjoy putting your project together. Best of Luck!







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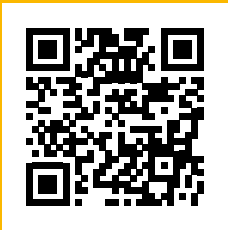
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