

There are few academic endeavours as exhilarating as writing the extended essay. It not only prepared me to join the community of scholars at Stanford, but also helped develop the critical thinking skills and independence necessary for life. When you bump up against the frontiers of knowledge and push beyond into unexplored terrain, the exercise becomes truly thrilling. I will always vividly remember researching my topic at Cambridge University and discovering that no one had apparently written about the depiction of French women in Shakespeare. I am grateful to the IB for providing the opportunity to experience firsthand what it's like to find new links to create knowledge. Writing my extended essay was one of the highlights of high school—an experience not unlike condensing soup down to its essential broth. The IB is like the instructor who teaches you how to drive a car, which you can then take on your own to the magical place of which you have always dreamt.

For those working on their extended essays wondering how it will come together, keep in mind that I had those same feelings during this process. I had to do a complete re-write to narrow it to one issue and toiled at the end to get it under 4,000 words. If you focus on what fascinates you and refer early and often to the IB guide, you can experience the glorious feeling of driving on new terrain.