

Without a doubt the extended essay was my favourite part of my IB journey. I loved researching, analysing and writing about the Sino-Uighur conflict. I've always been interested in human rights, but I knew next to nothing about this particular topic at the beginning. It was incredible the way the essay started as a simple research assignment but gradually turned into so much more. It grabbed me: I became completely involved in it. I suppose this was one of the best parts—the total, unexpected attachment and fascination I developed for what I was investigating.

The emotional connection I soon felt towards the events unfolding in Xinjiang, magnified by contacting some Uighurs living in Australia, led to a degree of frustration at needing to remain objective. I wanted to write a heartfelt, passionate piece as opposed to a purely academic article. Luckily, the peace and conflict theory created a path through which I could more moderately approach and ultimately gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Admittedly, there were moments when I was irritated by the tedium of the more technical aspects such as referencing and formatting. I felt they were taking time and energy away from the human side of the essay. Overall this mattered little to me: my eyes were opened to something really important and it has changed how I see the world and my role in it.