



Battle Abbey School

Extended Project Qualification 2022

Extended Project Qualification

An Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is a qualification on offer to all Year 12 students at Battle Abbey School, where it is equivalent to an AS level.

Universities tell us that the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) Level 3 is an excellent preparation for undergraduate study as it gives real evidence of independent, critical thinking. It is a stand-alone qualification which enthuses students by offering the opportunity for open debate and research on their own topic. Students from Year 12 can opt to take the EPQ, alongside their Sixth Form subjects and will be taught skills such as researching effectively and time management. It is essential that students work independently, but they will have a supervisor and subject mentors who assesses their progress.

It focuses on:

- A solid and coherent grounding in a specialist topic
- An ability to undertake independent and self-directed learning
- The ability to think laterally, critically and creatively
- Problem solving
- Reflective learning
- Self-management
- The development, presentation and communication of information
- The delivery of a presentation to an audience

The students' choice of topic is free, although they must show that it is academically useful, either related to their current course of study, or their future career. It takes the form of either a dissertation (5,000 words being a common guideline) or a number of other forms: a musical or dramatical composition, report or artefact, each backed up with paperwork.

An EPQ consists of 100% coursework, there is no exam. The EPQ projects generally start in February in Year 12 and finish in November of Year 13 to ensure students can adequately focus on their exams. Final projects are submitted in the November after the EPQ presentation events.



Cover image: EPQ Artefact - **Amélie Arundel**



Amelie Arundel (Year 13)

What is the message of art through the centuries?

I chose to complete my EPQ investigating the question “What is the Message of Art over the Centuries?”. Whenever I looked upon an art piece, I have asked myself what the artist tried to express through their work. I find it fascinating how colour pallet, technique and composition can be used to influence the viewers feelings. Through the choosing of my title, I plan to explore the purpose and charm art has for humans.

I decided to build my own creative “Art- House”, in which each room presents a different epoch.

This enabled me to portray all the different messages in a single glance. It becomes evident that the single messages are “building upon each other” while styles and techniques developed and changed over the centuries.

I used a range of different sources such as the internet, books or museums. I visited the Lenbachhouse and the Egypt Museum in Munich, the National Gallery in London and the Cezanne Atelier in Aix. I investigated the mysterious prehistoric cave paintings, the phenomenal royal tombs in the mighty empire of the Pharaohs, the antient Greek masterpieces of architecture and sculpture, the suggestive religious paintings of the Middle Ages and the fine renaissance paintings, showing off the wealth and style of the “nouveau riche”. I continued my research in the 19th century as I studied the romantic epoch, which worshiped the power of austere landscapes, the soft and calm brush strokes of the Impressionists, the avantgarde and revolutionary cubism style, the vivid and passionate painting of the expressionists and the fantasy worlds created by the Surrealists. Creating a link to the present I decided to end my project with the more contemporary styles of the boldly colourful Pop Art and the controversial graffities of Street Art.

My research led me to conclude that in almost all cases the meaning of an art piece relates to the social and historical circumstances of its time. Ultimately it can also be stated that through the centuries each epoch established its own distinct message and narration.

Through creating my EPQ I learned how to develop my own creative concept while also demonstrating my creative abilities. I managed to consistently drive my project further by persistently evolving ideas. In constructing my Art- house, I not only gained knowledge on art history, but also succeeded in composing an art piece of my own. I learned how to analyse an art piece through technique, composition, subject and colour palette. I am very glad I completed this project as it will be very helpful at university where I intend to study art and design.

FLORENCE BEINT

How narrow is the portrayal of women in fairy tales?

When choosing what to complete my Extended Project Qualification on, I knew I wanted to combine my love for the written word and how literature we experience at a young age impacts us for the rest of our lives, combined with my particular interest in feminist literature. I chose to write my dissertation on 'The Portrayal of Women in Fairy Tales' where I could explore their origins, their impact on young people, and discover a range of examples ranging from original tales shared through word of mouth, to modern film adaptations, with varying levels of change.



My research took the form of internet research of scholarly articles, reviews on various culture pages and a range of reference books to secure my knowledge surrounding the origins of the tales we grew up with and why women are presented in such a way. Throughout this time, I was making connection to the target audience and how young children, both boys and girls, are affected by the narrow portrayal of women. Further research through the introduction to a number of renowned collections of fairy tales gave me ideas for further research and consideration of ranging lines of argument.

My EPQ process has given me excellent researching and planning skills and has acted as the perfect steppingstone into university life where referencing and extensive planning will become a normality. I learned how to refine my research and decipher between reliable scholarly articles from proper sources, and unreliable information from blogs or unrecognised websites.

My planning and time management skills improved considerably and will hopefully have prepared me for university.

The presentation of my EPQ taught me public speaking skills and also confidence in recognising my initial mistakes and how to move forwards from them.

The completion of my EPQ has been an incredibly valuable experience for me in terms of the skills I gained and my personal growth throughout the progress. I am very glad that I chose to do an EPQ as not only do I have something to be proud of as a result of time and work, but I have also received multiple reduced university offers based on my predicted grade allowing me to further my chances of being able to study English Literature at a top university. The EPQ is an invaluable experience and I highly recommend everyone takes the opportunity to complete one.



JADON BRISTOW

How did Plato influence ancient Greece?

I chose to complete my EPQ on how Plato influenced Ancient Greece. I chose to write a dissertation on this topic as I have always been very interested in Philosophy, particularly ancient philosophical thought.

Having read the book the Republic I started further research into the influence Plato held researching Plato's creation of the Academy and the development of his teachings. I found a large majority of his influence stemming from his students spreading information about his teachings.

My research took the form of internet research to secure my knowledge surrounding the events connected to Plato, such as the current political and economic situation he was born into, as well as listening to lectures by philosophy professors on this topic. Throughout this time I was making connections between Plato and his Students, finding which students made the most impact on his life and influence, some of those being Aristotle and Xenocrates .

The EPQ has given me excellent researching skills as I started off way too broad, and then learned to be very specific with my searches. I also learned to properly reference my work, a skill I will definitely need at university. After being a bit too relaxed at the start of this journey, my planning and time management skills have considerably improved.

My presentation taught me the importance of practicing to speak the presentation as it sounded very different to how it appeared on my PowerPoint and needed adjusting to make it flow better. Completing the EPQ has been a very valuable experience for me, not only for the skills I have gained and my personal growth throughout the process, but I have also received reduced offers for university based on my predicted grade. I am very glad I chose to do an EPQ and I recommend everyone also chooses to complete one.

ANNIQUE CONVERT

Making a recycled patchwork top and skirt.

I chose to complete my EPQ on the link between fast fashion and eco-friendly recycled clothes. For my EPQ, I chose to make a recycled patchwork top and skirt and write a dissertation on why I chose to do this. I chose this topic because I would like to study textiles design at university, I have a passion for textiles and fashion, and I wanted to highlight the never-ending problem of fast fashion and how it impacts our environment, by making my garments out of recycled materials. Having researched topics that included the impact of fast fashion and peer pressure combined on teens; how many clothes end up in landfill sights a year; the impact of fast fashion on the environment; designers and brands which are eco-friendly and recycle; and the history and different styles of patchwork, I discovered how fast fashion is contributing to the awful worldwide problem of sweat shops and the lack of limited raw materials that are being used to make clothing.



My research took the form of internet research to secure my knowledge based around the history, evolution and different styles/techniques of patchwork and their uses as well as fast fashion. I supported this research by reading many different articles and visiting art exhibitions. Throughout this journey I was planning and creating my garments – top and skirt; watching online tutorials on how to make the various types of patchwork.

This EPQ has given me excellent planning and organization skills, as beforehand without doing much planning, I dived into my EPQ, which I shortly realized wasn't going to work so I had to think about what I wanted to make, how I was going to make it and what materials I wanted to use. Once I constructed a strong plan which entailed lots of mind maps and thought, I was on the right path and knew exactly what I wanted to make. I also learned how to properly reference my work, a key skill which I will need for university. My time management and research skills have also improved. My presentation taught me the imperative importance of having a clear structured PowerPoint and matching it up to the speaking part of the presentation to make it flow smoother. Completing the EPQ has been an enjoyable, personal and valuable experience for me. Not only it has educated me on an important topic, helped me gain amazing skills, helped my personal growth and confidence throughout the process, but I have also received lowered offers from universities based on my predicted grade. I am very glad I chose to do an EPQ and I definitely recommend everyone also chooses to complete one.



VIOLET CUMING

Do women make better leaders than men?

I chose to complete my EPQ on the question 'Do women make better leaders?' I wanted to write a dissertation on this question as I'm very interested in the topics of current affairs and feminism.

I wanted my question to be very relevant and something to initiate interesting conversation as I feel that it is something which should be talked about more often. Having seen a rise in interest in leaders such as Jacinda Ardern and Angela Merkel in the media I thought that producing a dissertation on this topic would achieve the relevance I wanted.

By reading articles online which highlighted people's attitudes to different female leaders and how their leadership styles have affected those countries, I found links between the styles of female leaders and how they were viewed by the public.

My research took the form of articles on the internet, using resources such as Google Scholar, as well as videos on YouTube on topics such as how Rwandan women rebuilt the country after the genocide. Further on in my journey, I began to look at more of the societal side and how its constructs affect the way that we regard female leaders. For research on this I read articles which explained evolutionary behaviour differences between men and women and compared statistics showing how big a percentage of the UK's executive positions are dominated by men. This research inspired me to take my essay to the next level and directed it more towards finding a solution for the inequalities against women pursuing leadership positions.

The EPQ has really helped me to improve my writing skills in a dissertation form as I was quite unsure how I would do it at the start but wanted to give myself a challenge. Due to writing many drafts and improving on each one, I think I'm better analysing different sources and finding links between them throughout my writing, which I can use to come to a better and more intelligent conclusion. By identifying common problems and suggesting ways that they can be improved, I feel that I can create a piece of writing that is interesting and provides a stimulant for ideas in the reader's mind. Another skill that I found to have improved is my planning skills. I really learned the importance of it when writing my first draft, where I found I had to go back to my planning to add more basic ideas in order to make it easier to write more in depth content in my essay. I think that doing the presentation was very important as I aspire to be better at public speaking and I found it interesting to try and transfer ideas that made so much sense in my head into a form that everyone could understand. I feel that completing the EPQ has been very a beneficial and worthwhile experience for myself and my skills. I am very glad I chose to do an EPQ and I recommend everyone also chooses to complete one.

HENRY EAST

To what extent was the battle of Stalingrad the turning point on the eastern front during World War Two?

I choose to focus my EPQ on history and specifically WWII. I wanted to study a subject that I did not currently study at A-Level to expand my knowledge and gain a greater understanding of world history. I initially focused my question on D-Day because it is a fascinating topic within WWII and remains one of the most important battles of WWII.



After substantial research, I realised that the question was too broad and wasn't correct. After months of tweaking the question I decided to divert my attention to the eastern front, and thus my focus shifted to the Battle of Stalingrad. There was a symbiotic relationship between my question and my research and I predominantly used my research to create a question. In hindsight, this might have been the incorrect decision because my research had no foundation. I used my research to create a plan and a question instead of the reverse. This resulted in irrelevant research that wasn't specific to the question. My research took the form of various resources including, but not limited to; magazines, articles, books, documentaries, and web pages. Documentaries were the most effective resource, as a visual learner. I found documentaries engaging and informative. Having said this, my research was enhanced by webpages and articles from Google Scholar, which enabled me to develop a more detailed argument and use scholars to support my argument. In my essay I argued that there were three fundamental turning points on the eastern front during WWII, which were; The Battle of Kursk, the Battle of Moscow, and the Battle of Stalingrad. Each one of these battles was incredibly significant in its own respect. However, in my dissertation, I concluded that the Battle of Stalingrad was the definitive turning point on the eastern front during WWII, primarily because it marked a clear and profound change in momentum and witnessed the Wehrmacht get pushed onto the offensive which was a point from which they wouldn't recover.

During my EPQ I have learned valuable skills, such as how to reference and how to develop an analytical and coherent argument. After being too relaxed at the start of my journey, I have learned how to use resources to balance my time appropriately and effectively, which is a valuable skill for university. I would recommend the EPQ to any student planning to study at university.



HOPE FOXALL

Why is the sense of smell so important?

I initially decided to do an EPQ because I wanted to gain new skills I would be able to apply to other aspects of my studies, as well as having the chance to research a topic I was genuinely interested in outside of my A Levels and subsequently ending up with a qualification at the end of it.

The topic I chose was about the sense of smell which the idea for this topic came fairly quickly to me as I love scent and fragrance, so the whole project was definitely easier as I was genuinely interested to learn more about it.

I struggled at first with my planning and research since I had never done this kind of thing before so I wasn't really sure where to start. But I started simple with a few mind maps and searches on Google Scholar, which made it seem more doable. I found that good planning and research was key to a smooth ride with the essay, having already mind mapped which topics I wanted to talk about in my essay and highlighted the research I wanted to use as it meant it took less time to do and I only really had to put it all together.

In the end, I realise I did in fact enjoy the process of my EPQ journey. I liked that it gave me structure to my week knowing exactly when and what I should be doing and also giving me a sense of achievement, managing to complete a project and gain a qualification from it. I would highly recommend doing an EPQ.

GEORGE JEMPSON

Should Sunday trading be further deregulated?

I decided to do an EPQ on Sunday Trading after an interaction with Mr Clark, the Headmaster, a few years ago. He suggested it would be a unique and appropriate topic, especially as my family run a business that never trades on Sundays.

I began researching into the topic of Sunday trading by becoming familiar with the associations and bodies that campaign against Sunday trading, and vice versa. This method allowed me to glean information about the economic and social impacts, as well as public polling. The chairman of the Association of Convenience Stores, James

Lowman, who has spent a great deal of his professional career campaigning and lobbying in parliament on the issue, was kind enough to share a telephone call, which resulted in a great deal of information. This interaction taught me the value of reaching out and being proactive in my research, as this avenue of research turned out far more positively than I could ever have imagined. However, the value of scrolling the internet and literature cannot be underestimated, as this is how I came across other useful material, an experience which embedded and developed my skills around pinpointing useful information. When I came to write my essay, I realised that my plan was inadequate, and far too brief. To overcome this, I simply made a more in-depth plan that included paragraph by paragraph breakdowns that allowed me to write my essay smoothly. I learnt the importance of having a strong, robust plan, and the time it would save. Writing my essay also gave me the opportunity to learn to reference effectively and in a recognised style, a skill that is vital for almost any university course or higher education.

The presentation developed my ability to produce aesthetic and concise PowerPoint slides and my ability to speak to an audience. Although it was nerve racking, I am pleased to have had the opportunity as the only was, to improve on these skills is through exposure.

Embarking on the EPQ journey has been valuable to me. It has taught numerous lessons, cultivated a knowledge in a topic that I may find myself having to refer to in future and was a great source of experience for public speaking. Aside from these skills, these EPQs will help my cohort and I to receive reduced university offers. I am grateful for the opportunity to complete an EPQ, and I would suggest that everybody completes one if they have the opportunity.





DANIEL JONES

Is the Insanity defence successful as a tool in the legal world?

My decision to do an EPQ was one based on a genuine interest in learning new, niche topics that interest me in a variety of ways. My topic that I chose being the Insanity defence, allowed me to gain perspective in mental health issues, development of the law, how social attitudes affect the law in different countries, the media's influence on how the public perceive such laws and how misinformation can be spread. All of these parts of my project interest me a great deal while making the project constantly exciting to learn about as it was not isolated to one topic. To begin with, I

knew little of the Insanity defence, but was keen to begin to enhance my knowledge on law as it is an aspiration of mine to become a lawyer, but also to study politics at university. This not only satisfied these desires but also fulfilled my constant interest in psychology, ethics and to a degree, history.

My research came from mostly websites that contained scholarly articles and useful information. While it was often a challenge to determine the reliability of such sources, I thoroughly enjoyed learning about the topic in this accessible method. From this practice of researching for an extended project, I have developed skills that will undoubtedly be useful in future endeavours, skills including selection of relevant material from broad sources, organising these sources in an accessible manner in files, and also the use of sources in my essay is a few of the skills that I can go onto use in things like my history A level coursework and also hopefully university dissertations in the future. Not only have I appreciated the lessons taught in research, but also in planning and time management. Two aspects of the project that I initially struggled with, but strengthened myself in over time.

In my presentation, I understood that I had to make various changes to make it more informative with a more successful flow during the presentation. I recognised that practicing multiple times helped me to realise I didn't need flash cards as they ended up hindering my flow of speech, as well as seeing that it was too long and needed to be shortened. These types of skills and experiences that I have had as a result of the EPQ make me very glad and proud that I have completed my EPQ. Not only have I endured difficulties and grew my own knowledge, but an EPQ that I have been thoroughly interested in has helped me to gain university offers based on predicted grades to continue a similar avenue of academia. I am without a doubt glad that I chose to do an EPQ and would recommend the qualification to anyone.

NOAH KIRBY

How feasible is terraforming Mars to make it habitable for humans?

I chose to complete my EPQ on the question How Feasible is it for Humanity to Colonise Mars in the Near Future? I chose this topic because I have recently, over the last couple of years, become really interested in human spaceflight and in particular humans going to Mars. I also want to study engineering at university so this could be a very relevant topic for my future career. Some of the things that started my interest in the topic was watching SpaceX's falcon 9 landing after a mission and seeing ideas on the internet on how we could visit Mars and eventually colonise it. I decided to look into it in more depth so that I could decide for myself whether this was a project that was actually feasible for humanity to accomplish or not. I found out that a lot of the theories and ideas on the internet about colonising Mars and in particular terraforming Mars, are not accurate and some are impossible or won't be possible for at least a hundred years and probably more. I also found out about a lot of plans for Mars that are actually being set into motion and plans that are possible.

I did almost all of my research online as there were a lot of good sources such as Google Scholar. I used a lot of scientific papers in my research to find out about new technologies being developed for a Mars mission. During my research, I also used online articles and YouTube videos from channels such as Anton Petrov, this also helped me learn about other things we would have to consider such as the affects of radiation on the human body.

The EPQ has taught me a lot of skills and reinforced and strengthened a lot of skills that I already had. For example, researching, I have learnt how to sift through information that might not be as useful and how to find exactly what I am looking for through searches and other online tools. This will be a hugely important skill for university where I will have to write more long form answers. My writing skills have definitely improved along with my planning skills, as I wouldn't have considered myself a confident writer prior to the EPQ, however learning to plan properly has allowed my writing skills to develop. The EPQ also gave me an opportunity to present my work which I am very rarely able to do. This is a great skill for me to learn and one that I hope to use more regularly in the future. All of this considered, the EPQ has been a great opportunity for me, and I hope that it will allow me reduced university offers. I am very happy with the experience the EPQ gave me, and I would encourage everyone to complete one themselves.





ALMIRA KARIMOVA

What are the current trends in disposable fashion?

I decided to do my EPQ on a topic that is personally related to my life and my career path - to explore the concept of sustainable fashion, current trends, materials and techniques used. I've had some previous experience on the topic of sustainability as well as doing some online presentations on an online platform about uniforms in fashion history, so I decided that it was vital for me to expand my knowledge even further and write a 5000 word dissertation on this topic.

I started off by reading as many relevant articles on the topic as I could find. It was important for me not only to conduct research, including expert opinions and information from reliable sources, but I also wanted to show my point of view, backing it up with statistics and direct analysis. The fashion industry is very tightly related with not only ethical and moral standards, but the money side, which greatly affects all actions of the fashion brands.

Sustainability, undoubtedly, is one of the main trends on the current market, therefore the demand is quite high, making it even more interesting to investigate.

My research took the form of internet research, interviews, and various article references, as well as my personal knowledge. I also managed to attend public talks by "MBF Russia" on sustainability nowadays and how it affects the consumers' behaviour; this gave me ideas for further consideration and motivated my research.

Throughout this time, I found it difficult to manage my timing, as I get distracted very easily, which makes it hard for me to get back into work, however I've improved my planning skills, and can now properly reference my work, a skill I will definitely need at my university. At the start of my project, it was hard and unusual for me to understand how to structure my work and include all the knowledge in one essay, showing every step that I took on this journey. However, as the time passed by, I learned from my mistakes and was able to produce a well-planned dissertation, with a lot of interesting facts and valid points in it.

My EPQ project helped me improve my planning skills and taught me how to manage my time - an extremely useful skill, not only for writing essays, but also for diligent and productive work in any aspect of the future life.

KATIE LAM

What is the link between creativity and mental illness?

I have completed my EPQ on the link between creativity and mental illness. I chose this topic because I am interested in psychiatry and this allows me to link it with art, my hobby since childhood. Through reading several articles around this topic, I realised that there are several different approaches towards the subject including from a historic and creative viewpoint and from a scientific perspective looking for empirical findings.

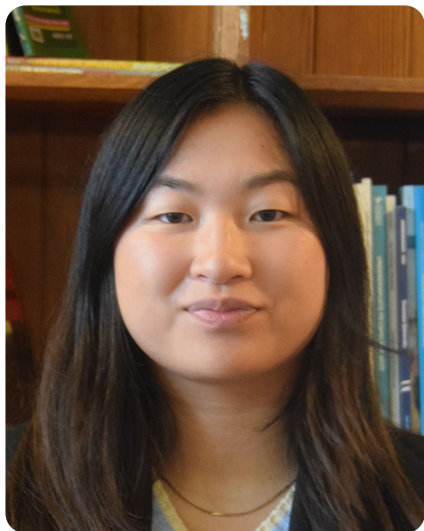


I have done my research on each of the areas through reading books, articles, and scientific journals. I explored different artistic movements including romantic movement and outsider art movements which often link to the foundation and development of psychiatry and psychology. I also read research reports on the study done in that matter. I learnt the different methods used such as tests measuring facets of creativity and how to link it to psychopathology including using genetics and cognitive models. I read articles to give me a humanistic approach on how this belief could affect creative individuals when they are seeking help for their mental health.

This EPQ has honed my planning and time managing skills through setting up the project timeline and adhering to its deadlines. I have improved both my research and essay writing skills through reading and reviewing sources of information and analysing and evaluating what I have learnt and considered.

My presentation has taught me to explain my ideas and project processes to the audience and making a PowerPoint really aids my presentation and acts as a reminder for the ideas that I want to deliver. It allowed me to practice my public speaking skills.

Completing the EPQ has been a very valuable and experience for me. It allows me to practice my skills learnt through the curriculum but also let me demonstrate my subject interest, especially during university interviews. I am very glad that I have done an EPQ, and I would recommend others to complete one as well.



ISABELLA MUSGROVE- WHITE

International adoption: beneficial or barbaric?

I chose to write a dissertation on this topic as I have always had a passion for the history and secrets behind international adoption, particularly the period before the one-child policy was introduced. An interview with an orphanage director and a psychologist indicated that many children were mistreated after the one-child policy was introduced and between the two interviews they both had a common factor of abuse and loss of identity. Furthermore, having read books and watched the documentary “The dying rooms” which I then did a deep dive into and found that

people with no expertise were forced to look after these abandoned babies in pop-up orphanages. My main source of research was the internet as well as finding primary research from books that I found around the house, this meant that I had a variety of different perspectives on the one-child policy and how it was then enforced by the Hague convention

Further interviews with Chinese adoptees Lucy and Alice implied that they too had different views about the loss of identity and growing up with the question as to why we were left but also that we’re so lucky to not be in those awful conditions as the other children were in those horrific understaffed orphanages.

The Extended Project Qualification has given me the opportunity to fully enhance my research and analysis skills. Throughout this, I also learnt how to properly reference my work, which is a skill that I will need for university. Overall, I felt that I was getting on top of all the feedback and corrections and managed my time well throughout. I had to factor in that it was a sensitive topic and that I didn’t want my presentation to sound too sad I wanted it to be informative more than anything.

Completing the EPQ has been a valuable experience for me, not only for the skills I have gained and my personal growth throughout the process but also for reduced offers for university based on my predicted grade. I am very glad that I chose to do an EPQ. The skills that I have gained from undertaking the EPQ are vast: planning, organisation, effective research skills and monitoring my own progress. I would recommend the EPQ as it can look great on applications, but more importantly, I really enjoyed doing it on a topic that I was very passionate about.

CARLOS NIETO-PARR

Tackling performance anxiety in athletes and what is the importance of mental strength in becoming a successful athlete?

My EPQ topic is 'How Can Athletes Manage Performance Anxiety, Build Mental Strength and Reach Their Full Potential?' I chose this topic as cross-country running and athletics have been very prominent in my life since I was 9 years old in 2011. However, throughout my sporting experiences, I always felt that I lacked sufficient knowledge regarding the psychological side of sport. So, when I was offered a chance to create a project on anything of my choice, my mind instantly returned to this thought.



After deciding on this topic, I began planning how I would go about completing the project through the use of mind maps and a timeline. It was in this area that I learnt the importance of time management and the importance of a contingency plan, as unexpected obstacles are always bound to appear and cause time constraints.

Having created a plan, I began research: Initially my communication channels in this area were very limited and only consisted of articles I found online. However, as my research progressed, I began using BBC podcasts and professional interviews to aid my research. It was highlighted to me by my peers, the importance of evaluating the validity of a source I was using. I did this in a few ways: Checking how qualified the author of the source was. Checking when the source was posted. Cross referencing between sources offered a great way to verify validity and organise my notes into those most relevant and most reliable.

My EPQ gave me great essay planning and writing practice which I had previously hardly worked on.

Performing my presentation taught me the value of staying calm under pressure, as I would have performed very badly in front of the audience had I not stayed calm and spoken calmly.

Overall, completing this project has taught me many essential life skills which are sure to improve the quality of any future project I work on. I am very glad I was offered this opportunity and chose to undertake it to the best of my ability. The EPQ is certainly something I would recommend to anyone looking to expand their skills and knowledge.



NATALIE PANG

Can mathematical modelling be used in this irrational world?

I have done my EPQ research on ‘Can mathematical modelling be used in this irrational world?’ I was initially thinking of how mathematics approach to trading. The reason why I chose these topics is because I want to study financial mathematics in university. In this EPQ, I started off by reading different books and articles on Behavioural Economics. To complete my aims, I looked up the news and different types of mathematical models that are related to memes stocks. These have broadened my economics knowledge, and I have gained more skills through this process.

This long path has been full of ups and downs, from deciding on a topic to writing a proposal, conducting research, and evaluating the results. The project can be challenging at times, but it allows me to learn to try things before saying I can’t. I was not good at planning and following a plan at the very start of the EPQ. It’s interesting that when I first used a timeline, I was frequently sidetracked by external circumstances. I make a mental note of what I need to do and write it down in detail. I tended to stay with it and accomplish as much as I could in that amount of time.

I was completely bewildered in the beginning of my behavioural economics research. Because I was not given any economics information, I chose it only because I had heard of it and thought it fascinating. I was amused by how much mathematics helped in economics but not so much in behavioural economics. It is largely associated with the social norm, and most of the theorems are expressed in English, as opposed to physics or chemistry, where the principle is genuinely an equation which is so much easier to follow. I have also recognised that mathematical modelling is used not only in the economic sector, but also in health care and education sectors.

As a non-native English speaker, summarising all these studies, dissertations, and news is a difficult task for me.

Overall, I am glad I did an EPQ. I have learned a lot and will be able to use these skills at University in the future.

FELIX ROGERS

Were agricultural reforms or the formation of Special Economic Zones more crucial in helping China's economy?



I chose to do an EPQ in hopes of broadening my horizons and delving further into a topic that I am deeply interested in. I specifically chose this subject as I aim to study international relations and Chinese at university, focusing on the geopolitical situation in Asia. I feel that in order to understand China today, one must first understand its complicated and dark history. Taking Economics at A Level has also helped to spur my interest. From studying this, I knew that I wanted to focus on the history of China's economy and politics. I believe that it was visiting Hong Kong that sparked my interest in China.

Reading books and further research into the economy of China meant that my title changed to "Were agricultural reforms or the formation of Special Economic Zones more crucial in helping China's economy?". This allowed me to write about something that I am interested in and meant that I was enthusiastic to write. Doing Economics A Level has meant that I was able to carry over much of my knowledge from it to my project. This also further consolidated the fact that I would love to study politics and economics at university.

I would say that one of the best parts about doing an EPQ is that it helps one adjust to the sort of independent work that is done at university or work. At first, I was disorganised, however after doing my EPQ I am much more organised and in general I manage my time a lot better. I have also learned how to research effectively, which will save lots of time at university.

Poor time management and procrastination at the start were my biggest weaknesses. However, as I developed my project, I got rid of these bad traits and made sure I did work on time. I have already carried this over to my other subjects, making sure that I stick to deadlines.

Stage fright is something that has hindered me greatly in the past. I find it very difficult to present, even to a small number of people. Creating and presenting my project journey in front of people has allowed me to partly overcome this fear. This also taught me the importance of having to prepare for public speaking.

I would recommend taking an EPQ, I have learned many valuable skills and lessons whilst completing it. Almost all of these skills will be very useful for life at university and beyond.



CORBYN SMITHERS

Making a book of shadows - an investigation into modern Paganism.

I chose to complete my EPQ on the relationship between modern and ancient Paganism by producing an artefact studying the practices of the religion. I chose to make an artefact as I am a practicing Pagan, and there is often confusion surrounding the aims and intentions of Paganism in contrast both to other religions and other strands of Paganism, as it is, for all intents and purposes, a personal way of worshipping the universe's power.

Having been raised in a Pagan household and had some base level knowledge of the way people I know practice, at the very least, I started further research into the origins of modern Paganism, the persecution of Pagans throughout the ages and the 1950's resurgence of Paganism in Western society. The underground of Paganism made research into older forms difficult, but I discovered similarities between some forms of worship, like the following of lunar calendars, as well as the two forms following the Wheel of the Year, with eight sabbats according to solstices, lunar events, and harvest patterns.

My research took the form of internet research, forum surveys, and various reference books to consolidate my knowledge surrounding the intricacies of practicing Paganism, including the different forms of divination, deity worship, altar use, and more, as well as recognising the stigma surrounding Paganism and witchcraft in modern media. Throughout this time, I was also researching the ways in which I could compile my research, deciding to make an artefact known as a Book of Shadows, a Pagan personal 'bible' of sorts.

The EPQ has helped me teach myself time management skills as I started off with an unclear plan that meant it was too easy to procrastinate. I also learned how to properly research, without getting lost in searches that are too broad, a skill that I will need for university. My ability to reference has also improved. My presentation taught me the importance of pacing myself when speaking publicly. When practicing my presentation I realised that I often sped ahead because I was nervous to fix this, I adopted some breathing tactics to better space my presentation and make it more understandable. Completing the EPQ has been a very valuable experience for me, not only because of the skills I have picked up that will help me at university, and the newfound knowledge I gained about my own religion, but I have also received three reduced offers for university based on my predicted grade.

EMILY STREVENS

Did vampires really exist?

At first, I decided to dedicate my EPQ to scuba diving, which is a personal hobby of mine outside of school. After some consideration I took the step to base my EPQ on something that I believe is a bit more 'out-there' and daring, that would stand out from the other topics, hence I settled on vampires. The supernatural, and vampires in particular, are an interest of mine and I've always found the idea of other 'beings' (beside us) fascinating. I wasn't sure where my research would take me but it turned out to be quite academic as I discovered a link between vampires and diseases.

This was very intriguing for me as I happen to have a desire to venture into the medical field where diseases are highly relevant.



After seeing a video on TikTok (I was wary of the possibility of false information) that a creator posted about vampire burials and The New England Vampire Panic, I decided to take a brief look into them. I used Google and it showed many results for instances of graves being found and information regarding the New England Vampire Panic. From here, I decided that I could come up with enough areas of research that I could write a complete essay about. I understand how crazy it might seem to write an academic piece on vampires (I thought the same) but after conducting research, I discovered its relevance to my interest in career choice and it turned out to be a rather academic topic of research. I found this after seeing multiple articles written by university students and scientists that were conducted over 5 years of research, dedicated to vampires. This enhanced my confidence on researching and writing about their existence.

Completing the EPQ proved to be a very helpful and treasurable journey as I both gained and improved on many useful soft skills that will come in handy in all areas of life. My personal growth from this experience is evident and highlighted in my evaluation where I put my self-reflection skills to practice. I am very grateful for this opportunity to complete an EPQ and had excellent guidance all the way through. I am glad that I kept on going with my EPQ, even when it got a bit stressful, the outcome was worth it all as I am a more developed person now compared to when I started. It showed me the importance of time management and personal growth and I would recommend everyone to take part in the EPQ process as the result is very valuable in more ways than just a potential lowered university offer.



PHOEBE UPTON

Taking a clip from a film and writing an underscore to go with it.

The topic I chose for my EPQ was composing an underscore for a film clip. This was selected from a few ideas I had been working on, however I thought this to be the most feasible and hoped I would be able to bring other areas of interest, such as psychology, into my work. I chose to do this artefact as I wanted to see how the composition process is different for film to what I usually do for A-level music. For this project I had to stick to very specific timings in order to create an overall cohesive piece after combining the video and audio.

After having decided on my topic, the series of tasks I needed to fulfil included research, extensive planning, and composing. I took inspiration from other film and television scores, including much of the soundtrack from various parts of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. This is because the clip I decided on was from “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse” and is therefore strongly linked with the MCU and many of the themes in the various movies. Another inspiration I used came from Richard Wagner and his use of leitmotifs (musical ideas appearing with certain people or objects), such as in his Ring Cycle.

As I hope to pursue psychology at university, my research included looking at a psychological study measuring associations of certain emotions with timbres (sound qualities). This allowed me to combine what I hope to do in the future with my love for music.

Despite struggling to begin with in my time management and research, I was able to gain a new understanding of myself by the end and now have valuable skills which I will use frequently in the future.

Overall, I am very proud of the work I produced and would strongly suggest taking part in this project to anyone who wants to further pursue any interest!

HERMIONE WHITE

Creating a piece of artwork inspired by Escher.

I chose to create an artefact inspired by Escher for my EPQ as I wanted to combine my interests in art and maths. As I learnt more about Escher I decided to focus on his tessellations. Watching lectures and reading articles I found on Google Scholar were my primary sources of information. I then started creating my own tessellations. My first successful tessellation didn't make much sense and didn't tell a story whereas my second and final tessellation was more Escher-like. I then wrote a short essay about my tessellation and how I was inspired by Escher.

My EPQ has shown me the importance of planning and time management as everything was easier to do with a good plan and organisation of time. I also learnt how to research and reference properly in my essay which will be useful for the future. I am glad I completed an EPQ as it taught me useful skills all while learning more about a subject I'm interested in.





KYLE WILLIS

To what extent are the internal politics of Palestine preventative to a peace solution in the Middle East?

I chose the topic of Middle-Eastern politics for my EPQ - though, in hindsight it was clearly overambitious of me to take on such a broad topic. I was intent on writing a dissertation on the Israel-Palestine conflict initially - I had a vested interest in the area at the time and had only recently become aware of the extent of the ongoing humanitarian issues that plague the conflict. I felt that there was not nearly enough coverage in any meaningful

level of detail in western news and media. By writing a paper on the topic myself, I was sure to become educated enough to better comprehend developments in the conflict.

This is where I would recommend taking on an extended project qualification. I have broadened my knowledge significantly - such a topic necessitates research from Middle-Eastern scholars and sources, forcing me to question my own cultural perspective in interpreting them. I also had to be selective in using vast quantities of humanitarian data from the UN and research centres such as the PCPSR (Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research). Sources like these, along with books by western academics studying the region informed most of my research, allowing me to write my dissertation.

I found writing the dissertation difficult because 5000 words is not nearly enough to examine thoroughly something this complex. I should have narrowed the topic down much more than I actually did. Referencing at first was a challenge but this was another new skill I learned.

Giving my EPQ presentation was the most enjoyable part. All public speaking experience is useful, if difficult, but I found that being able to speak about something I am passionate about was enjoyable, and made it much easier to be confident and coherent.

Overall, I found I enjoyed the EPQ process and have learned a great deal from completing one.

MARY WILSON

Women; the artist as their subject.

I chose my EPQ topic as I have a passion for English Literature, particularly the theme of how women are portrayed throughout different literary movements. Initially I wanted to write a dissertation on the question “How are women portrayed in poetry?”, but I changed my outcome to produce an artefact - creating an anthology of women writers as it allowed me to be more creative. Through this outcome change I was able to answer my question in, what I believe, a more direct and honest way.



Generally, my research consisted of websites such as Poetry Foundation, The Guardian, academic journals, and dissertations. I learnt how to reject biased and unhelpful information and learn how to find research quickly and efficiently through Google Scholar and Jstor. As a poetry enthusiast I had read many anthologies and collections which inspired me and helped lead me to some of my favourite poets today, which I included in my anthology. I really enjoyed researching my topic as some of my wider reading can be applied for my English A level and is a kick start for university.

Throughout my EPQ I have learnt skills which will be useful for university – not only referencing, but further reading of poets and a new skill to evaluate academic journals and dissertations. I believe reading these dissertations have helped me develop a more sophisticated tone in my essays which I will use in my English Literature A Level. Despite it taking me a while to grasp – my planning and time management skills have improved too, which is clearly a useful topic to have at university with strict deadlines.

I did my presentation to a small audience consisting of teachers, friends, and parents. This was a very big step for me, as public speaking usually makes me nervous. To overcome this anxiety, I ensured I practised my presentation many times, so it flowed well, and I was prepared. As soon as I stepped up to present, I felt a sudden wave of confidence and was able to present in an assured manner. I believe this wave of confidence appeared as I was so passionate about my EPQ topic and proud of my outcome – my very own anthology with my name on the cover. I believe I conveyed this passion well, as I received many compliments afterwards, which has boosted my confidence for when I will have to present later in my studies.

All in all, completing my EPQ has been incredibly valuable. As mentioned above I have learnt practical skills which can be applied at university, but, arguable more importantly, I have gained confidence in pursuing a career in publishing, editing, and publishing my own work as I've had a mini-insight into what it's like.



SOLOMON YOUNG

What caused the demise of the Roman Empire?

I knew that when choosing a topic for my EPQ that exploring the reasons behind the demise of the Roman empire would be something that not only would I enjoy but also extend my knowledge in an area that I can transfer into the continuation of my education at university.

After trialling prior topics such as the history of ancient Mesopotamia, and the rise of liberalism in Ancient Greece, I found that after realising I want to study ancient history at university, to delve into the technicalities of the Roman empire was perfect. I already had somewhat

of an understanding of the Roman empire, as ancient, particularly military history has always been a topic of interest for me. With this, I managed to reduce my topic down to a particular aspect of the Roman empire, that being its demise. The thought that such a vast, complex, and well-oiled machine such as the Roman empire could collapse with such effect fascinated me intensely. This line of thought also carried me towards the beginning of the Byzantine empire, another deeply interesting civilisation, although I had to limit my exploration of it as a way of not losing focus on my question.

The process of completing my EPQ has taught me valuable skills, which I'm sure will be transferable to further study at university. In particular, personal evaluation and planning, which towards the beginning of my EPQ were weak points that I have now recognised and improved considerably. The most important lesson my EPQ has taught me, however, is that of self-discipline. Learning to stick to a set deadline and work purely on my own accords has helped me develop my independence greatly.

My EPQ has taught me more than I could have fathomed at the start, not just through the 5000-word dissertation I produced, but also through the realisation of important skills that I will now keep with me for the foreseeable future. To top it off, most of my university choices offer decreased grades with an A in EPQ, which is priceless in helping me to achieve my dream of going to a top university. With all of this considered, I would highly recommend doing an EPQ.

