

SUMMER EPQ PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THE EPQ?

The EPQ is a project qualification in which you complete a research project about a subject you are really interested in. The project gives you a chance to show you can manage independent research and project management, which is increasingly valuable to universities and employers.

The project will take the whole of year 12 to complete – half of this time is class time; the rest is done in your own independent time.

The EPQ is worth half an A level and up to 70 UCAS points depending on your final grade.

WHAT DOES DOING AN EPQ INVOLVE?

You will choose a specific topic that you want to research, and then choose either to:

- write a dissertation about it (of around 6000 words),
- or produce an 'artefact' (such as a website, costume or musical recording) and a shorter report of around 1500 words.
- You will then give a short presentation about your project.

During the project you will be demonstrating your ability to:

- search for information,
- plan a project,
- write academically,
- think critically,
- build and support arguments,
- record and reflect critically on your progress.

These are all skills you will need at university or in the workplace, so it is a great way to build confidence in yourself for the future. Your EPQ teacher will guide you through the process. You will also be given access to resources provided by universities like Southampton and University of East Anglia.

WHY SHOULD YOU DO THE EPQ?

1. The EPQ gives you the chance to explore something that really interests you and become more of an expert in this area. It will probably be something you've never had the chance to study at school. It could be a very rewarding time.
2. Universities and employers are starting to recognise EPQs when assessing applications, so it could boost your chances of getting to where you want to be, by adding UCAS points or reducing your grade offer.
3. It helps develop skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, presentation and creativity, which are all useful, not only for university study, but also for the world of work.
4. It increases your confidence, knowing your hard work has resulted in an extra qualification, expert knowledge, skills and experience that you might not have otherwise had.
5. It gives you something unique to talk about in interviews! If it's related to the university course you're applying for, even better.
6. It could widen your options for funding – UEA's Bright Spark Scholarship (worth £3000) requires students to hold a research project qualification, such as an EPQ.

THE SUMMER EPQ PROGRAMME: WEEK BY WEEK

The best time to start on your EPQ is during the summer holidays, so that you are ready to get going when you begin year 12 – as you will only have year 12 to complete your EPQ. I am going to give you five tasks to work through during the Summer break to get you ready for Year 12.

Alternatively, if you are feeling really motivated, you can sign up for this **free course** that takes you through the steps of doing an EPQ: [Developing Your Research Project - Online Course - FutureLearn](#)

Week 1: To understand what the EPQ really is?

The first thing to do is get familiar what the EPQ is. Make sure you read the information above carefully, then watch this video from East Anglia University that explains what the EPQ is: [Extended Project Qualification - UEA](#)

Also, go through this powerpoint to look at some example EPQ topics: [32607833370. Introduction to EPQ.pptx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

TASK: Reflect on the mix of subjects you want to do at A-level – can you think of any topics that relate to some or all of them? For example, if you are doing Spanish, Textiles and Maths you could design and produce a garment detailing the life story of Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí. If you do Economics, Geography and PE you could look at the impact of sports funding on life expectancy and performance in international competitions. However, your project could be unrelated to your A-levels. Maybe you have been unable to take History as an A-level. Your project could therefore focus on an area of History you are interested in. Write down your ideas for a topic/project that you think will engage and excite you for the whole of Year 12.

Week 2: Dissertation or Artefact?

The next big question is to decide if you want to do a Dissertation (6000 words) or an Artefact (where you make an artefact, detail your progress in your portfolio and write a short report).

If you choose to do subjects such as music, graphics, art, drama, photography, textiles choosing the Artefact option may suit you best. For an Artefact you generate your own design brief in the same way in the Dissertation you generate your own research question to answer.

However, the Artefact is not limited to students doing creative subjects. Neither is the Dissertation only for students doing 'academic' subjects. In fact, if you are doing two or more creative subjects, you might want to consider doing a Dissertation to show that you have the skills to do this type of research; likewise, if you are doing two or more academic subjects, an Artefact might give you an opportunity to express yourself in a more creative way.

TASK: Write down your thoughts on whether you are leaning towards dissertation or artefact, and what these projects might be.

Week 3: Thinking about a Research Question/Design Brief

If you are thinking about doing a Dissertation project, watch this video on getting started on a project and how to choose a question: [Pearson and AccessEd - Getting Started - YouTube](#)

Once you've watched this, have a think about the topics you are interested in and write down some research question options to see what you might enjoy doing. The more personal you make the topic of your choice, the better as you will be able to generate your own interest.

Advice on research questions: They should ideally be Yes/No questions or "To what extent..." questions so that you can effectively develop an argument.

If you are thinking about doing the Artefact project, watch this video on getting started developing a design brief: [Pearson & Act On It: Getting Started: Creative Projects - YouTube](#)

Once watching this, have a think about the artefact projects you are interested in and have a go creating a design brief. This should be as detailed as possible in order to be clear about what you want to achieve. For example, instead of a brief to 'create an eco-friendly dress' consider 'The design, production and evaluation of a piece of sustainable fashion'.

Week 4: Developing wider knowledge

Hopefully, you have a good picture of what the EPQ process looks like now and maybe even have a topic/design area in mind. This week's focus is on beginning to develop some research skills by beginning to read around your topic.

Step one: Use a search engine to start finding information about your chosen topic or area of design. One of the key skills you will learn during your EPQ is learning how to find reliable and trustworthy information that will help support you in answering your research question or fulfilling your design brief. Read around your topic and make a note of the different points of view people have. HINT: Through this process, you will also get an idea if your idea for a project a good one or not.

Step two: I would suggest also having a go at using [Google Scholar](#) as this will give you access to academic quality sources. Have a look to see how much information there is on your potential topic.

Week 5: Project Proposal Self-reflection Task

Have a look a document called the Project Proposal: [ProjectProposalSNS.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

This is the very first document that is completed in an EPQ course. Have a look at a guide to filling in the 4 sections: [42552186472. What goes in my project proposal.pptx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Now have a go at filling the form out. You will bring this with you to your first EPQ class in Year 12.

If you want to explore further, the school has its own EPQ sharepoint site: [EPQ Student Homepage - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

Have a go and see how you get on with these tasks for now; try to stick to the week-by-week outline. I look forward to officially welcoming you to the EPQ course next year.

Regards,

Mr Wasserfall | Ric.Was@sns.hackney.sch.uk