

Extended Essay: Exemplar commentary

Subject	Biology	If applicable, theme for WSEE	
If applicable, category for language essays		If applicable, subjects used for WSEE	
Title of essay	An improvising brain		
Essay number	A	Examination session	May 2014
Assessment of extended essay			
Criteria	Mark awarded	Commentary	
A: Focus and method [6]	5	The topic explanation is very clear and well-founded, with appropriate sources and research. The title could be a bit more illuminating. The research question is actually very focused, although that may only become clear when the essay is read. The methods applied are well explained. A best-fit approach lands the essay in the top band. However, an explanation of why the student's approach is selected (and not others) is not evident, so only the lower level in the band is achieved.	
B: Knowledge and understanding [6]	6	The candidate addressed both strands and all indicators to the highest level.	

C: Critical thinking [12]	11	<p>The research was highly sophisticated and creative, but not always directly relevant to the research question. The candidate showed excellent understanding and mastery of the research. The analysis is clearly structured and presented and a consistent, clear argument is developed with conclusions drawn.</p> <p>There is a critical evaluation, but it does not address whether the approach taken and methods used were appropriate and produced valid data—hence the absolute top level is not achieved.</p>
D: Presentation [4]	4	<p>An appropriate cover letter from external professional was provided.</p> <p>The structure and layout are good and support the reading and appreciation of the essay</p>
E: Engagement [6] (not included)		<p>The assessment of an accompanying RPPF will affect the overall mark awarded and the grade achieved.</p>
Total marks awarded	26/28	<p>Summative comment</p> <p>Top-level investigation. The only weakness were a lack of discussion about the reasons for choosing the data-collection method and critical evaluation of that method. Please note: as a result of modifying existing extended essays for illustrative purposes, not all exemplars have an accompanying RPPF for assessment under criterion E (this is a mandatory element for all essays as of 2018). As a result, this essay has been marked out of 28 rather than 34.</p>