Berkhamsted Sixth

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

Summer Work

What is the EPQ?

The EPQ is an optional Level 3 qualification worth half an A Level.

It is open to all students in Year 12 to complete, in addition to their three A Levels.

To complete an EPQ, students design, research and produce a project for themselves. Although they will have a supervisor to support them, EPQ is largely **self-guided** – students are expected to work independently.

What subjects can I study?

An EPQ can be on almost any topic and in almost any format!
Students do have to choose between four different units:

Dissertation: extended research essay (approx. 6000 words)

Investigation: essay based on data collection and analysis (approx. 5000 words)

Performance: devised piece + research and development report (approx. 3000 words)

Artefact: devised piece + research and development report (approx. 3000 words)

Why do an EPQ?

- It's excellent preparation for university and/or working life.
- You will develop useful transferable skills.
- It's a great addition to your university/training/employment applications.
- Universities will sometimes make lower alternative offers for students with an EPQ.
- You get to work on a topic you love!

Interested? Scroll down for the summer work!

What is the Summer Work?

The Year 11 summer holiday is a great chance to begin looking at possible EPQ topics. You will save time later and develop the habit of independent study, which will serve you well in the Sixth and beyond. Here are some steps to get you started:

- Think about subjects and topics that might interest you.
- Start doing some reading and researching! There are many places you can find useful sources, such as:
    - School and local libraries (including online resources)
    - AV resources such as films, documentaries and podcasts
    - Museums, galleries and other places of interest
    - The Internet – but be careful: not all sources are equally useful or reliable.
        - If you are already a student at Berkhamsted, the Library website is an excellent place to start your journey.
        - If you are an external student, a list of resources available for free online can be found at the end of this document.
- Write down brief notes as you go about what you learn, so that you can use them later.
- IMPORTANTLY, make a list of the sources you find. Record important details such as the title, author and web address (if relevant).

What next?

You will formally sign up for EPQ at the end of September 2024. You will complete an application form in which you will briefly set out the unit and subject area you are interested in, and list the sources you have studied so far relevant to this topic. We will also consider your academic record, to ensure that we feel you can manage the demands of EPQ.

The programme runs until June 2025. You will be expected to commit two to three hours of independent work each week towards your project.

Free websites and portals for EPQ research

Thanks to Andrea Roberts, Library Services Manager, for producing these.

Getting Started

Organisations, Charities, Professional or Government Bodies

Identify the organisations and bodies related to your topic area. Many share links to relevant research they have funded or recommend on their websites. Examples: World Health Organisation, Greenpeace, Cancer Research, YouGov.

Social Media

If you are interested in the work of a particular researcher or research group, it's worth checking if they have a social media presence for links to further research or discussions.

Newspapers

Access current and historic news databases online via your local public library (Free library account needed)

The public library provides free remote access to many other online databases – explore what's on offer from your local library service via their website.

Recommended Websites

The Conversation

All the content is written by leading experts. Articles link you straight to primary **academic research**. A fantastic source of information for a wide range of EPQ topics.

The Economist

Covers politics, business, tech, culture and more. Access a limited number of articles for free per month by registering for a free account.

Open Access Government

A free source of analysis on key public policy areas worldwide.

Digging Deeper

Google Scholar

Google's search engine for finding academic literature.

Access to Academic Journals

JStor (free personal account)

Extensive academic journals database. If you don't have access through an institution, you can still read 30 articles a month with a free personal account. See How to register & get free access to content.

Access to Research

Free walk-in access to online journals, available in many public libraries. Search the database and download the content (on-site only). A useful option if you hit a paywall for an article in, eg. Google Scholar.

These databases help you to find open access journal articles:

CORE The world's largest collection of open access research papers and articles.

DOAJ Index of diverse open access journals from around the world.

Pubmed Database of articles in Biomedical and Life Sciences