



# Key EPQ Information

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EPQ stands for Extended Project Qualification, which is an additional qualification you can take alongside your A Levels. It helps to develop research skills, time management and a whole host of other skills that could be very useful at university. An EPQ consists of a 5000-word report on a subject of your choice and a presentation on both the planning and project management of your EPQ, as well as the content of your report.

## Pros

### **1. An EPQ is worth valuable UCAS points**

A top grade in your EPQ is worth the equivalent of half an A-Level (70 UCAS points) which could be invaluable when applying to universities.

### **2. It develops useful skills**

Skills such as Time management, research skills, presentation skills, essay writing, etc. can all be developed during the course of your EPQ, and many of these skills may come in handy later in life.

### **3. It lets you study your own interests**

Several of my friends applying to do medicine at university did their reports on subjects such as type 2 diabetes or abortion, which will be relevant to their course and gave them things to mention at interviews. I, on the other hand, did Disney princesses because I like Disney, and it also linked to my interest in feminism.

## Cons

### **1. It takes up a lot of time – 120 hours!**

Writing 5000 words is not an easy task, plus you have to do extensive research on your chosen topic, prepare a presentation and even hand in evidence of your time planning!

### **2. It can be tricky if essays don't come naturally to you**

I'm quite lucky in that I study entirely essay-based subjects at A Level, and have a lot of experience writing 3000-word pieces of coursework for English, so an EPQ isn't such a big stretch. However, some people who don't enjoy essay writing – and perhaps find it a bit harder – might struggle when writing for their EPQ.

### **3. It can be very stressful**

An EPQ is a lot of work to put in, and you should consider your other commitments before taking one on, as it can be extremely stressful when you still have 3000 words to go with only a week before the deadline, or when the presentation comes the morning after the school musical (not fun!).

Ultimately it's up to you to decide whether or not you go ahead with it. While it can be very difficult and stressful, it is also very rewarding and the qualification is becoming increasingly favoured by universities. If you do decide to take it on, here are some final tips that might help you out...

## EPQ advice

**1. Pick a subject that genuinely interests you. Don't say "I'm going to do my report on string theory!" if you're not actually interested in it, just because it'll make you sound as clever as Sheldon Cooper. I did Disney Princesses and that was fascinating for me, and ultimately I really enjoyed it.**

**2. Plan your time well. Don't be afraid to say to your supervisor, "I'm taking a two week break from my EPQ due to mocks" – that's perfectly fine! Make sure you balance your EPQ with your A Levels.**

**3. Keep hold of every scrap of planning. It'll all be useful evidence to include in your folder at the end of the project, and could gain you marks!**