

## May 2015 extended essay reports

### Swedish A

#### Overall grade boundaries

<b>Grade:</b>	E	D	C	B	A
<b>Mark range:</b>	0-7	8-15	16-22	23-28	29-36

#### The range and suitability of the work submitted

This May session, the number of Category 3 essays continued to increase, however only slightly. Like last year there are still some issues with the Category 3 option with regards to appropriate research. This includes also the problem of broad questions that are not focused on a specific text.

Many Category 1 essays this session continued to look at well-known themes such as motifs in Astrid Lindgren's works and the theme of evil and other features of Guillou's *Ondskan*.

The number of Category 2 essays comparing more than two literary works has for some unknown reason continued to increase. This is sometimes to the detriment of the focus and depth to which each piece of literature can be addressed. The most focused and creative essays tend to be on more minor details that have come from two literary pieces.

Candidates inevitably continue to research classic authors which offer a variety of secondary sources for consideration during the research process. More modern authors appear this year and internet sources are increasingly used as secondary material as well as criticism and reviews from newspapers. Books that have received popular awards and texts that look at actual, social themes seem to be of great interest. Candidates who use contemporary works tend to have more difficulties in appropriate source selection, as many sources are electronic and sometimes of dubious quality. Candidates have always explored children's literature, and this session the number of essays dealing with this topic (literature for the youth/young adults) increased. Novels such as *Engelsforstrilogin*, are sometimes not rich enough on literary features to give a good enough opportunity for a candidate to deal with in isolation and do well. Candidates need to take care in their selection, and ensure if one piece of work alone does not give sufficient scope for analysis and research on the chosen features, that another piece of work is chosen for a comparative approach.

The majority of essays are good to very good. The number of satisfactory to poor essays has increased this session. An increasing number of essays are furthermore too short, which means one can see there is a great lack of ideas that should have been included. There is still a difference in performance between schools; some know exactly how to write an EE, but some have a seemingly vague understanding of the process. The supervisors should be encouraged to read the guidelines for the EE properly, including the requirements which are explicitly stated in the level descriptors of each of the criteria.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A: research question

The research questions are mainly suitable for investigation and most of the best research questions are formulated as a question. This tended to be presented early on in the essay. Candidates should take care to not lose focus of the question- the ensuing body should respond to the research question as presented in the introduction or on the title page. Unfortunately, this session, there is also a tendency for some essays to be merely descriptive, offering a retelling of plots or comparing in unsubstantiated list-form, the similarities and differences between literary works.

### Criterion B: introduction

As with last session far too many candidates (and supervisors) have not clearly noted the requirements of this criterion. Some introductions do not present existing knowledge included and some students tend to write a copy of part of the abstract here. Under this heading the candidate should present a rationale for choosing research question, and they should state the worthiness of examining these chosen aspects. The research questions should also, when possible, be situated in its academic context. Some candidates tend to make no distinction between the introduction and the beginning of the main body of the EE. This makes the assessment of the introduction difficult.

### Criterion C: investigation

Some selected works as indicated above, generate problems when it comes to source selection. Sometimes secondary sources are rarely available, and those that are available are short reviews.

### Criterion D: knowledge and understanding of the topic studied

It was obvious that candidates tended to have read the books and formed an opinion. Sometimes however, despite the formulation of a focused research question, candidates tended to progress to predominantly discussing the plot and characters.

### Criterion E: reasoned argument

This is where the ability to coherently and efficiently make use of quotations is assessed. It is also here that the technique of paragraphing and the use of linking words and expressions

are useful. This is often a matter of technique and should be practised more in class in order to assist candidates in retaining focus.

### Criterion F: application of analytical and evaluative skills

On page 25 of the Extended Essay Guide it is stated that candidates should study and analyse “how texts work as literature”. With this in mind, many essays could generally score at least 1 point higher here. A broad repertoire and knowledge of various literary features and terminology can prove to be of great importance to score higher here

### Criterion G: use of language appropriate to the subject:

The good essays almost always reached level 3 here. However, unfortunately, it is unusual to be able to give the highest mark 4 here.

### Criterion H: conclusion

A good conclusion always refers to the problems highlighted in the introduction and gives a brief and chronological summary of the arguments used to build the final conclusion/answer to the research question. It should however not be a long repetition of examples used earlier in the essay, nor should it be the opportunity to introduce totally new concepts or views. A many-sided conclusion with perhaps a new strong supporting argument for the overall result/interpretation to finally convince the reader could however work well as part of the conclusion. Too many students end their work with only summaries repeating themselves.

### Criterion I: formal presentation

Everything required to score well against this criterion is listed as a formal requirement in the EE guide. There were examples of surprising carelessness which cost candidates marks unnecessarily.

### Criterion J: abstract

Candidates should write the abstract after completion of the essay. Of the three requirements, the scope of the investigation seems to be the most difficult to write about. It is not enough to state that the object of the investigation is the book chosen, and often a presentation of the result is there to represent how the investigation was undertaken.

### Criterion K: holistic judgement

Here an award of 2 marks seems to be the standard, and a 4 is rarely seen. A comprehensive supervisor report can assist examiners in understanding the process that the candidate has been through. A 4 is given when there is an imaginative and original research question, one that has an impressive scope of investigation, including well-chosen secondary sources. There is also often proof of an academic context to the whole EE and alternative conclusions are presented as a result of rich investigations.

It can finally be stated from examiners involved that it has been a pleasure to read the EEs this year.

