

IB Environmental Systems & Societies IA

Topic-Picker & Top-Band Checklist - a free guide for IB students

Most Environmental Systems & Societies IA marks are won or lost in the choice of question. Use this to pick something that can reach the top band, then to pressure-test your draft against the actual criteria.

1 . Choose a question that can score

- * **Make it focused** - not a broad theme. A narrow, specific question beats a survey of a topic.
- * **Make it answerable** - you can answer with evidence, data or close analysis you produce yourself.
- * **Make it doable** - feasible with the time, sources, access or materials you actually have.
- * **Leave room to argue** - if the answer is obvious, there is nothing to analyse or evaluate.

2 . The five habits of every top-band IA

- * **Focus** - a narrow, specific research question or line of inquiry.
- * **Argue** - analysis and evaluation, not description or summary.
- * **Evaluate** - limitations or alternatives weighed by impact, with a forward step.
- * **Structure** - write criterion by criterion against the rubric; cover every strand.
- * **Discipline** - stay within the word/time limit and cite every source.

3 . IB Environmental Systems & Societies IA - the assessment criteria

- ☐ Research design (/6): a focused, measurable environmental gradient; rigorous field sampling (quadrats/transects); a fieldwork risk assessment and environmental ethics.
- ☐ Data analysis (/6): processing with Simpson's diversity index; an appropriate statistical test (e.g. Spearman's rank); a graph with error bars.
- ☐ Conclusion (/6): answer the RQ, linked to the environmental issue and value systems, with secondary data.
- ☐ Evaluation (/6): limitations weighed by impact; improvements + an extension.

4 . Using AI honestly

The IB permits AI tools provided you acknowledge them honestly. Anything an AI produces that you use directly must be cited like any other source; using AI to do the work and passing it off as your own is academic misconduct. The work must be your own.

Write it with a guided, examiner-written frame

IA Studio gives you a section-by-section writing frame with these criteria built in, worked examples, a live top-band readiness check, and 24 topic ideas for this subject.

Free to start: ibdp.ed-planner.com/ess **24 ideas:** [/ess-ia-ideas](https://ibdp.ed-planner.com/ess-ia-ideas)

