Tips for pupils on picking a topic for and writing the Research Study Report

• Pick something you find interesting, that an examiner might also find interesting.
• Pick something manageable and a topic for which information and sources are available.
• You need to pick something that is historically significant (while people may disagree on what is historically significant, remember your choice of topic has to be approved by your history teacher as well as you wanting to do it).
• Don’t make study too broad.
• Don’t make study too narrow.
• Pick books, chapters from books, websites that are manageable. There may be an excellent 1,000 page biography of a personality from history, but this may not be the best place to start your project.
• Be careful using websites in particular as information may not always be reliable.
• Avoid things that are directly covered by the curriculum (the Blackshirts, the 1916 Rising etc...).
• Be careful with topics relating to music or art or literature, your focus must be historical information rather than evaluating the artistic merit or cultural significance of an artist, writer or musician. (So you could write about James Joyce’s life and times but not simply review or evaluate his writings and their influence).
• Avoid serial killers and anything to do with drugs.
• Pack your essay with facts, details and information but also try to make it interesting to the reader.
• The process involves: picking a topic, getting it approved by your teacher, finding sources, writing your Outline Plan, reading sources, taking notes, organising your ideas, deciding on possible paragraph headings, planning structure/paragraphs, writing 1st draft of Extended Essay, writing your Evaluation of Sources, giving these to your teacher for suggestions, rewriting drafts until you and your teacher are happy with it, writing your Review of Process, getting that checked and possibly redrafting it, and finally copying the whole thing into the SEC booklet.
• Do not plagiarise or take chunks directly from sources or just changing it into your own words. Read, take notes, organise your ideas, and write paragraphs using your notes, add to paragraphs with extra information later if necessary.
• Don’t procrastinate and leave it too late.
• Read guidelines from SEC on Choosing a topic for research study.
• Read guidelines on various individual parts of the project.