

Tips for picking an IB History IA title

1. Keep it personal, ensure the topic you are choosing actually interests you. This will help ensure you want to carry out research and write it in the first place.
2. Make it local, try to find a topic that is either local to your current location or somewhere that you have lived or your family is from. This helps prevent it from becoming too 'big' to deal with. It may also have the added advantage of you gathering primary sources yourself and using museums and historical sites within easy reach.
3. Less is more. Keep your question/scope narrow, direct and specific and not too broad, you only have 1300 words to answer it in. Consider just a decade rather than a century, an individual rather than whole population, a city rather than a country.
4. Check your resources. Is there information available – both primary and secondary? Can you make your own interviews of eyewitnesses to create a primary source? Can you visit the site? Try to ensure there is not too much information as this can be overwhelming.
5. Try to be original. Don't cover a question that is textbook material. Really think about a new angle or question that is not likely to have been covered many times before.
6. Keep it simple. Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to create a complicated question to try and impress. Ensure your question is clear and to the point.
7. Get it checked. Ask your History teacher or tutor to check the question is appropriate and manageable before you start writing it up. It can be very disappointing to put all that effort in to find that the question/focus or even topic needs to be altered.

Example IA titles for IB History

Here are some examples of my past students IA questions that achieved a Level 6 or 7. Each question was planned and reviewed before full research and writing up began. Each student discussed the progress and challenges they faced with me on a regular basis to ensure the IA was successful.

To what extent was Friedrich Hennemann to blame for the bankruptcy of the Vulkan Werft situated in Bremen?

Why was this question successful? This student was a family friend of Hennemann and he also lived in Bremen making it a very interesting research question. He was able to draw on local and national newspapers and film and even attempted to interview the man in question. He was driven by his own personal and local interest. Making this one of the most original IAs I have supervised.

To what extent did Sophie Scholl get pressured into resistance work?

Why was this question successful? Rather than looking at the broader category of Youth Resistance groups, this student concentrated on the role of Sophie Scholl during the 1930s and

1940s. She was particularly interested as she was a young female of similar age herself, and why and how Sophie became involved in such an important resistance group. The student was living in Germany at the time too.

Analyse the experience of Native Canadian children in residential school from 1870 – 1990

Why was this question successful? This student had a personal interest in her own Native Canada which drove her to visit Canada to further research and write her IA. The topic is not widely resourced so making it manageable across a century.

To what extent was Palmyra important for the Roman Empire?

Why was this question successful? This student from Syria had a vested interest in this city especially as at the current time it was being destroyed as she wrote. She was able to research sources in both English and Arabic.

To what extent did Israel achieve its aims in the Invasion of Lebanon in 1982?

Why was this question successful? This student from the Lebanon was interested in this topic for personal reasons and kept her question only focused on the aims being achieved not the complete invasion within one year.

How did Ballroom Dance spread and develop between the Americas and Europe by 1968?

Why was this question successful? Although this question covers a wide period of time and across two continents; it is very narrow in focus and of very personal interest to the student writing it. There were not too many resources available making it manageable for an IA.

