Instructions for the research essay:

The **research essay** should be around 20 pages (not including references). It should contain an introductory section about the background and a comprehensive literature review of the chosen topic.

Regarding the style:
Single spacing, 12 pt fontsize with larger headings.
Referencing style: use whatever is the norm in your supervisor's field.

On topic: Generally you are expected to write the literature review on the topic of your project or something closely aligned with it (it is really up to you to decide this with your supervisor). Some people are planning to choose slightly different topics for the literature review and the final project. This is fine as long as your supervisor thinks that the literature review informs your future/broader knowledge in the area of your project. In the end, your supervisor and a second supervisor will mark the project: so please make sure that the supervisor is happy with the topic.

Some general advice below:

Break into chapters (not compulsory, but looks nice).
Aside the introductory chapter, have a good conclusions chapter as well. In the middle have 2-3 chapters on various aspects (again, depends on your essay -- one chapter in the middle may be ok as long as your supervisor judges so). Either in the introductory chapter or separately it is important to have a description of what motivates your topic. Similarly in the conclusions chapter or earlier, it is good to display a critical understanding of the subject: this means identifying some of the open problems in the field of the essay and a discussion of how one might approach them. However, you are not expected to add any of your own research to this even if you have conducted some already. You can, of course, add the direction of the research as a part of your insights in the future as a "Future Scope" chapter/section or in the conclusions section itself.

On plagiarism: Submission will be through "Turnitin". So plagiarism from various sources will be automatically checked. However, supervisors will mark -- they know when something is not really a plagiarism -- there might be whole phrases which are scientifically the right ones to use. So it is not that you have to not have "any" overlap of phrases with previous literature. That is quite impossible to have in science simply because of scientific terminology. However, copying several entire sentences (unless a particular sentence is the only or the best way to accurately convey something scientific) or entire paragraphs will be considered a plagiarism. In the end, a robot will not mark it, but a supervisor informed in the field -- so they will make the judgement whether something seems like plagiarized (the turnitin is solely to aid them access sources, but do not determine the marks). For figures and tables you should cite sources unless it is your own. In many cases -- say for certain conclusions -- you can quote results of previous work once you appropriately cite them. You do not need to be afraid of "self-plagiarism" between the essay and the final project as the introductory and/or background chapter/s of the project would naturally be expected to have a very high overlap; perhaps some parts of the future scope as well. So, again, the supervisors understand this, and will not be penalizing you for self plagiarism.