

# HOW TO BEGIN RESEARCH: Choosing a Topic

The following tips will assist you in choosing a good topic to suit your assignment requirements as well as how to create a research question that reflects your chosen topic.



## Read your assignment carefully

- Read assignment more than once
- Highlight the required length, citation style, and the types of permitted sources



## Analyze the assignment and the instructions

- Highlight the expectations
- Highlight any limitations
- Identify the focus of the assignment - what is the topic/key theme



## Identify potential ideas that match the assignment or research requirements

- Focus on your chosen/assigned topic
- Browse a few resources for thesis ideas
- Identify different components of the topic



## Customize your topic

- Consider how different disciplines approach the same topic in different ways
- Create an angle to help focus the topic
- Ask who, what where, why, and how to focus the topic



## Identify keywords from the question

- Take your topic (in the form of a question or statement) and identify the main terms - these are the key concepts or keywords
- Ignore prepositions, articles, adjectives, etc.



## Identify synonyms of the keywords

- Identify similar terms for the keywords in your topic
- Synonyms help broaden a search for sources with subjects/terms relating to the same concept as your topic



## Browse through general sources that match your topic

- Locate background information by searching in popular sources (websites, encyclopedias, magazines, etc.)
- Learn general information for an overview of your topic



## Consider your sources

- The sources you select will determine what you find
- Identify the type of source
- Evaluate each source to determine if it suits your need



## Obtain more details on a topic

- Locate more detailed related to your topic in books, news sources, trade journals, etc.
- Reliable and specific sources can be found in scholarly journals, statistical reports, government publications, etc.



## Familiarize yourself with your topic

- Begin by reviewing general sources
- Once a general understanding of your topic is obtained, build up to more specified and detailed sources that are peer-reviewed that can be referenced in your assignment

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