

## Choosing a Research Topic/ Developing a Proposal

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### Overview



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### Selecting research topics



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- brainstorm for ideas
- choose a topic that will enable you to read and understand the literature
- ensure that the topic is manageable and that material is available
- make a list of key words
- be flexible
- define your topic as a focused research question
- research and read more about your topic
- formulate a thesis statement
- <https://www.umflint.edu/library/how-select-research-topic>

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## Brainstorm for ideas



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- Choose a topic that interests you. Use the following questions to help generate topic ideas.
  - Do you have a strong opinion on a current controversy
  - Did you read or see anything recently that has piqued your interest or made you angry or anxious?
  - Do you have a personal issue, problem or interest that you would like to know more about?
  - Do you have a research paper due for a class this semester?
- Write down any key words or concepts that may be of interest to you.
- Be aware of overused ideas when deciding a topic.
- <https://www.umflint.edu/library/how-select-research-topic>

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## Read general background information



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- Read a general encyclopedia article on the top two or three topics you are considering.
- Reading a broad summary enables you to get an overview of the topic and see how your idea relates to broader, narrower, and related issues. It also provides a great source for finding words commonly used to describe the topic.
- Use periodical indexes to scan current magazine, journal or newspaper articles on your topic. Ask a librarian if they can help you to browse articles on your topics of interest.
- Use Web search engines. [Google](#) and [Bing](#) are currently considered to be two of the best search engines to find web sites on the topic.
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## Focus on your topic



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- Keep your topic manageable (it should not be too big or small)
- A research topic is too difficult for us to research because it is
  - Too locally defined
  - Too recent
  - Too broadly inter-disciplinary
  - Too popular

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## Making a list of useful words



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- Keep track of the words that are used to describe your topic.
- Look for words that best describe your topic
- Look for them in when reading encyclopedia articles and background and general information
- Find broader and narrower terms, synonyms, key concepts for key words to widen your search capabilities
- Make note of these words and use them later when searching databases and catalogs
- <https://www.umflint.edu/library/how-select-research-topic>

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## Be flexible



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- It is common to modify your topic during the research process.
- Always prepare for submitting the study to different journals
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## Define your topic as a focused research question



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- You will often begin with a word, develop a more focused interest in an aspect of something relating to that word, then begin to have questions about the topic.

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