

How to Build a Research Question



THE FIRST YEAR RESEARCH EXPERIENCE GUIDE

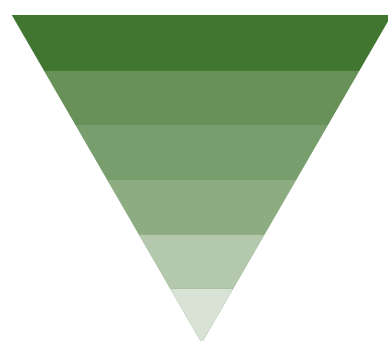
PICK YOUR TOPIC AND BRAINSTORM



Do preliminary research (Online, library)
 How does this topic connect with other topics?
 How does this topic connect to your FYRE class?
 What part of the topic draws your highest interest?

NARROW YOUR TOPIC DOWN

Ask: Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?
 What do you know? What do you want to know?
 So what? What's interesting about this aspect of this topic, and why does it matter?



REFORMAT TO A QUESTION



Evaluation: What is X doing about Y and is it Z?
 Hypothetical/Exploratory: How might X affect Y?
 Factual/Explanatory: What is X and how is it related to Y?
 Empirical/Descriptive/Causal: Why or how is X affecting Y?
 Comparative: How is X similar to and different from Y?

IDENTIFY SOURCES AND DATA

Are there sources/data to help you investigate your research question? Do you have access to them? -- If not, rephrase your question.

Is the research question manageable and answerable in your time frame? -- If not, rephrase your question.



CHECK YOUR QUESTION



Is is too general? -- make it more specific (choose place, time period, particular group)
 Is it a yes/no answer or a statement? -- rephrase it to investigate and add complexity
 Is the answer easy to find? -- rephrase it to require research and analysis

*Congratulations!
 You Developed a Research Question!*

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