

Narrowing the Topic

Have you ever picked a topic, did some research and realized...

- The information you found was too vague or had a general quality to it
- That you became overwhelmed by the amount of information you found
- Or that you began to get frustrated- you didn't know which direction to go

...well, it might have been, because your topic was TOO BROAD.

Consider the following questions that may help narrow your topic and guide your research.

For an example, these are some ways in which to narrow the broad topic of EDUCATION:

WHO are the people or groups that you want to focus on?

For example: college Students, minorities, Kindergarten – 12th grade, teachers...

WHAT aspect of the topic interests you?

For example: study habits, bullying, education reform, desegregation...

WHICH point of view or approach will you take?

For example: legal, ethical, psychological, scientific, historical, political...

WHEN did important events occur, if any?

For example: today, 1950's, within the next ten years, during President Reagan's years...

WHERE do you want to focus, geographically?

For example: Alabama, New York, Europe, China...

At times, it is possible to create several distinct research tracks from a singular broad topic.

Take a look at these:

Track #1- college students > study habits > psychological > today > China

Track #2- K-12 > education reform > historical > President Reagan's years > New York

Track #3- minorities > desegregation > legal > 1950's > Alabama

Narrow Your Topic Worksheet

WHO are the people or groups that you want to focus on?

WHAT aspect of the topic interests you the most?

WHICH point of view or approach will you take?

WHEN did important events occur, if any, for your topic?

WHERE do you want to focus on, geographically?
