

What is My Research Topic Going to Be?

Success in AP Research starts with your research question. **The research question is crucial because a poorly developed question leads to poor research, which leads to a poorly written academic paper – the final product of all of your hard work.** Creating an effective research question isn't easy, but you'll spend the first quarter next year working on ways to create and refine an effective research question. What you'll need to do between now and the first day of school (August 10), is to start thinking about topics you'd like to explore. You should have at least one idea of a topic you can live with and research for the entire school year. You can definitely expand any of the topics you worked on in AP Seminar.

There are four major concepts to a research question – focus, scope, value and feasibility. Answer the reflection questions below the table, which are the same as the ones listed in the table. After answering the reflection questions in the chart below, try to write a research question (or two). Go ahead and create a folder in Google docs labeled "PREP." Your answers will be due on **Thursday, August 17, and will count as your first grade.** You'll learn more about submitting that document into Canvas in our first class.

Responses to each reflection question should be at least 3-5 sentences. The more time you take thinking through your answers, the better prepared you'll be for next year. I would also begin looking for articles that might provide evidence that supports the viability of your question. Keep track of those articles in your Google Drive – you'll need them for an annotated bibliography/literature review we'll be working on for the first half of the school year. You'll have a very large Annotated Bibliography assignment during Quarter 1 that is a significant grade. The suggested Additional Work can be used for that assignment. Remember to proofread your answers for spelling and grammatical errors. You should type your responses in Times New Roman, 12-point font, single- or double-spaced (your choice).

Helpful links :

- [Questions Development: Criteria for a Successful Research Question](#)
- [Tips for selecting a Research Topic](#)
- [Topics that should be avoided when writing a research paper](#)- For example personal information and personal stories, topics with a lack of approachable and/or accessible information, too narrow topics, too broad topics and controversial/political topics (abortion, conversion therapy, etc.)
- [Developing Your Research Question](#)
- [Digital Commons Network](#) - The Digital Commons Network brings together free, full-text scholarly articles from hundreds of universities and colleges worldwide. Use this to explore potential topics and find scholarly articles to support your research
- [Narrowing a Topic and Developing a Research Question](#)
- [How to Write a Research Question: Types, Steps, and Examples](#)
- [AP Research Glossary of Terms](#)

Sample AP Research Academic Papers

- [Exploring the Properties of Nonstandard Origami Tessellations as Folded Cores in Sandwich Structures](#)
- [Using Sentiment Analysis to Predict Google Stock Prices](#)
- [Mediterranean Diet and Alzheimer's Disease](#)
- [Formula of KPop](#)
- [How can gut microbiota composition within SwHi and SwLo rats support or negate the Porsolt Swim Test?](#)

Concept	Description	Reflection Questions to Answer (required)	Additional Work (Suggested)
<p>Focus: Narrowing (or sometimes broadening) a topic so that you can demonstrate a good understanding of it.</p> <p>Research Discipline and Topic</p>	<p>This is the #1 biggest pitfall in the research process. If you pick a topic that is too big, you will not only have trouble selecting what to include from a huge selection of material available, you will probably leave out some critical information that will make it apparent (especially to your teacher) that you don't really know what you are talking about.</p> <p>If, on the other hand, you pick a topic that is too narrow, you won't find enough to write about.</p> <p>The process of focusing on a topic takes practice, so be patient with yourself. It is challenging when you don't know too much about a topic. It will get easier as your knowledge base increases. Remember that the research process is a recursive one which means that you may need to revisit your topic choice more than once if you find it doesn't work out.</p> <p><u>Discipline</u>: lens or section of focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Art ▪ History (Chicago) ▪ Humanities ▪ Hard Sciences ▪ Social Sciences (APA, MLA) ▪ Mathematics <p><u>Topic</u>: specific interest within a discipline that creates the basics of your research question (Research Topic vs. Research Questions)</p>	<p>1. What discipline do you feel you are the most successful at in school?</p> <p>2. What discipline would you enjoy working in during your research?</p>	<p>Gather 3-5 research articles in the discipline of your interest.</p> <p>You still have access to FL-PASS until September. Use the blue "Access" button, then sign in with the email you put on the form at the start of last year. Once in, the second entry is Gale database and the 3rd entry ("Academic Search Complete") is the EBSCO database. You can use other databases like Google Scholar as well (but may hit a paywall on some entries)</p> <p>You can use these articles to help inform the structure and style of your academic paper and as part of your literature review.</p>
<p>Scope: the limits of your research study.</p> <p>Depth and Size of Your Research Project</p>	<p>Simply put, the scope helps you make your research question focused and realistic.</p> <p>It also helps decide what data you need to collect (and, therefore, what data collection tools you need to design).</p> <p><u>Context</u>: The specific setting of your research</p> <p><u>Variables</u>: The items/people/situations/concepts being studied and/or manipulated</p>	<p>3. What specific things will you study? People? Animals? Things? Concepts? Theories?</p> <p>4. How will you work with the people, animals, things, concepts, theories, etc. that you will research?</p>	<p>Find 3-5 research articles that work with similar variables to your research interest.</p> <p>You can use these articles to help inform your research and as part of your literature review.</p>

<p>Value: the usefulness or significance of your research to your research field</p> <p>Contribution to the Existing Body of Knowledge</p>	<p>The value of your research is determined by how your contribution enhances what is already known about the topic. You are expected to either add to the current conversation of a discipline or use multiple discipline conversations to create new knowledge.</p> <p>Think of this as the “so what?” test in your research. Ask yourself, is this research actually valuable? Who would benefit from the new knowledge or information?</p>	<p>5. How will your research change the way we currently see the topic?</p> <p>6. How will your research benefit society or your discipline of study?</p>	<p>Find 3-5 current discussions about your topic.</p> <p>Look for contrasting views about the topic.</p> <p>You will be able to use this content for your literature review or the discussion portion of your academic paper. This will help you figure out the need for your project.</p>
<p>Feasibility: Ability to be accomplished within the time, resources, and processes available</p> <p>Possibility of actually accomplishing the research</p>	<p>Note: You have to be very realistic about what you can actually research as a high school student. Time, money and resources can play a major part in determining the ability to complete your research.</p> <p>You will have around 2-3 months in the late fall and early winter to complete your actual research project. If weather/seasonal activity is a factor for your research interest, keep this in mind for feasibility.</p> <p>Also, there are a variety of ways to collect data for your research. You do NOT need to do an experiment. For example, you can conduct surveys, do a trend analysis, correlational studies, meta-analysis, etc.</p>	<p>7. What will you physically and/or monetarily* need to complete your research?</p> <p>8. How long will your research take?</p> <p>9. Do you have access to the things you need for your research, for example access to a science lab, software for data processing, etc.</p> <p>10. What adults from the professional world can help with your research?</p> <p><i>*Monetary needs doesn't mean that you will need to spend your own money on your project. This will be discussed more in class.</i></p>	<p>Make contact with an adult who is skilled in your topic. This is known as an expert advisor. Talk with them and ask if they would be interested in supporting you during your research process.</p> <p>Although not required, the College Board strongly encourages having an Expert Adviser. They will <u>not</u> be able to write or edit your paper, but building a professional relationship with someone invested in your discipline will strengthen your academic paper.</p>

Possible Research Questions (RQ): Write out two possible research questions. They don't need to be perfect yet.

RQ #1-

RQ #2-

Reflection Questions: Responses to each reflection question should be at least 3-5 sentences.

(Questions 1 & 2 only need to answered once)

Focus

1. What discipline do you feel you are the most successful in at school?
2. What discipline would you enjoy working in during your research?

Research Question 1

Restate RQ 1:

Scope

3. What specific things will you study? People? Animals? Events? Concepts? Theories?
4. How will you work with the people/animals/things/ concepts/theories that you will research?

Value

5. How will your research change the way we currently see the topic?
6. How will your research benefit society or your discipline of study?

Feasibility

7. What will you physically and/or monetarily* need to complete your research?
8. How long will your research take?
9. Do you have access to the things you need for your research?
10. What adults from the professional world can help with your research?

Research Question 2

Restate RQ 2:

Scope

3. What specific things will you study? People? Animals? Events? Concepts? Theories?
4. How will you work with the people/animals/things/ concepts/theories that you will research?

Value

5. How will your research change the way we currently see the topic?
6. How will your research benefit society or your discipline of study?

Feasibility

7. What will you physically and/or monetarily* need to complete your research?
8. How long will your research take?
9. Do you have access to the things you need for your research?
10. What adults from the professional world can help with your research?