

Developing a Research Question

The first step in any research process is developing a research question that you can feasibly research in the time and space allotted for your research project. Use the questions below to formulate a strong Research Question.

Part I: What Should I Research?

- A. Possible Research Question:
- B. Why I am interested in this Research Question?
- C. Why this question is worth researching?
- D. Three questions that I have about my Research Question:

Part II: Is This Something I Am Able To Research?

Ask the following questions to evaluate the feasibility of your research question.

- A. Does the question deal with a topic or issue that interests me enough to spark my own thoughts and opinions?
- B. Is the question easily and fully researchable?
- C. What type of information do I need to answer the research question?
E.g., The research question, "What impact has deregulation had on commercial airline safety?" will obviously require certain types of information:
 - statistics on airline crashes before and after
 - statistics on other safety problems before and after
 - information about maintenance practices before and after
 - information about government safety requirements before and after
- D. Is the scope of this information reasonable?
- E. Given the type and scope of the information that I need, is my question too broad, too narrow, or okay?
- F. What sources will have the type of information that I need to answer the research question (journals, books, Internet resources, government documents, people)?
- G. Can I access these sources?
- H. Given my answers to the above questions, do I have a good quality research question that I actually will be able to answer by doing research?

Adapted from *What Is Writing?: An Introduction to Writing as an Act and Medium of Communication* (2015).



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