

# The Research Process

At the college level, a research paper is not an encyclopedia entry that merely reports facts about a topic. Rather, college-level research projects pose a problem, question, or issue to be investigated, and the research paper presents findings in a way that supports your claim. You need to do more than describe the topic—you need to analyze the material you have collected and figure out what it means. In this essay, you bring your own researched insight to a problem or question you have formulated. You need to demonstrate not only what you know about the topic, but that you have thought critically about some specific aspect of it.

With the topic of the **Gentrification in New York City**, the temptation might be to write a paper that simply reports statistics or gives examples of the problem in New York City. However, a college research paper will say something about these statistics and analyze the problem or present possible alternative solutions for the problem. The research question often asks if there is a cause/effect relationship, what impacts what, or if there is a relationship (when two or more things are influencing each other).

Here are some possible research questions narrowed to specific aspects of the topic:

- *What/Which:* What are the factors that contribute to Gentrification in New York City? Which appears to be the most important? What does Gentrification do to NYC neighborhoods?
- *Why:* Given the numerous attempts at addressing Gentrification, why does it persist? Why does it only impact particular neighborhoods and populations? Why are some people in favor of it, while others are against it?
- *So what:* Why should we be concerned about Gentrification in NYC? How is it impacting the city?

Notice that these questions require a commitment on your part not only to show that you have researched the material but that you have thought about its significance as well. In other words, you will have to provide information (data, statistics, textual evidence, other findings) and establish the significance of it in relation to the issue you are researching.