

Assignment 2: Narrowing and Defining Your Research Topic

Please list the names of all group members here:

Purpose of this assignment: This assignment will assist you in developing and refining a research topic, which is a key part of the research process. Your research is only as good as your ability to clearly focus your topic. I will be looking to see that you can:

- choose a broad and undefined topic and narrow it into a more precise and focused research topic
- situate your research topic in relationship to broader, narrower, and related areas of knowledge
- focus on a specific aspect, or aspects, of your topic
- develop research questions that help you focus on the main questions you wish to investigate related to your topic
- develop an argument that advocates a position or solution to your topic
- develop a working thesis statement that succinctly summarizes the main ideas and issues related to your specific research focus

Introduction: To complete this assignment, you will be working with your assigned group. Now that you have located two articles providing you with background information on your topic it is time to narrow the focus of your topic and then write a preliminary argumentative thesis statement.

Before narrowing the focus, it is useful to brainstorm various points of view on the topic as well as broader and related issues. You can do this a variety of ways, but one recommended approach is to use a [Concept Map](#). After you begin to narrow the focus, it is helpful to write a set of research questions you would like to answer during the research process. Research questions are not the same as fact-finding questions, but rather are complex questions that, when answered, help strengthen the position you take on your topic and the argument you make in your argumentative thesis statement. Review the Badke text Chapter Two and Appendix One for further clarification on Research Questions. After you have adequately reviewed your two reference resources, you are ready to proceed with the instructions below.

Complete the following instructions:

1. Using the reference resources you located in the first homework assignment, locate and list here the main issues (or main points of view) and possible arguments related to the topic.
2. Keeping in mind the original broad topic, brainstorm broader, narrower, and related ideas to that topic and list them here. Although you may list your ideas as short phrases or bullet points, this would also be an appropriate time to utilize the concept map handout or another tool that helps you map, graph or chart your ideas.
3. Consider a more **focused** aspect of the topic you wish to explore and write it down here.

4. Identify the main perspective or academic discipline you are using to approach the topic. Some possibilities include psychological, ethical, political, economic, or scientific, but these are just examples. You might think of others. If more than one of these applies, be sure to identify the **single main perspective** you plan to use.

5.

Research Questions	Argumentative Thesis Statement
<p>Create three to four research questions that you would like answered about your topic and write them here. Keep in mind your questions and thesis should work together to develop your focused topic.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p>	<p>Your first sentence should briefly describe the main issues that you wish to focus on related to your topic. Your second sentence should make a statement, claim or argument—take a position on your topic. Your third sentence should propose a solution or a call to action.</p>

Assess your group work as a whole using the rubric on the next page. Mark the level in each assessment category that you think describes your group's work. I will mark where I think your work falls and you can compare the results.

Narrowing and Defining Your Research Topic Rubric

Requirement	Insufficient (D or F level)	Basic (C level)	Proficient (B level)	Advanced (A level)
	0 1 2 3 4 5 6	7 7.5	8 8.5	9 9.5 10
<p><i>Student has:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Used background information to brainstorm broader, narrower, and related ideas.</i> <i>Specified the dimensions of the topic appropriately.</i> <i>Developed a suitable working thesis.</i> <i>Has a clear argument and proposed solution</i> <i>Has clear, focused and complementary research questions</i> 	<p>Did not brainstorm main points of view</p> <p>Topic has an imprecise or unclear focus or focus needs to be narrowed or clarified.</p> <p>Thesis statement does not clearly state a focused topic, lacks precision and does not clearly lay out the main ideas and issues.</p> <p>There is no argument.</p> <p>Research questions are too broad or vague and do not adequately focus the topic. The research questions do not complement each other and do not work together to focus the topic.</p> <p>Did not follow directions</p> <p>Did not complete assignment</p>	<p>Brainstormed only a few main points of view</p> <p>Topic has a discernable focus but lacks precision.</p> <p>Thesis statement addresses the topic but needs a clearer focus and more precision.</p> <p>There is an argument but it needs to be more clearly stated.</p> <p>Research questions address the topic but need more focus and precision.</p>	<p>Brainstormed several points of view</p> <p>Clear focus on the topic that is adequately precise.</p> <p>Thesis statement is clear and focused and adequately precise.</p> <p>The argument is adequately stated and precise.</p> <p>Clear, focused and adequately precise research questions.</p>	<p>Brainstormed multiple points of view, demonstrating a good understanding of the broad topic gleaned from the reference sources</p> <p>Very clear focus on the topic that is precise, appropriately narrow, and well articulated.</p> <p>Thesis statement is very clear, well focused and concise.</p> <p>The argument is clear, focused and well stated.</p> <p>Very clear, concise and well focused research questions.</p>