

Creating a Research Question

The table below illustrates how a research question develops from a broad topic to a focused question. Follow the four examples down the columns to see how the questions develop. Then use the blank form to develop your own research question.

Topic	Subtopic	Issue or Problem	Research Question
Environment	Global warming	Global warming in the United States	What can the United States do to identify and prevent global warming?
William Shakespeare	King Lear	King Lear and the theme of betrayal	How could the character of King Lear change the outcome of betrayal in the play?
Censorship	Internet	Internet and China	How will China's effort to censor the Internet affect its citizens?
Whales	Minke whales	Minke whales and extinction	What factors have contributed to the Minke whale depopulation?

Now try out your topic below. It is useful to work out several variations of the topic idea to see how it could change slightly and be improved or amended. These variations will come in handy when you search for background information before committing to a topic, as you will need to make sure there is enough information available to write a good paper.

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