

## Choosing Research Paper Topics-Part 1

Below are some suggestions for choosing research paper topics.

1. Pick a topic that you find interesting and will still be interesting during the research.
2. Don't use highly controversial topics. If you decide to use them, be sure to have your instructor's approval.
3. Do not use popular topics because your instructor will be sick of reading papers on them. If you're not sure, ask your professor.
4. Do not use topics that doesn't "go anywhere," are hard to narrow down, or that you can't find material for.

### Making a Topic Work for You

1. Brainstorm and browse through the library to narrow your topic and get ideas on a particular area that you can write about.
2. Use sources such as encyclopedias, atlases, biographies, dictionaries, etc. to obtain general information and see what direction you want to head in.
3. Narrow topic down by limiting the question your paper will address to one that can be handled in the assigned length.
4. Compile a preliminary bibliography listing enough sources to research on this narrowed topic.
5. You can repeat steps 3 and 4 until you have an adequate preliminary bibliography on the topic you are interested in.

### Narrowing the Topic

There are several ways to go about this. The following are suggestions:

1. List the general topic at the top of the sheet of paper. Underneath, write down your own all the various aspects you have knowledge of from past experience or preliminary reading.
2. The 5 W's. Divide the listing of subtopics into columns for Who, What, Where, When, and Why. Then follow the same procedure listed for number 1. This will help you sort out people, developments, time periods, important places, and reasons for developments concerning your topic.