

### Narrowing Research Paper Topics

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1. What is your current research topic? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Brainstorm *KEYTERMS* and *KEY PHRASES* that are synonyms for your topic, related words that can generate a subtopic or be used to narrow/particularize a search for reliable sources:

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3. What disciplines or fields relate to the topic (History, Sociology, Gender Studies, Critical Race Theory, Health, Advertising, Age, Social Class, Aesthetics, African-American Studies, Disability Studies, or Politics/Political Science, etc.)? This information can help to identify specific subject databases and popular or academic journals:

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4. If you are finding too many sources, the topic might be too broad or have too many variables. In addition to brainstorming Keyterms in Question #2, think about where your viewpoint either matches or differs from other viewpoints (i.e. to help develop a Stance Position):

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5. Try narrowing the focus or parameters by writing specifically worded Research Questions about the topic to help narrow or particularize your focus, Motive, or Stance. For example, if your topic is alcoholics/alcoholism, think which gender, class, age, or ethnic groups you could discuss: i.e. women, teens, Native Americans, working class poor to focus on: "How do we see alcoholics form a particular group as "other.""

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