

# All About Topics!

## Picking Your Topic

- Picking a topic is one of the hardest parts about doing a paper! Here are a few tips to help get you started and inspired to do your research.
- First, read your assignment carefully.
  - Does your professor provide a list of topics you should pick between?
    - You can usually get alternative topics approved, but if you're going to improvise you should talk to your professor first.
  - Does your professor provide any other sort of guidance?
    - For example, do you need to pick a company? Or a current issue facing nurses?
  - What are you interested in?
    - Is there anything you've learned about in class or heard on the news that sparked your interest?
- It's okay to start broad.
  - If you've only got the very beginning of an idea, go with that!
- It's okay to start specific, too!
  - If you have a really clear idea, go with that!
- You're not stuck with this topic forever.
  - The **research process** is a **process**. It's okay to change your mind after reading about your first topic, and it's okay not to change your mind. Going back and forth is a part of this process.

## Forming a Research Question

- Once you've chosen a topic, it's time to move on to forming a research question. What's the difference? Here's the distinction between the two:
  - **Topics** can be really broad, like *business management*. This is too broad to write a paper on, but is a great first step in the right direction.
  - **Research questions** are more specific, and usually focus on the relationship between two things. For example: *What impact has social media had on business management styles?*
    - In this example, you're researching the relationship between two ideas: social media and management. You can write a paper on this relationship.
- Background reading is a great way to help you gain more information on your topic and start the process of narrowing it into a research question.
  - Why not try Wikipedia first? You can't cite it, but it's got a lot of great background information in there.
  - You can also try the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which is available using the following steps:
    - Log into your Moodle.
    - Hover over *Library Online*
    - Click *How to Access the Research Databases*.
    - From here, you can click on the Encyclopaedia and get access using the username and password provided.

Contact your Campus Library if you'd like a more in-depth tutorial on this topic!

- Background reading helps you narrow your topic by giving you the basics about a topic. If something comes up in your background reading that you are really interested in, go with that as a way to narrow your topic!
  - Research has better results and is more fun to do if you're interested in the topic!

## Turning a Question into Keywords

- To search in scholarly databases, like ProQuest or EBSCOHost, you need keywords.
  - Unlike Google or other common databases, our library databases have a hard time understanding full questions. By giving them keywords, you make it easier for the database to understand you.
- When you come up with keywords, you're bringing out the main ideas of your topic.
  - For example:
    - My research question is *What are the benefits for a business of maintaining an active Twitter presence?*
    - Keywords:
      - Business
      - Twitter
- What are the two things you think interact with each other? If you had to boil down your research question to the relationship between two ideas, which two ideas would they be?
  - Those ideas are your keywords.