Narrow Your Topic

Have you ever picked a topic, did some research, and realized ...

☐ The information you find has a vague, general quality
☐ You are overwhelmed by the amount of information you find
☐ You get frustrated and annoyed – you don’t know which direction to go!

... It was probably because the topic was TOO BROAD.

Use the following questions to narrow your topic and guide your research. For example, here are some ways you could narrow the broad topic EDUCATION:

**WHO** are the people/groups you want to focus on?

> college students, minorities, K-12, teachers...

**WHAT** aspect of the topic interests you?

> study habits, bullying, education reform, desegregation...

**WHICH** point-of-view/approach will you take?

> legal, ethical, psychological, scientific, historical, political...

**WHEN** did important events occur?

> today, 1950’s, next ten years, Reagan years...

**WHERE** do you want to focus, geographically?

> Alabama, New York, China, prison population....

It is possible to create several distinct research tracks from a single topic:

**Track #1:** college-students ➔ study habits ➔ psychological ➔ today ➔ China

**Track #2:** K-12 ➔ education reform ➔ historical ➔ Reagan years ➔ New York

**Track #3:** minorities ➔ desegregation ➔ legal ➔ 1950’s ➔ Alabama

Neera Mohess
Suzy Sciammarella
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*Time to Practice!*

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