

Supporting Students with Topic Selection

Students often struggle with narrowing their research topic to a clear, focused, and theme connected research question. Most often, this is due to a giant leap from a topic idea straight into research. Before your students start on secondary and primary research, guide them in narrowing their topic and writing a clear research question.

Having students work through a narrowing process will help them with the following:

- Determine if the topic is interesting to them
- Determine if the topic is historically significant
- Begin their research with a verified source like a reference article
- Identify the elements they will need to write a research question

NARROWING YOUR TOPIC

STEPS FOR SUCCESS

1 Is your topic more than 20 years old?

2 Identify a Time Span
Choose a specific time period. For example: WWII, Colonization, Cold War

3 Identify Your Interest
Are you interested in technology, strategy, medicine, innovation, environment?

4 Identify a Location
Focus on one geographic area.

5 How are People Affected?
Legal, political, economic, cultural, social aspects of your topic.

6 Identify an Event, Action, or Choice
For example, a battle, march, speech, law, strike, or natural disaster.

7 What is the cause and effect of your topic?
What was the impact of your topic?

8 Focused Research Question
Start your question with "how" and be sure to use the theme words.

A reference article will help your students with steps 1 - 7.

Check out the NHD-CA Toolkit and Make It! Webinar series for more resources on research questions.

Your Narrowed Topic:

Your Research Question: