



Writing Centre

How to Narrow Your Research Topic

A challenge in writing a research paper is narrowing down your topic. If your topic is too broad, you may encounter two major problems.

1. Too much information to manage
2. Inability to state an effective thesis

You can avoid these problems by applying the following limitations to your topic.

- 1. Time** **2. Location** **3. People/Person** **4.Events/Objects**

Example Topics:

French Literature → **Time:** 18th Century French Literature

Place: 18th Century Literature in Southern France

People: Women's Literature in 18th Century France

Events: Illuminated Manuscripts in 18th Century French Literature

Pollution → **Location:** Pollution in the Fraser River

Time: Pollution in the Fraser River, 1960-1986

Events: The Salmon Fishing Industry and Pollution

Person & Events: David Suzuki and Pollution Activism

*Remember: These are only *TOPICS*. Your thesis statement must *make a point* about your topic.

Ex: *Excessive pollution in the Fraser River from 1960 to 1986 is largely attributed to the salmon fishing industry.*