

Developing Your Research Question

AP Seminar

Good research questions:

- Require a judgment or evaluation to be made (not just description)
- Are researchable (it is possible to find relevant and credible sources)
- Involve genuine points of ongoing debate
- Invite engagement with alternative perspectives; and
- Are simple and do not contain multiple, nested questions

Before you begin developing your own research question, evaluate the follow sample questions against the criteria for a good research question listed above. Evaluate the question, and rewrite it if necessary so that it is a good research question.

Q1. What different attitudes do people around the world have to the relationship between parent and child?

Q2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of nuclear power stations?

Q3. Is cryogenics only an option for the rich as well as an immoral use of resources?

Steps for developing a research question:

1. Choose your topic of interest. This topic should have a clear focus that will guide your research.
2. Start developing a list of questions about the topic you have decided to research. When developing your list, think about what you want to accomplish with your research. Your research questions should begin with words such as *what, why, when, where, who, how, would, could, and should*.
3. Once you have a list of research questions, it is time to select which one will be the focus of your research. Choose a question that best meets your interest and purpose.
4. Finally, you will need to refine your research question. When writing research questions, revision is inevitable. You want to make sure your question is not too vague or too broad. One good way to do this is to do a preliminary search for resources. (If your preliminary search yields too many results, you should probably limit the scope of your study. However, if you receive too few results, you should broaden the scope of your question.)

Fill in the following after you have generated a list of research questions:

Our team's topic is

My specific research question is

It is a good research question because

***** DON'T FORGET THAT EACH TEAM MEMBER MUST EXAMINE THE QUESTION FROM THEIR OWN LENS/PERSPECTIVE! *****