

How to write a good research paper



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(it is not just a summary of articles on the topic)

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What is a thesis?

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What is a thesis? (an argument, or position)

Your thesis must be supported by evidence

The thesis answers a question

Begin by asking a **question**

The answer to your question becomes the thesis of your paper

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topic: beavers

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research question?

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- ▶ is something about which evidence exists
- ▶ usually involves judgment (not a fact about a place or event)
- ▶ usually has broad implications
- ▶ is something you are curious about

From research topic to research question

A research question is more than a topic:

Topic	Research Question
World War II	What were the causes of World War II?
World War II	Did bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki shorten the war?
Witchcraft	Which types of societies practice witchcraft?
Social media	Does teen use of social media help or hurt literacy?
Sex education	Do abstinence-only programs work?
Homicide	Does homicide have evolutionary roots?
Homicide	Does income inequality increase homicide rates?
Religion:	What is the function of religion in society?

Which of these research questions are too broad?

How might you narrow it down?

Now you do it

Pulling it together

You find that the evidence:

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Now what?

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- ▶ can different answers be linked? (show how)
- ▶ is evidence missing? (explain what evidence would be needed)

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Consider using the writing center in Marriott Library