



## Developing a Topic – English Transcript

It's time to write a paper. But what are you going to write about? Sometimes your topic is assigned. But other times, you get to choose the topic or the area to focus on. So where do you begin?

This tutorial will help you develop a topic for a research paper. We'll talk about a few basics to keep in mind when you're developing your topic, possible approaches to take, and how to broaden and narrow your topic. Let's talk about some basics to keep in mind when you're coming up with a topic to write about.

First, make sure that the paper that you write meets all of your assignment requirements. Read your assignment carefully.

Next, choose a topic that's interesting to you and would be interesting to others reading your paper. When you choose a topic that you're interested in, you do better research.

Finally, choose a topic that other people have written about. Can you find information on the topic that interests you? If not, you might consider another topic.

When you're coming up with your topic, try to think of a few broad areas that you'd be interested in studying. Has anything in the news caught your attention? What about something you discussed in class? Is there something you've always been curious about?

When you have a broad area or two in mind, brainstorm all of the possible associations that pop into your head related to those ideas. It might help to write down these ideas. For example, a broad topic of polar bears could have associations such as ice, pollution, cubs, hunting, diet, environmental icon, population, or melting. A broad topic of Afghanistan could have associations such as history, war, Taliban, Soviets, economy, geography, class, or women.

After you've brainstormed some ideas and associations, think about approaches that might help you further develop your topic. For example, a historic approach-- consider a time period. How have gender roles changed since World War II? The geographical approach-- consider a geographical area. How are gender roles expressed in Afghanistan? The sociological approach-- consider a group of people. How do gender roles in Afghanistan impact the daily lives of women?

It's also important to consider the scope of your topic. If it's too broad, there might be so much information to sift through that it could be difficult to find exactly what you need. If your topic is too narrow, it might be tough to find any information at all.



Generally, it's good to start with a slightly broad topic that you can further develop and narrow as you find information. For example, too broad of a topic could be history of women. A better option would be history of female gender roles in Afghanistan during the 20th century. Too narrow of a topic could be current child-rearing practices of women in Kabul, Afghanistan. A better option would be how gender roles in Afghanistan impact the lives of women.

While you're researching, keep in mind that you can always go back and change or further develop your topic as you discover sources. Research is a dynamic or evolving process, so be open to discoveries and changes along the way.

For specific examples and for more information about this topic and the entire research process, explore OSLIS. Thank you to the Oregon CLIP project for allowing the OSLIS committee to adapt their tutorials. OSLIS, Learn to Research. Research to Learn.