

RESEARCH PROJECT GUIDE

Step 1 – Pick a Topic

Name: _____ Due Date: _____

Consider the following question when deciding on a topic:

1. Which topics are of interest to you?

•	•
•	•

2. What is the purpose of your project?

• Writing to persuade	TIP! When writing to persuade, use facts to support the argument you are making
• Writing to inform	TIP! When writing to inform, present both sides of the issue equally
• Writing a speech	TIP! When writing a speech, use language that appeals to your audience
• Preparing for debate	TIP! When preparing for a debate, consider the opposing side's counterpoints

3. Who is the intended audience?

<input type="checkbox"/> Peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Members	<input type="checkbox"/> Parents or Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
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4. Does this issue have a personal or geographic appeal?

Does this issue relate to my personal life?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do I know someone affected by this issue?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has it affected my community?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has it affected communities in other states or countries where my family or friends live?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

TIP!

Understanding the characteristics of your target audience can influence your topic choice. It's important to present a topic that is meaningful and interesting to your audience.

You may select a topic because it relates to your personal life OR because you know someone else affected by this issue.

ASK!

*Is this a topic I have always wanted to know more about?
Does this topic meet the requirements of my project?*

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Step 2 – Develop Basic Knowledge

My Research Topic: _____

Develop basic knowledge about the topic you have chosen.

TIP!

Read the Leading Issue's summary for an overview of the topic you have chosen.

1. What terms do you need to know to better understand this issue?

2. Who is affected by the Leading Issue?

3. What are the main controversies associated with the issue?

4. Who are the key figures and organizations surrounding this issue?

5. What significant events have occurred related to this issue?

TIP!

See timeline for key events related to a Leading Issue.

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Step 3 – Selecting a Focus & Separating Fact and Opinion

My Research Topic: _____

Read the Essential Question, critical questions, viewpoints, and supporting articles to help select a focus and to understand the points of difference related to the issue.

1. Which question associated with the issue are you interested in answering?

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2. Which viewpoint do you most strongly agree with?

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3. List 2-3 articles containing arguments related to the side of the issue in which you most strongly agree.

1.	
2.	
3.	

4. List 3 facts from your research that support your viewpoint on the issue.

Supporting Facts
1.
2.
3.

TIP!

A fact is based on real occurrences and can be proven to be true.

5. List 3 opinions from your research that support your viewpoint on the issue.

Supporting Opinions
1.
2.
3.

TIP!

An opinion is what someone personally believes.

Step 4 – Writing a Thesis Statement

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My Research Topic: _____

Write the thesis statement for your paper. Your thesis will state your stance on the issue and illustrate how you intend to support your position.

1. List 3 arguments that support your viewpoint on the topic. You may refer to the facts and opinions provided in STEP 3.

ASK!

*Has your
viewpoint
changed?*

My Viewpoint:

Support Arguments:

1.

2.

3.

2. Compose your thesis statement. Follow this formula to help compose your thesis:

Clearly Stated Opinion + Specific Supporting Arguments = Thesis

TIP!

*Avoid
writing in
the first
person.*

ASK!

Have I clearly expressed my position?

Is my thesis specific and focused?

Will my thesis statement trigger thoughtful debate?

Step 5 – Supporting Evidence & Drawing Conclusions

Thesis Statement: _____

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List each of the arguments you are making to support your thesis. Then, list 2-3 documented facts to support each of those arguments. Record the type of evidence you have gathered. Refer to key below.

Argument 1	Supporting Evidence	Type of Evidence
	1. 2. 3.	
Argument 2	Supporting Evidence	Type of Evidence
	1. 2. 3.	
Argument 3	Supporting Evidence	Type of Evidence
	1. 2. 3.	

Types of Evidence:

Statistics *Graphics/Multimedia/Political Cartoons* *Facts*
Expert Opinions *Primary Sources* *Government Documents*

Step 6 – Apply Your Knowledge

Synthesize the information you have collected and organized to complete your project. Refer to the guidelines as set by your teacher to ensure you meet all the requirements for the project.

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If your project is a written report, ask the following questions as you write and proofread your paper: (Put an X in the correct box)	YES	Needs Improvement
Is my paper well organized with an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion?		
Have I used supporting evidence to defend each point related to my thesis?		
Do I have a conclusion?		
Does every paragraph contain clear opening and closing sentences?		
Are transitional words or clauses used to separate ideas?		
Have I used vocabulary that is appropriate for my intended audience?		
Is all punctuation correct?		
Have I cited my sources in the proper format required by my teacher?		

WRITING TIPS!

1. Introduction: *A good introduction will entice your audience. Consider using an interesting anecdote or stunning statistics to grab your reader's attention. In most cases, the introductory paragraph will include your thesis statement.*

2. Conclusion: *The concluding paragraph will end your discussion and present ideas for further research, awareness or action. A well-written concluding paragraph will summarize the main points of the thesis restating the introductory paragraph.*

Sample Transitional Words and Clauses:

Accordingly As a result However Above all Furthermore In particular
For example Likewise To the contrary Nevertheless For instance