What Makes a Good Research Topic?

- When you "Think Like a Researcher" you are focused on a research *question* rather than a research *topic*.
- You must also be able to *articulate the problem* that underlies the question.
- This problem must have *social significance*.
- The solution you argue for in your proposal must be *arguable* and *feasible* based on reliable evidence.

Examples

	Issue (Broad) What is the issue or overall topic that interests you?	Research Question (Narrower) What is a specific research question you want to investigate?	Underlying Problem(s) What is the problem that makes your question worth investigating? Is this an actual problem or an assumed problem?	Social Significance Does your problem have social significance?	Proposal/Solution What is your proposal for addressing this problem? Is your proposal both arguable & feasible?
	Organic Farming	Are fruits and vegetables grown on organic farms healthier than those grown on conventional farms?	Conventional farming may produce vegetables with pesticide residues leaving individuals susceptible to preventable diseases.	Human health Environment	Consumers should choose fruits and vegetables grown organically, especially those fruits and vegetables that are most susceptible to pesticide residue.
	Rising Cost of a College Education	Is a college education worth the investment for students in the social sciences?	Many students are emerging from 4-year degree programs with staggering student debt and no job prospects.	Debt Unemployment Value of Education	Colleges should focus on critical thinking and data analysis skills in the social sciences curriculum.
1	Law Enforcement Practices	How do local police units allocate funding and prioritize protection for all of its community members?	Follow the funding - how are communities being equally supported? Do communities who pay more tax benefit more from police funding?	Safe communities or access to our tax dollars in terms of funding	How do we regulate or empower less wealthy communities to advocate for equal funding

	Issue (Broad)	Research Question (Narrower)	Underlying Problem(s)	Social Significance	Proposal/Solution
				benefits everyone	
2	Campus Safety	Does under-age alcohol use contribute to a higher incidence of sexual assault on college campuses?			
3	Violence in the Media	Do violent video games contribute to school shootings and other mass murders?			
4	Representation in the media	How do stereotypes portrayed in the media impact the groups of people (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, ability, age, etc.) being represented?	How does racism, sexism, homophobia, classism/elitism, ageism, etc impact the groups. "Being stereotyped as violent is extremely dangerous to that group"		

What ideas do you have for a research question?

	Issue (Broad)	Research Question (Narrower)	Underlying Problem(s)	Social Significance	Proposal/Solution
A					
B					

c				