



## Writing Centre

### How to Narrow Your Research Topic

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A challenge in writing a research paper is narrowing down your topic. If your topic is too broad, you may encounter two major problems.

1. Too much information to manage
2. Inability to state an effective thesis

You can avoid these problems by applying the following limitations to your topic.

- 1. Time**            **2. Location**            **3. People/Person**            **4. Events/Objects**

Example Topics:

French Literature → **Time:** 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Literature

**Place:** 18<sup>th</sup> Century Literature in Southern France

**People:** Women's Literature in 18<sup>th</sup> Century France

**Events:** Illuminated Manuscripts in 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Literature

Pollution → **Location:** Pollution in the Fraser River

**Time:** Pollution in the Fraser River, 1960-1986

**Events:** The Salmon Fishing Industry and Pollution

**Person & Events:** David Suzuki and Pollution Activism

\*Remember: These are only *TOPICS*. Your thesis statement must *make a point* about your topic.

Ex: *Excessive pollution in the Fraser River from 1960 to 1986 is largely attributed to the salmon fishing industry.*