

Narrowing Your Topic Worksheet

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(<http://web.monroecc.edu/manila/webfiles/jwilkie/narrowingyourtopic.pdf>)

Quick Tips for Narrowing Your Topic

- Look at an encyclopedia/Wikipedia-type site for general information on your topic and note interesting facts or ideas. (this is NOT a formal source for your paper—just a starting point)

- Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who is my audience? Choose a topic that will be interesting to your audience.
- Will my topic fit the assignment? Is my topic still too broad for the length of the paper?
- What kind of information do I need to fulfill the assignment? A brief summary, magazine or journal articles, books, essays, encyclopedia articles, statistics? Can I locate these types of research materials for my topic?

Using an Online Database for Narrowing Your Topic

- Search your topic in one of the BC Library databases (accessible through the BC Library website).
- Try Ebsco, Gale Opposing Viewpoints, and CQ Researcher, or a more topic-specific encyclopedia first. You can do subject searches to help narrow your topic, or sometimes there will be a box located on the left side of your screen titled “Narrow Your Search” or something to that effect.
- For research assistance, please find me or ask for help at the library reference desk.

Narrowing Chart (example):

Topic	Chocolate
Sub-Topics	History of chocolate, making of chocolate, health aspects of chocolate, chocolate addictions, brands of chocolate (Godiva, Hersheys, Lindt, etc.), consumption of chocolate, popularity around the world, forms of chocolate.
What sub-topics are of most interest to you?	Health aspects of chocolate.
What new questions do you have about your topic?	Are there health benefits to eating chocolate? Can chocolate boost your mood? Is chocolate addictive?
Develop a topic statement	I will explore the health benefits of eating chocolate, specifically focusing on how chocolate affects moods and brain chemistry.

Research Paper: Narrowing Your Topic Worksheet

Fill in the chart about your topic:

Topic:	
Subtopics:	
What subtopics are of most interest to you?	
What new questions do you have about your topic?	
Develop a topic statement.	