



Figure 1 The Writing Center and Academic Resource Center logo

Choosing a Research Topic

Writing a research paper can be difficult. There are many different sources to choose from and finding the perfect topic can be tricky. In addition, finding a topic that your professor approves of can add even more stress. Pinpointing the perfect balance between an approved topic and an interesting one is one of the hardest parts of a research paper. This handout will help decide the best topic for you, as well as narrow down the best areas of research.



Figure 2 An image of some essays with an Apple.

The first step to writing a research paper is to choose an appropriate topic. Depending on what kind of essay your teacher is assigning, you'll want to brainstorm some ideas about what to write. If you're having trouble with where to start, decide what ideas interest you the most. Think about certain subjects you enjoy reading about, or even activities you take part in during your free time. This allows you to have a foundation of knowledge for when you're ready to research your topic, as well as more interest in writing your paper.

The second step you should take towards writing your paper is discussing ideas or questions you have about your essay with your professor. Bring up any brainstorming topics you've come up with and allow them to give you feedback. Your professor can point you in the right direction if needed, and even suggest

more interesting variations of ideas you've already had. Make sure to ask your professor any questions you might have about your project. The more you know about the assignment, the more likely you will write a good paper.

Once you have a general idea of what you're interested in writing about, a great way to make final decisions is by finding information about the topics. A great place to start is by searching for your topic on the Internet. The resources are unlimited, and there will be several different opinions about one idea that can inspire you. You can also find information about a topic by visiting the library and reading books written by professionals and scholars regarding your subject. These resources will help you decide a clear-cut thesis to base your assignment on.

Here are some examples of topics that you may find interesting:

1. Are abstinence programs effective?
2. Is climate change a hoax? Is it being exaggerated?
3. Is the No Child Left Behind act working?

This handout is based on the following sources:

Midway College. "100 Research Paper Topics | Midway College." *Midway College, Midway, KY | Midway College | Midway College*. Web. 30 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.midway.edu/library/topics>>.

"How to Write an A Research Paper." *A Research Guide for Students*. Web. 30 Mar. 2011. <<http://www.aresearchguide.com/1steps.html>>.

All of the above texts are available in the Writing Center. For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.lavc.edu/writingcenter/>

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