

**Writing Your Research Question Worksheet:**

Now that you’ve chosen your research topic, done a bit of background research and brainstormed your ideas, you’re ready to write your research question. Your research question will direct the research that you do over next few weeks as you look for sources for your [annotated bibliography.](#h.1fob9te) Refer to Section 1.3 of your textbook to review the elements and purposeof a [research question**.**](#h.3znysh7)Hover over the blue underlined words to read a definition in the Glossary located at the end of this document.

You will begin developing your research question by filling in the table below

**Example of Research Question Development**

The table below illustrates how a research question develops from a broad topic to a focused question. Follow the four examples down each column to see how the questions develop.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BROAD**  **TOPIC** | **RESTRICTED**  **TOPIC** | **NARROWED**  **TOPIC** | **RESEARCH QUESTION** |
| Pollution | Acid Rain | Acid Rain in the United States | What can we do in the United States to prevent acid rain? |
| Pollution | Oil Spills | Oil spills and commerce | What impact do oil spills have on the fishing and tourism businesses in areas affected? |
| Pollution | Pesticides | Pesticides and the bee population | What evidence is there that pesticides are significantly harming the bee population? |
| Pollution | Fracking (hydraulic fracturing) | Fracking and groundwater | What evidence is there that fracking can cause groundwater contamination? |

**Develop Your Research Question**

Now try out your topic ideas below using the information you brainstormed. Try out several variations of your topic idea to see how it could be improved or amended.

**Research Question Development Table**

*The table will expand as you enter content into the columns.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **BROAD**  **TOPIC** | **RESTRICTED**  **TOPIC** | **NARROWED**  **TOPIC** | **RESEARCH QUESTION** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Research Question:**

Of the possible research questions you came up with above, which question are you planning to use for your annotated bibliography?

Check to be sure that the research question meets these criteria:

* It is open-ended (cannot be answered with simple yes or no).
* It addresses an issue or controversy and/or solves a problem.
* It is something on which you can take a stand.

**Reflection (150-200 words)**

In the space below, explain what you learned about this process as you conducted background research and refined your topic. What was the most difficult part of the process and how was it difficult for you? What part of the process did you find most helpful and why?

Once complete, save your completed worksheet and return to the online classroom to submit this document through the “Assignment Submission” button below the assignment instructions.



Glossary: Return to top

**Annotated bibliography:** A list of citations with descriptions and a brief summary or critical statement about each one. Return

**Research question:** The starting point for your research. This question should contain key terms or concepts (ideas) related to your research topic (Soloman, Wilson, and Taylor, 2012). Return

