5-STEP HOW-TO SELECTING YOUR TOPIC

Tips on selecting your research topic in 5-STEPs. For more details and access to research resources, visit libguides.uta.edu/researchprocess

UNDERSTAND ASSIGNMENT
Read the assignment description. Make sure you understand the requirements and grading criteria. If you have a grading rubric, be familiar with it and follow the guidelines. If you are unsure about anything, talk with your instructor.

TOPIC OF INTEREST
If you get to choose your own topic, make sure it is a topic that interests you and will hold your attention. Scan your textbook, review class notes, peruse a news website or database, or talk with your instructor or classmates about potential topics.

KNOWN INFO
Write down all the information that you already know about the topic. Don’t think too much about it, just write down what comes to mind. Then write down some questions you have about the topic. Again, don’t think too much about it, just jot down what comes to mind.

QUICK SEARCH
Do a preliminary search using Google or a library database to see what is out there about your topic. Search using keywords that you wrote down earlier. This search will help you see what is already out there, find additional keywords, and identify gaps or questions where you will want to refine your topic and focus your research.

ASK QUESTIONS
After you do a bit of preliminary searching and reading, ask yourself some questions. What areas of your topic are not represented? What do you want to know more about concerning your topic? Your goal is to fill in gaps in the research. Read the "discussion" and "future research" sections of scholarly articles for ideas to refine your topic.

ASK.UTA.EDU