**Narrowing a Topic**

Gather information on the broader topic to explore new possibilities and to help narrow your topic.

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**Choose an Interesting Topic**

You may not know right away what your research question is. If you're interested in your topic, chances are that others will be, too. PLUS, researching will be a lot more fun!

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**Ask Yourself**

- What subtopics relate to the broader topic?
- What questions do these sources raise?
- What is interesting about the topic?
- Who would be interested in the issue?/Who is your audience?

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**Gather Background Information**

For a general overview, reference sources may be useful. The database OneSearch@IU is also a good place to start narrowing your focus and finding resources (libraries.iub.edu/onesearch).

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**Reference Sources**

A great place to begin your research
- A way to identify potential research topics.
- A starting point to gather information on your topic.
- An introduction to major works and key issues related to your topic.
- Key authors in your area of research.

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**General Reference Sources**

Dictionaries and encyclopedias
- Provide information on a variety of subjects.
- Include definitions that may help you break down and better understand your topic.

*Note*-Reference sources are generally not cited, since they mainly give an overview of a topic.