

Develop and Refine My Research Question

Complete the following activity in your research log to help you develop and refine your preliminary research question.

1. To develop potential research questions, identify the issue you are focusing on and write ten questions related to the conversation you have decided to join. Complete the following table by beginning each question with one of the following words: what, why, when, where, who, how, would/could, should.

<p>What Questions ... focus your attention on a particular aspect of a topic by asking questions about facts, such as, what is the cause of a particular problem or what caused something to occur. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: What are the effects of watching professional wrestling on aggressive behavior among young teenage boys? What is the driving force behind the growing popularity of professional wrestling?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What ...
<p>Why Questions ... focus your attention on a particular aspect of a topic by asking for an explanation of something, such as why something happened or why it did not happen, or why one thing is better than another. For instance, a research question about professional wrestling might ask: Why is professional wrestling so popular among young teenage boys?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why ...
<p>When Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to timing or history. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: When did professional wrestling first become popular? When is the best time to</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When ...

<p>start training to become a professional wrestler?</p>	
<p>Where Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to location, geographic or otherwise. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: Where in the United States and Canada is professional wrestling most popular? Where can I learn about becoming a professional wrestler?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where ...
<p>Who Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to people or personalities. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: Who are the most popular professional wrestlers? Who benefits most from the popularity of professional wrestling?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who ...
<p>How Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to process or origins. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: How can I become a professional wrestler? How do professional wrestlers avoid injury? How is professional wrestling marketed in the United States and Canada?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How ...
<p>Would and Could Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to possibilities. For instance, research questions about professional wrestling might ask: Would professional wrestling be more popular if the media paid more attention to the sport? Could professional wrestlers make good politicians?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would ... • Could ...
<p>Should Questions ... focus your attention on aspects of a topic related to the appropriateness of a particular action, policy, procedure, or decision. For instance, a research question about professional wrestling might ask: Should professional wrestling be regulated by the federal government?</p>	<p>Potential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should ...

2. Choose the research question that best meets the needs of your writing situation, including your purpose and roles and your readers' purposes, interests, values, and beliefs.

3. Refine your working research question by replacing vague words and phrases with more specific words and phrases.

4. Ask whether you should refine your research question by referring to shared assumptions and existing conditions.

5. Test your refined research question by conducting preliminary searches of library catalogs, databases, and the Web.