

Research Project Topic Selection

Introduction

For some people, choosing a topic is the most difficult part of the paper. This assignment will help guide you as you choose a topic that meets the guidelines of the project and piques your curiosity and interest.

The first part of the research project is to choose a topic. **You will be submitting your working thesis and introduction paragraph for evaluation and approval.** Your topic should be submitted on Canvas on the corresponding due date.

The following guide will help you develop an interesting and effective topic and thesis.

Step One: Understanding the Requirements

1. The topic must be between the years 1607 and 1865.
2. The topic should not be a biography or a summary of an event.
3. The topic should be about United States History
4. Do not choose topics that are too broad, this is a short paper, trying to discuss the entire Civil War
5. You cannot choose a topic based on one of the other written assignments or discussion questions.

List of **Banned Topics** (because I am tired of reading them)

- Salem Witch Trials
- Overviews of Suffrage Movements
- Women in the Civil War

Step Two: Choosing a subject that interests you.

To begin with, ask yourself a few questions

- What do I want to learn about?
- What kind of things interest me?
- Is there a topic related to my major or career goals?

Things to Consider

1. Does the topic meet the requirements?
2. Are there available sources? Is this topic too obscure?

Periodization:

History classes are generally designed around a periodization. The textbook is designed around this concept. When choosing a topic, it would be wise to skip ahead in the textbook. Also, the closer you get to the middle of the 19th century the more sources are available.

Step Three: Narrow Your Topic

Once you choose a time period, you can narrow your ideas down further. Using WWII as a time period, I have provided a few examples.

Social – You can choose a topic that has to do with how society functions and how different social groups interacted.

Examples: How did women contribute to wartime production? How did CORE expand rights for African Americans during WWII?

Economics - Topics that cover economics such as financial collapse and recessions, banking and fiscal policy, and economic structures and systems.

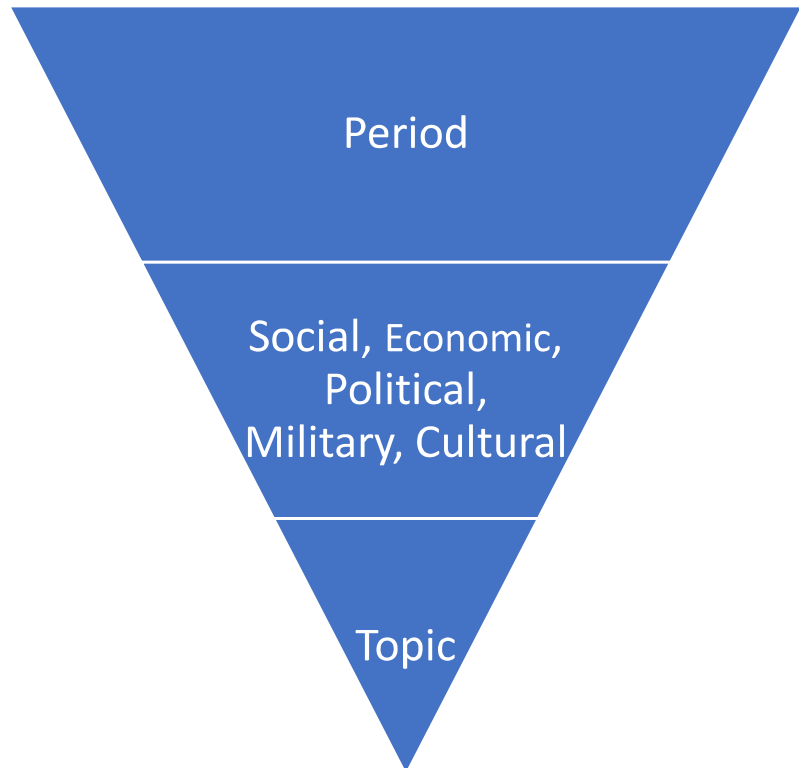
Examples – In what ways did the Second World War lead to unprecedented U.S. economic success in the next two decades.

Political – Topics that cover political parties, elections, political movements, and groups.

Examples – What issues dominated the Republican campaigns against FDR during the Second World War? How did those elections play in the conduct of the war?

Military – Topics that cover strategy, tactics, battles, military technology, and diplomacy.

Examples – Were the United States and Great Britain purposefully delaying the opening of the “second front.”



Cultural - Topics that cover art, literature, and music.

Examples – How did the cartoon industry assist in the war effort?

Step Four: Ask the Right Question

What question are you seeking to answer? Remember that this is an analytical paper; this means that you cannot simply describe an event; you will need to provide analysis.

Examine and break information into parts, identify motives or causes. Make inferences and then find evidence to support generalizations.