



LIBRARY

Choosing a Research Topic

Idea Books

Looking for lists of ideas to browse through? Try some of these:

<i>10,000 Ideas for Term Papers, Projects...</i>	ref LB 1047.3 L35 1998
<i>The Debatatabase Book</i>	ref PN 4181.D3945 2007
<i>What Can I Write About?</i>	ref LB 1631.P66 2002

Reference Books

Reference books are useful for both overviews of a topic and for detailed information. Subject encyclopedias focus on one broad topic, such as: environment, food, violence, psychology, etc. Depending on your interests, you might get topics ideas by browsing through books such as:

<i>New Dictionary of the History of Ideas</i>	Ref CB 9.N49 2005
<i>Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History</i>	Ref E185.E54 2006
<i>Encyclopedia of Food and Culture</i>	Ref GT 2850.E53 2003
<i>Encyclopedia of Civil Liberties in America</i>	Ref JC 599.U5 E53 2003
<i>Encyclopedia of Bioethics</i>	Ref QH 332.E52 2004
<i>Biotechnology; Changing Life through Science</i>	Ref TP 248.218 .B56 2007

Series Books

Series such as, [*Opposing Viewpoints*](#); [*Current Controversies*](#); [*At Issue*](#); [*Information Series*](#); [*Contemporary World Issues*](#), etc. are very useful for exploring different aspects of a topic or issue. Look for them by title in the online catalog. You can also search for series books on a particular subject by using the “keyword” search. Enter the series title, followed by the topic you are interested in. For example, type *opposing viewpoints abortion*.

BOOKS:

Looking for books on your subject is an excellent way to get started with research. You can search the [online catalog](#) to find books, videos, DVDs, etc. for information on your topic. Type in a broad topic as a **subject search**; often it will be subdivided into specific categories, such as:

Global warming – government policy

Education, bilingual – social aspects

Obesity – economic aspects

Or, try a **keyword search** using words that express your idea, such as:

Media and gender

Television and children

Cars and environment

Alcohol and driving

Education and testing

Clean air

DATABASES

Magazine, journal, and newspaper articles provide current information on thousands of topics. From the Library Homepage click on the icon to “Find Articles” to the list of Databases by Subject. Many of the databases also provide a link to listings of potential research topics. You can select databases according to the subject areas that interest you.

Academic Search Complete

The contents of thousands of magazines and academic journals can be searched here. “Advanced Search” allows you to combine keywords to locate articles on specific aspects of a topic, such as, *nurses AND mentoring*. From the list of results, you can limit your search using options in the left hand column. The “Search within results” box allows you to add terms to your search. You can also select a specific content type such as academic journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.

African American Experience and Latino American Experience

Browse the homepage of the databases; review “Browse Topics” for more ideas

Biography in Context

This database has thousands of articles on famous people. Click on “Browse People” and select categories such as profession, ethnic group, historical time period, etc.

Global Issues in Context

Global issues, conflicts, and events are covered here. A wide variety of subject areas are included, such as sociology, current events, civics, politics, science, economics, cultural/religious issues, women’s studies, human rights, and much more. Click on “Browse Issues” for ideas; you can also browse by geographical regions.

Environmental Studies in Context

The focus here is green technology and issues concerning the environment, sustainability and more. The database is interactive and current, allowing users to navigate issue, organization, and country portals. Click on “Browse Issues” for a comprehensive list of topics covered.

Issues and Controversies

This database specializes in current controversial issues. You can browse through the “Recent Controversies”, “Issues by Subject”, or “All Issues” links on the home page.

Opposing Viewpoints in Context

This database has a wealth of resources – magazine articles, academic journals, newspapers, essays, statistics, websites, audio/video, and images. Click on the “Browse Issues” tab on the black tool bar for a link to a list of controversial issues.