

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 1865 and 2000.
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 Second World War
5. You cannot choose a topic based on one of the exam questions (found on the exam reviews).

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.

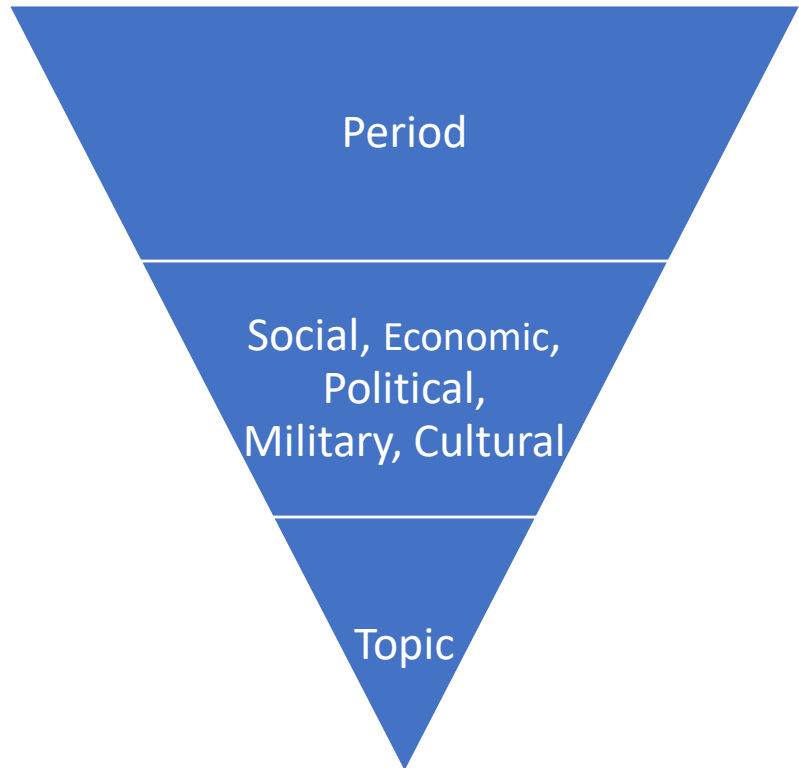
Examples – What issues dominated the Republican campaigns against FDR during the Second World War? How did those elections play in the conduct of the war?

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.

You will notice in the sample outline on the Research Project instructions. The topic being outlined has a question, “Why did women support the Nazi Party?” This allows for effective analysis, as the research is able to draw connections among ideas.

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