Research Topic and Question

Student Name

GEN103: Information Literacy

Instructor Name

Month Day, Year

Refer to Module 1.3 of your textbook as you complete this assignment.

In the box below, provide a 2-3 sentence description of your research topic and how it is related to your major. You may refer to the *GEN103 Possible Topics for Research* handout in the classroom for research topic ideas.

**Important:** “Prayer in school” is not an acceptable topic for your annotated bibliography because it is used for the assignment examples throughout this class.

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| **Research Topic and its Relation to Your Major:** |
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To help you explore your topic, fill in the KWHL chart below.

1. Write at least three specific thing you know about your topic in the first column, K **(K = know).**
2. Write at least three specific questions about your topic that you would like to know the answers to in the second column, W **(W = what do I want to know).**
3. Write at least three specific tools you might use to find out more about your topic in the third column, H **(H = how do I find out).**
4. At this point, you need to do background research before you can fill out the fourth column. Use the tools you wrote down in H to find out more about your topic. Focus on the questions you wrote in W:
   1. When you do background research, it’s fine to do a Google search or to use Wikipedia or other encyclopedias or general reference works; you will not use these sources in your annotated bibliography.
   2. The *4 Easy Steps to Using the Ashford Library for Background Research* provides directions for using the references sources in the Ashford Library
5. After doing your background research, write at least three specific things you have learned about your topic in the fourth column, L **(L = what have I learned).**

You must have at least three distinct items listed in each column to get full credit for this portion of the assignment.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **K**  **What do I know?** | **W**  **What do I want to know?** | **H**  **How do I find out?** | **L**  **What have I learned?** |
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Now that you have done some simple background research, it’s time to write a formal research question. Your research question will help you focus your research by defining the information you are looking for as you research your topic for your annotated bibliography.

A quality formal research question must be:

* Open-ended (Review the How to Ask Open-Ended Questions handout)
* Clear
* Concise
* Detailed

Remember that research questions should generate the kind of research that is suitable for an academic paper. Avoid questions that:

* Are yes/no questions (Often begin with “are” or “do”.)
* Ask for number or date (Often begin with “how many” or “when”.)
* Ask for a list
* Ask for an opinion (Often begin with “what do you think”.)
* Can be answered with a brief explanation or by referring to a single source.

Tip: Open-ended questions usually start with “what,” “why” and “how.”

Develop a research question that will allow you room to investigate your topic. Some examples of successful research questions are:

**What can we do in the United States to prevent acid rain?**

**How do oil spills impact the fishing and tourism businesses in affected areas?**

**What evidence shows that pesticides are significantly harming the bee population?**

**Why is the Clean Water Act an important law for the welfare of urban populations?**

Type the first draft of your research question in the first row of the table below and fill in all of the shaded areas. Write your final, revised question in the last box.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Type the first draft of your research question in the box to the right. |  | |
| Does the first draft ask a yes/no question?  *If the answer is yes, you need to revise your research question.* | | yes/no |
| Does the first draft ask for a number, date, or a list?  *If the answer is yes, you need to revise your research question.* | | yes/no |
| Does the first draft ask for an opinion?  *If the answer is yes, you need to revise your research question.* | | yes/no |
| Can the first draft be answered with a brief explanation or by consulting a single source?  *If the answer is yes, you need to revise your research question.* | | yes/no |
| Type the final version of your research question in the box to the right. |  | |
|  |  |  |

When you have completed this worksheet, save the document and submit to Waypoint.