

Research Questions

Successful research involves more than just finding all the information out there about a topic. You will never be able to find—or read—all this information. Having a narrow topic will help you to keep their projects to a manageable size, but you can focus your research and project even more by developing research questions.

Writing Research Questions: Good historical research questions will allow you to investigate issues of cause and effect, change over time, differences in perspective, etc. What were the causes of past events? What were the effects? How did past decisions or actions affect future choices? What has changed?

Research questions are different than information-seeking questions.

Information-seeking questions help you to understand the basic facts about your topic. When was the 19th amendment passed? Who was the first president of the United States? How does a bill become a law? You will likely answer these questions just by reading an encyclopedia article about your topic.

Practice Writing Research Questions		
Category	Sample:	Your Topic
Cause & Effect What were the causes of past events? What were the effects?	<i>Why did MLB have rules against black players? Why did Jackie Robinson decide to play? What impact did his career have in baseball?</i>	
Through Their Eyes How did people the past view their world?	<i>What motivated Jackie Robinson to play even though he was hated? Why did the Brooklyn Dodgers sign him?</i>	
Change & Continuity What has changed? What has stayed the same?	<i>How did baseball change after Jackie Robinson broke the color line?</i>	
Impact How did past actions affect the future?	<i>How did Jackie Robinson's career impact the Civil Rights Movement? How were other players impacted by Jackie Robinson?</i>	