Developing Your Questions

When you have chosen a broad topic, the next step is to do a little research into the topic so you know enough to create a research question. Your question can be modified and even replaced as you learn more about the topic. The most workable research questions usually start with “Why?”, “How?”, “Which”, “Should”, or “What if?”

Try working with these sample questions by filling in some appropriate words to explore for possible research.

Why did China ______________ during the ___ time period?

Why did ______________ (Wall Street, law makers, scientists, doctors, the military or others) respond as they did during_____________?

How would you have solved ___________?

How does hindsight help us understand__________?

How did __________ influence ____________?

How have efforts of reform impacted__________?

How significant were the efforts of groups or organizations in _____________?

How would you have advised the president to act during ____________?

Which were the three best or three worst: ____________?

Which were the most important ____________?

Which time period would you choose to ____________?

What if ___________ had ___________?

Should Congress ____________?

Should the Supreme Court ____________?