

The Research Question

You will probably spend a few weeks trying to get this small part right., but it will direct most of your research and writing for the next year.

- It is the main drive of your essay & the glue that holds all your different points together.
- You must have at least one before you start serious researching and writing.
- It must be a question, not a statement.
- It must describe your topic, and your approach to it - usually in one long sentence.
- It must be focused so that you can answer it within the word limit.

You will probably change your RQ as you go because your research will uncover new information & influence your perspective – but your question and your essay must be congruent by the end.

Examples

Q: To what extent does Global warming affect the Earth?

Problem: Too broad and very difficult to answer – this is a whole book not an essay!

Answer: Which nations will be worst affected by Global Warming?

Q: What are the causes and consequences of the diminishing ozone layer?

Problem: Too broad and mostly descriptive, it doesn't lead to enough deep analysis

Answer: What policies should *** government institute now to help balance the economic vs environmental risks of Global Warming?

Q: What are the pros and cons of alternative fuels?

Problem: Too broad and mostly descriptive, it doesn't lead to enough deep analysis

Answer: What fuel combinations are the future for *** nation?

If you require further reading:

The Owl @ Perdue

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Best website in the world for university style essay writing.

