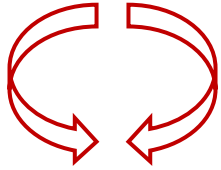


### **1. Start with a broad topic.**



### **2. Do preliminary research to learn about topical issues.**

Once you have picked a topic, start doing preliminary research with two goals. First, a preliminary review of related literature allows you to discover issues that are currently being discussed. Second, a preliminary review of related literature allows you to spot existing gaps or limitations in existing knowledge of your topic.



### **3. Narrow down your topic to determine potential research questions.**

Once you have gathered enough knowledge on the topic you want to pursue, start focusing on a more specific area. One option: to focus on gaps in existing knowledge to fill, extend or complement the findings of existing literature. Another option: challenge assumptions that support a position held by the field.

## 4. Evaluate the soundness of your research question.

### **F – Feasible**

A good research question is feasible, which means that the question is well within the researcher's ability to investigate. Researchers should be realistic about the scale of their research as well as their ability to collect data and complete the research with their skills and the resources available to them. It's also wise to have a contingency plan in place in case problems arise.

### **I – Interesting**

The ideal research question is interesting not only to the researcher but also to their peers and community.

### **N – Novel**

Your research question should be developed to bring new insights to the field of study you are investigating.

### **E – Ethical**

This is one of the more important considerations of making a research question. Your research question and your subsequent study must be something that review boards and the appropriate authorities will approve.

### **R – Relevant**

Aside from being interesting and novel, the research question should be relevant to the scientific community and people involved in your area of study. If possible, your research question should also be relevant to the public's interest.

# DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE RESEARCH Qs

**Quantitative research questions** are *precise*. These questions typically include the population to be studied, dependent and independent variables, and the research design to be used. These questions *are not answerable with “yes” or “no”* responses. As a result, quantitative research questions don't use words such as “is,” “are,” “do,” or “does.”

Topic	Quantitative Research Questions	Qualitative Research Questions
Mental health diagnoses	How does race affect rates of mental health diagnosis among teens in foster care?	What is the experience of African-American teens seeking help for mental health concerns?
Career choice	What is the relationship between household income and career choice among American university students?	How do American university students from low-income households experience making a career choice?
Social media use	What proportion of Australians aged 55 to 75 use popular social media sites?	How do Australians aged 55 to 75 use social media?
Early-stage dementia	What are the differences in the perceptions towards people with early-dementia before and after diagnosis?	How do people with early-stage dementia experience other people's reactions to their changed condition?

**Qualitative research questions** generally aim to “explain,” or “explore” and, as result, are typically descriptive

## Examples of Good and Bad Research Questions

### *Example no. 1*

**Bad:** How does social media affect people's behavior?

**Good:** What effect does the daily use of YouTube have on the attention span of children aged under 16?

The first research question is considered bad because of the vagueness of "social media" as a concept and the question's lack of specificity. A good research question should be specific and focused, and its answer should be discovered through data collection and analysis.

### *Example no. 2*

**Bad:** Has there been an increase in childhood obesity in the US in the past 10 years?

**Good:** How have school intervention programs and parental education levels affected the rate of childhood obesity among 1st to 6th-grade students?

In the second example, the first research question is not ideal because it's too simple, and it's easily answerable by a "yes" or "no." The second research question is more complicated; to answer it, the researcher must collect data, perform in-depth data analysis, and form an argument that leads to further discussion.