

Lesson #38

Choosing a Topic for Your Report

You have just been assigned a short research report of your choice for a semester project. That means you will have to find information about a topic. You are excited about the assignment, but you sit down to write and . . . nothing! You are staring at a blank piece of paper. Where do you begin?

- The very first thing to do is to **select a topic**. Begin with a brainstorming session. Write down every idea that pops into your head. Another way to begin is to talk to people like your teachers, parents, and friends. Bounce your ideas around with them and add to your brainstorming list.
- Then, go through your list and select ideas that catch your attention. Narrow them down until you decide upon just the right one. Which topic sounds the most interesting to you?
- Next, make sure there is available information on your topic. The subject must not be too general or too narrow.

Example 1: Pollution

Pollution is a very broad topic; there may be too much information, and that can be confusing.

Example 2: Pollution in My Back Yard

This topic is much too narrow. You will probably not be able to find valid information for your report.

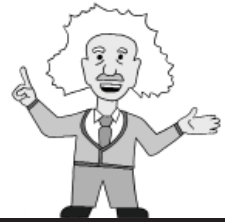
Example 3: Air Pollution Caused by Old Buses and Cars

This is a much better topic because you will probably be able to find enough material to support your opinion and write a good report.

Use the topic selection advice to answer items 1 – 3.

1. Put a check by all the sources that could help with topic selection.
 teacher parents friends librarian
2. Your topic selection must be a good fit. If the topic is too _____, the amount of information may overwhelm you.
 specific general just right modern

3. One of the best ways to get started on your report is to _____.
- A) copy someone's work
 - B) brainstorm a list of ideas for possible topics
 - C) select the same topic as your best friend
 - D) wait for someone to tell you what to do



Study Strategy If you feel stuck while trying to come up with a writing topic, and you have your parents' permission, there are plenty of great topic ideas on the Internet. There are actually lists and lists of writing topics on the Internet.

4. Another good source for topic selection is the _____.

Analogies

Another type of analogy is **part-to-whole**. Here's an example.

tongue : mouth :: hair : head

5. wheel : bicycle :: wing : _____ window wheel airplane
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6. button : shirt :: zipper : _____ pants book collar

7. Supporting details should always relate to the _____.
- conclusion question main idea analogy

8. Underline the **direction words** in this test question.

What is the difference between climate and weather? Define each term and give an example of how each impacts our daily lives.