DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION WITH GALE

WHAT IS A RESEARCH QUESTION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

A research question is a **clear**, **focused** question that guides your investigation into a topic. It helps you stay on track, dig deeper, and find **meaningful answers** instead of just **collecting random facts**. A strong research question turns **curiosity into purpose**—it gives your research direction and helps you think critically about what you're learning.

To develop a stellar research question, follow these steps:

Choose a Topic That Interests You

Start with something you're curious about or want to learn more about. It could be broad at first—like fashion, technology, or sports. Check Gale In Context for **Topic, Person, Work, or Event Guides** relevant to your chosen topic.

Do Some Background Research

Start with the **Overview** on the guide for your topic, then dive deeper by reading, watching, or listening to a few additional pieces about the topic. Browse **Related Topics**, if needed. Look for background information, key terms, current issues, or surprising facts. This helps you understand the topic better and **find a focus**.

Narrow Your Focus

Think about a specific part of the topic that stood out to you. Ask yourself: *What do I want to know more about?* or *What problem or question is being debated?* **Tip**: Use the **Topic Finder** tool to narrow down your topic.

Ask an Open-Ended Question

Turn your focus into a question that can't be answered with just "yes" or "no". A good research question invites **explanation**, **analysis**, **comparison, or debate**.

Check If It's Researchable

Make sure there's enough information available to answer your question. If it's too broad or too specific, **adjust it**.

Refine and Improve

Try to make your question more focused, clear, and meaningful. Use the **Good → Better → Best** model to help you improve it.

Here are some examples following the **Good → Better → Best** model:

TOPIC: Fast Fashion	
GOOD	What is fast fashion?
BETTER	How does fast fashion affect the environment?
BEST	In what ways has fast fashion contributed to environmental degradation in developing countries, and what sustainable alternatives are being implemented?

TOPIC: Artificial Intelligence	
GOOD	What is artificial intelligence?
BETTER	How is artificial intelligence used in education?
BEST	How is the use of AI-powered tutoring tools impacting student learning outcomes in high school classrooms, and what ethical concerns does this raise?

Now you try! Take the topics below and develop research questions following the **Good → Better → Best** model.

TOPIC: Social Media	
GOOD	
BETTER	
BEST	

TOPIC: Space Exploration	
GOOD	
BETTER	
BEST	

Gale, here for **everyone.**

GALE

1. CHOOSE A TOPIC THAT INTERESTS YOU
Start with a broad topic that interests you. Check Gale In Context for **Topic**, **Person**, **Work, or Event Guides** relevant to your interests.

Your Topic: _____

2. DO SOME BACKGROUND RESEARCH
Use Gale In Context to learn more about the topic. Start with the **Overview** and then dig deeper. Browse **Related Topics**, if needed. **What are some key terms, current issues, or surprising facts that stand out after your background research?**

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3. NARROW YOUR FOCUS
Based on your background research, ask yourself: *What do I want to know more about?* or *What problem or question is being debated?* **Tip**: Use the **Topic Finder** tool to narrow down your topic. **What do you want your main focus under the topic to be?**

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4. ASK AN OPEN-ENDED QUESTION
Turn your focus into a question that can't be answered with just "yes" or "no". This should invite **explanation**, **analysis**, **comparison, or debate**.

My question: _____

_____

5. CHECK IF IT'S RESEARCHABLE
Make sure there's enough information available to answer your question. If it's too broad or too specific, **adjust it**. Is there enough information at my disposal to answer this question? **Circle one: YES** or **NO**

6. REFINE AND IMPROVE
Try to make your question more focused, clear, and meaningful. Use the **Good → Better → Best** model below to help you improve it.

TOPIC:_____	
GOOD	
BETTER	
BEST	

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