Steps for Developing a Research Topic

1. Choose a topic that interests you.
2. Write a research question.
3. Answer the following questions:
   a. Does this topic strongly interest me?
   b. Is this topic creative enough?
   c. Is this topic too broad or narrow?
4. Revise research question as needed

Questions about citing the great sources you’ve found?
The main book that you need to cite your sources and format your work in the American Psychological Association (APA) style is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). You can find a copy in the library at the Reference Desk.

For starters, see these examples:

**How to cite an article:**


**How to cite a book:**

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle.* Location: Publisher.

Since you’re using APA citation style for social work related assignments, see the following for more help:

- The Purdue Online Writing Lab at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/1/
- The Writing Center
- Any librarian!

Specific Resources

These resources will be particularly helpful to you for your research.

**Databases**

- SociINDEX
- PsycARTICLES
- Psychology and Behavioral Science Collection
- Abstracts in Social Gerontology
- JSTOR

**Books**

- Doing a Successful Research Project by Martin Davies
- Handbook of Research Methods for Studying Daily Life by Matthias Mehl
- Making Sense of the Social World by Daniel Chambliss
- Methods Matter by Richard Murnane
Research Process

1. Plan
   How do you get started?
   Understand assignment requirements.
   Develop your topic.
   Establish a timeline.
   Consider appropriate search terms.

2. Search
   Where should you look for your sources?
   Databases
   CatPac
   Internet Resources
   Other

3. Evaluate
   Are your sources appropriate?
   Examine sources for:
   Currency
   Relevance
   Authority
   Accuracy
   Purpose

4. Use
   What do you do with the information once you have found it?
   Ask:
   Does what I found fulfill the requirements?
   How do I organize it?
   How do I cite it?