

# TOPIC EXERCISE

Name:

Choosing a topic is probably the most important step in writing a research paper. A topic should be interesting to you, should be just the right size (not too narrow or too broad), and should be a subject for which you can find sufficient research material. This exercise encourages you to begin exploring a possible research topic.

From the list below, select the topic that is the most interesting to you:

The Children's Crusade	Women in the Middle Ages
Relations with Native Americans during the Colonial period	Utopian movements in American History
Women's Suffrage Movement in the U.S.	The My Lai Massacre (Vietnam)
Holocaust	African American soldiers in the Civil War
Blacklist during the Cold War	Manhattan Project

Topic:

Go to the Suzzallo Library Reference collection and use one or more specialized encyclopedias to begin exploring your topic (you can use the list provided in class, but you are not limited to that). For this assignment, use only printed, specialized encyclopedias (i.e., not the Britannica online)

List at least one encyclopedia, dictionary, or handbook that looks the most useful for your topic:

Browse the encyclopedia article related to your topic, noting especially any subcategories that look useful. Make note of keywords and important ideas, people, dates, etc. The more ideas you can put in the chart, the easier it will be to focus the topic.

Don't worry about the ideas you write down being *good* or *correct* or about exactly where you put them on the chart. Let your imagination go.

<b><i>Subject areas</i></b>	<b><i>Where? (places)</i></b>	<b><i>Who?</i></b>	<b><i>When?</i></b>	<b><i>Other</i></b>
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Using the information you gathered from encyclopedias, rewrite your topic with a narrower focus: