Selecting a Research Topic

After you have fully read through the assignment requirements, understand if you have an assigned topic or if you can select your own topic.

Selecting a topic involves two processes:

1.) Finding a subject that interests you
2.) Deciding what you want to learn about that topic.

Tip 1: The online encyclopedia’s found in HC’s Library Webpage can provide basic information on a topic.

Tip 2: You can also search HC Library's online catalogue and/or the journal databases to see what information is available on your topic.

Tip 3: Be aware of how much information is available about the subject! You want enough material to write a research paper as well as easily accessible through the Holland College library services rather than interlibrary loan

Tip 4: If you are struggling to find information on your topic, talk to your instructor or library staff as they can help you narrow your topic and guide you to helpful resources

Once you have decided on a topic, you will need a Research Question

A research question focuses your research and ensures you are on the right track with a topic that isn't too broad.

For Example: You are interested in learning more about the Elderly Population

- You need to determine what about this topic do you want to research?
- This is a necessary step because Elderly population as a research topic is too broad, and you will find thousands of resources.

Once you have decided what aspects of the subject interest you and formulate questions based on your thoughts

For Example: “Does the elderly population struggle with mental health issues?”
After you have a general question, start asking yourself general questions about the topic

**For Example:** Which mental illnesses do the Elderly suffer from? Is there support for those suffering? Are some supports better than others? Do those living in seniors’ facilities experience mental health problems more or less than those living at home? Is there enough awareness of this issue? Where can families find support? Are they affordable or subsidized?

From these questions, choose one or two that interest you the most and use them as a basis to begin your research.