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| Title | **Global Topic Proposal** |
| **Due Date** | **Due Monday** |
| Where to Post | Click on "New Post" button above and type your response in the space provided below.  Click Save. |
| Subject | Your Name / Global Topic Proposal |
| Points | 10 |
| Criteria | * Includes all required content * Shows thoughtful and substantial responses * Is on time, posted in the correct forum, correct subject line. Correct grammar, spelling and usage. |
| Objective | Define your topic to describe exactly what you will research |

#### **Focusing a Topic**

Almost any topic can be approached from a variety of perspectives, and many topics could become an entire life's work. In the *Secret Life of Dust,* author Hannah Holmes demonstrates that even a seemingly tiny topic can become an entire book—she's written 240 pages on dust! For most students, research projects must be considerably shorter.

#### **Too Broad, Too Narrow, Just Right**

A topic that is too broad will be difficult to research because it includes too many possibilities. Focusing a topic is particularly important when you need to make an argument. Freedom is too broad, but a specific freedom such as Intellectual Freedom, is more focused. Still, such a topic will need more focus for most college research papers. Remember too, that the scope of a topic can depend on the size of the project.

Several strategies can help narrow a broad topic. Consider:

§ A specific aspect of a topic (*use of Facebook and Twitter in the Egyptian Revolution)*

§ The perspective of a specific group of people or a geographic area (*Republicans vs. Democrats on issues of international trade*)

§ A specific aspect of an event relating to the topic (*Wikileaks and U.S.-India relations*)

§ Key players in the topic (*Julian Assange, Britain, Iran,* human rights activists, U.S. State Department)

§ A specific issue in combination with the topic (*music and 21st Century globalization*)

§ Time frame (*intellectual freedom and American foreign policy with China*)

Just as a broad topic can cause research troubles, so can a topic that is too narrow. Unless you plan to do primary research, your research depends on information others have already produced about your topic. If that information doesn't exist, you may need to broaden your approach. Ask yourself whether your topic is too new, too localized, or too obscure to have generated enough information for meaningful research.

Consider: *Little Miracles Children's Home in Mumbai, India*. While this topic might intrigue you, you could discover that little has been written about it, or that little is available in the resources available to you.

You could broaden your topic by focusing on:

§ A larger associated issue or problem (*orphanages in India* and Little Miracles Children's Home as a case study)

§ A larger focus (*international adoption*)

#### **The Evolving Research Topic**

Live and learn. So it is with research. As you learn more about your topic, you will discover the important terms used to describe it and the best types of information sources for your particular topic. And, you may revise early assumptions that you made based on a more limited understanding of your topic. That process is what research is all about: finding new knowledge, integrating it with what you already know, and revising your assumptions.

#### **Key Terms**

Every topic has important words, often called keywords, which are used in the writing about it. These terms are your "keys" to unlocking the research resources available at your library and on the Internet. You can use key terms to search for your topic—or aspects of it—in the indexes of reference books and other books, library catalogs, periodical databases, and Web search engines. You have identified some important terms that you already knew.

#### **Encyclopedias**

Go to the Seattle Central Community College (SCCC) website. As a student , WAOL5000, you can use all the resources here. When you encounter a log-in screen, use your 9-digit Student ID number (SID) and your last name. Check out the online encyclopedias by using this link: http://libguides.seattlecentral.edu/content.php?pid=109757&sid=1028786

Encyclopedias are an excellent place to begin learning about your topic. In most libraries you will find *general encyclopedias* that cover multiple disciplines and *subject,* or *special, encyclopedias* that focus on a particular topic, time period, geographic area, or aspect of a subject, such as, for example, famous Latin American women writers.

Encyclopedias often include:

* overviews
* key terms
* names of important events or people
* references to primary sources like laws and treaties
* brief history
* chronology
* summary
* topic outline
* bibliography
* statistics
* illustrations

Encyclopedia introductions outline what's covered and how the encyclopedia is organized. Articles are often written by subject experts and you can see their credentials in the section called, "Contributors." They include lists of further reading recommendations and an index leads to related terms and topics.An encyclopedia article on your topic may help you identify more. Such articles are also helpful for narrowing and defining your topic more.

### Assignment:

#### **Step 1: Get background information from two encyclopedias**

##### (You may want to use these encyclopedia articles in your final project the Pathfinder so keep track of where you found the information, article title, publisher, date of publication, and author if there is one)

Use **two** encyclopedias, **one general** and **one subject** to look for background information on your topic or some aspect of it. Complete a pre-search table for each.

**A. Go to a general encyclopedia**, such as Britannica Online (available through Seattle Central Community College Library or the college at which you registered.) DO NOT USE AN ENCYCOPEDIA FOUND ON THE WEB SUCH AS ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM OR ASK.COM. Use the college resources.

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| **Pre-Search Worksheet : General Encyclopedia** |  |
| Topic Idea |  |
| Encyclopedia used |  |
| What new things have you learned about the topic? |  |
| What aspects of the topic might be focal points in your project? |  |
| What new questions do you have about the topic after reading this encyclopedia entry? |  |
| What key words or terms are going to be most useful for describing your topic? |  |

**B. Identify articles in one or more subject encyclopedias that relate to your topic.** You may find such encyclopedias online on your library's web site. Go [here](http://libguides.seattlecentral.edu/content.php?pid=109757&sid=1028786) for a list of online encyclopedias at Seattle Central. You can also go to a library and browse the reference shelves in the subject areas relating to your topic. By now you should have a good idea what academic disciplines are concerned with your topic. Using your understanding of the disciplines that might consider your topic, look for a subject encyclopedia with some information about your topic. Some examples of subject encyclopedias are those on the environment, medicine, history of ideas etc. Library classification systems are based on academic disciplines. By finding the subject area for encyclopedias on your topic, you might be able to find background information from a disciplinary perspective (relating to sociology, biology, history, art, etc.)

Remember that very narrow or regional topics may not be listed in subject encyclopedias. If necessary, look for information on a related broader topic. Using an encyclopedia and following the format suggested below:

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| **Pre-Search Worksheet : Subject Encyclopedia** |  |
| Topic Idea |  |
| Encyclopedia used |  |
| What new things have you learned about the topic? |  |
| What aspects of the topic might be focal points in your project? |  |
| What new questions do you have about the topic after reading this encyclopedia entry? |  |
| What key words or terms are going to be most useful for describing your topic? |  |

#### **Step 2: Research Question or Statement**

With the help of the pre-search worksheet above, using your topic, create a statement or a question that will focus your research on a topic of global significance. Follow it with a short essay (200-words) describing what you know about your topic and what about it you plan to cover in your research. *Post your paragraph to the Global Topics Discussion Board.* **(Include your pre-search worksheets on encyclopedias.)**

#### **Step 3: Responses (at least two)**

Though you may not have direct knowledge about your classmates' topics, use your own ability to think and to pose questions to help them be clearer and more complete in their attempts to define their topic. Read the posts by other students and respond to at least two (2). Your response should include:

1. Feedback on whether you agree with why and how the topic is global -- explain why or why not
2. Feedback and ideas on whether the topic might be broadened or narrowed and how. (For example, *hunger* is a broad topic; *nutrition* or *food supply* are narrower aspects of that topic. *How the World Bank policies affect hunger programs* is much more specific.)
3. Questions that might help your classmate clarify his/her thinking
4. Suggestions for related topics
5. Suggestions for key search terms that could be important