### Selecting a Topic

Begin to think about a topic that you would like to research during the rest of the quarter. The point of your research will be to identify and describe the best information sources that you can for your topic. The standardized descriptions (annotations) that you develop for each of your best information sources will become the heart of your Pathfinder. One of the fundamental things that you should learn from this class is that information and research in the 21st century has few barriers other than the ones we put on ourselves. Obviously, language can be a barrier, but it can be overcome through curiosity and study. The greatest barrier is what I call "willing ignorance," that is, our natural human tendency to live within our own narrow confines and be comfortable with what we "know" and believe. I encourage you to push beyond what is comfortable and work toward a topic that will take us all out of our everyday routines and into the larger issues. A good way to approach selecting a topic is to think about issues of interest or concern to you, your family or community. Many issues that hit close to home, such as those related to education, health care, and the environment, not only impact you and your community but often have implications on a national or international scale.

Use the Discussion Forums to share your thoughts on any issues raised. I want you to feel free to express your opinion. Please know that your opinions have NO bearing on your grade as long as you observe good 'netiquette' and respect differences of opinion. College is a wonderful place to encounter differences in a safe atmosphere that promotes open debate. I sincerely hope that this class will foster such interaction.

**Global Topics**

Consider your own interests. Note: A topic doesn’t have to be a heavy research topic (like international relations between Pakistan and India, etc.) it can also be creative. For example, if you like art, you can focus on the differences between Japanese and Chinese aesthetics or if you like music, you might want to write about the development of a particular type of global music. You could even research songs, letters, poems, etc. for and by child victims of war or do research on how something from another culture is created, valued, and shared. The point is to choose something ‘uniquely you.’

Are you an expert in something already such as playing guitar, cooking, or gardening? Choose a topic that helps you further your hobby or brings inspiration from other cultures.

Whatever topic you choose, you must be enthusiastic about it. If you are not excited about your topic, the research process can be tedious. Pick a topic that you care about, like to do, see, feel, or experience.