

Pioneer Research Seminar:

Choosing a research question: best practices

1. It should be focused on a **specific** topic in **a new and/or original way** -> this will set you up to contribute new knowledge to your topic
2. **Start broad and then get narrower** as you continue to research
3. Be **careful of asking “why”** – why leaves the answer wide open

3. How to approach “why” questions

Sample question: *Why did the Soviet Union collapse?*

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Change to “to what extent” or “in what ways” and focus on one reason | 2. Change to examining the impact of a given reason | 3. Examine the combination of 2-3 potential reasons |
|  |  |  |
| 1. To <u>what extent</u> is the Chernobyl disaster responsible for the Soviet Union’s collapse? | 2. <u>What impact</u> did the Chernobyl disaster have on the collapse of the Soviet Union? | 3. How did the <u>collapse of Chernobyl</u> interact with “glasnost” to lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union? |

[https://www.mentimeter.com/s/
3315083a62e361a2c9017a2096d1395d/4c1630ac2580/edit](https://www.mentimeter.com/s/3315083a62e361a2c9017a2096d1395d/4c1630ac2580/edit)

Things to figure out **before** you write... *

- A. **Finding research topics**
- B. **Writing your research question**
- C. **Research methods and sources**
- D. **Thesis statement**
- E. **Research proposal** (see the handbook for more!)

Reminder

- Check your “Course Materials” section on the Pioneer LMS for a guide to things we didn’t cover but are super helpful:
- Research proposals
 - Videos of how to use the Oberlin Library
 - Advice on how to IMPROVE your note taking skills
 - Materials organization worksheet
 - And more!

选题：

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3 处理why类型问题的办法：

- 1 -> to what extent/ in what ways
- 2 examine the impact
- 3 combination of 2-3 reasons.

How to make it better?

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Research question adapted from research paper by Pioneer Scholar You Jin (check out the 2015 journal for this paper!)

Does brain development influence teenagers' behavior?



How does brain development influence adolescents' appetite for risk-taking behavior?

How to make it better?

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Research question adapted from research paper by Pioneer Scholar Guankai (check out the 2019 journal for his paper!)

How have designs for airplane cockpits changed for the better?



To what extent, and how, have engineers played a role in making airplane cockpits more ergonomic?

关于scholar sources: 去 Oberlin, 注意关自己的 vpn, 开他的 vpn

看 handbook!

How to make it better?

Over-trust in national democratic institutions, a redefinition of personal priorities, and a deep dislike for the opposing political party led to recent rise in the success of populist candidates.

Over-trust in national democratic institutions, a redefinition of personal priorities, and a deep dislike for the opposing political party contribute to recent paradoxical voting trends in which voters choose populist candidates that directly undermine aspects of the voters' identity.

Both thesis statements include the basic elements of 1) a claim and 2) indicating a path of how the research will be organized

The second version is much deeper – likely the result of continuous research, reflection, and revision

Pioneer
Real thesis adaptation...
Pioneer Scholar Joanna's paper (check out the 2018 journal to read it!)

The best way to improve your thesis-writing abilities: use examples and revise continuously

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Humanities and social science examples

STEM examples

Part D: Ways to Present Research (and a comic!)

Part E: Brainstorm, draft, and revise your thesis (STEM)

Part F: Brainstorm, draft, and revise your thesis (H&SS)

Part G: Write a research proposal

You can find research-area specific examples from the Pioneer Research Journal and the alumni videos in the Research Process Handbook and folder.