**Narrowing Your Topic and Audience**

You should begin researching your topic for Project 1 early to make sure that it is of great interest to you and that you can make informed decisions about the position you will take as you develop your argument for your intended audience. Being knowledgeable about your topic and addressing your audience effectively will enhance your credibility as a writer and help you reach your audience better. It will also help you with the assignments leading up to your final draft.

Remember, you can write about the same topic in both Project 1 and 2. This is not a requirement but highly suggested. For example, in Project 1, you would examine the causes or effects of a local or occupation-specific problem, and then in Project 2, you would propose a solution to the problem.

You may listen to this video on Narrowing Your Topic, which gives tips for focusing a topic that are specific to the requirements of the assignments in this class: <https://youtu.be/MUv6VzkiGAg>

**To complete this assignment:**

Spend some time reading and gathering background information about your topic for Project 1.

Use the ASU library databases and web resources to make sure there is comprehensive information in credible/academic and scholarly sources. Avoid drawing all of your sources from newspapers, magazines, and websites. Search for scholarly articles from journals to supplement your research. The databases below are the best for your project:

[Library One Search](https://lib.asu.edu/librarychannel/library-minute-library-one-search)

[Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost)](http://www.asu.edu/lib/tutorials/asp-search/)

[Google Scholar](http://www.asu.edu/lib/tutorials/google-scholar/)

[Lexis Nexis Academic](http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/)

[ERIC](http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/eric/advanced?accountid=4485)

[JSTOR](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/)

[PsycINFO](http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/psycinfo/advanced?accountid=4485)

[Alt-Press Watch](http://library.lib.asu.edu/record=e1000026%7ES3)

[Access World News](http://library.lib.asu.edu/record=e1000012%7ES3)

Next, present your research findings and the analysis of your intended audience, answering the following questions:

1. What is your topic for Project 1? Is it an arguable issue about causes or effects? It should be. And you should be arguing for either causes or effects – not both. Why do you care about this topic?

Remember, Project 1 is not an explanatory essay in which you only describe the causes or effects of a topic but a research-based persuasive essay in which you try to convince your intended audience that the causes or effects you take a position with and argue for are in fact the causes or effects of the issue, and other causes or effects are unlikely or refutable.

Your topic should be specific to your local experience – one within your academic, professional, or local community – and highly focused. Please avoid approaching topics at a global or national level.

Also, avoid speculating on future effects of an event that has not yet occurred. For example, speculating on how making texting illegal in Arizona would affect the accident rate is too broad in scope and looks at the future effect of something that has not yet occurred. Instead, you could argue how the passage of a ban against texting in your local community has led to a specific series of effects in that area.

1. Writing to a “general” audience or “anyone who disagrees” with your issue/position is too broad for Project 1. Therefore, in an effort to focus your topic and audience, determine which “communities” you are a part of and which target audiences exist within them. Are you a member of a club or society?  An organization of professionals?  A neighborhood association?

Describe the community on which you plan to focus your writing for Project 1.

Example: Let’s say you’re interested in writing about nutrition because you are pursuing a degree in a field related to nutrition. That makes you a member of a community of future nutritionists. However, “nutrition” is far too broad a topic. Now let’s say you also live in a neighborhood in a large city that has been struck by tough economic times and has a shortage of grocery stores. By living in a neighborhood that could be called a “food desert,” you are a member of a community affected by the impact of this phenomenon. Perhaps you are also a single parent trying to put food on the table in that community. That makes you a member of an even more specific community within that larger community, and being a member of the community of future nutritionists gives you a unique dual perspective. By exploring the specific causes that have led to lack of diverse nutritional options in your community, you can arrive at a specific cause-effect relationship that will serve as the focus of your paper.

1. Once you have settled on a community, identify your target audience. Is it a leader or group of individuals within that community who can be persuaded by your perspective? Or perhaps it is an individual or group from outside the community whose understanding of your community is important to your community.

Describe this audience with specificity. Comment on their moral/ethical values, political views, religious beliefs, assumptions about society and culture, their age, gender, social status, and any other details that will help you understand the individual or group you intend to persuade.

Example: In the previous example of the food deserts, which audiences are affected by the topic within your community? Single parents? Community leaders? Local investors? Which audiences outside the community need to better understand the causes and effects of food deserts? Food producers? Investors with the capital to invest in grocery stores? Developers? Which audiences overlap with part of the community? City leaders? Local entrepreneurs? Which of these audiences can you persuade to see food deserts in a new light in order to produce significant change?

1. How does your topic/issue impact your community, and specifically, your target audience? Why does it matter to them?
2. Which library databases did you consult to research your topic? After your research, have your thoughts/position on the causes or effects you plan to examine changed? If so, how have they changed? What new information did you uncover about your topic? What research do you still need to conduct to obtain more information about your topic?