Formulating Good Research Questions

1. What is the1994 rate of juvenile delinquency in the U.S.? **Bad research question**. This is not a research question because it is too narrow in scope. It only asks for one data point. A better research question could be ‘Did the rate of juvenile delinquency rise or fall in the 1990s?’
2. What can we do to reduce juvenile delinquency in the U.S.? **Bad research question**. It is too broad in scope and does not refer to any variables that could help answer a good research question. A better research question could be – ‘Do early intervention programs lead to a reduction of juvenile delinquency?’
3. Does education play a role in reducing juvenile delinquents’ return to crime? **Good research question**
4. How many customers does AT&T currently serve in Washington DC? **Bad research question** Like question #1 this question is too narrow in scope. A better research question would be: What factors increase the number of AT&T customers in Washington DC?
5. What factors lead consumers to choose AT&T over other service providers? **Good research question**
6. How can AT&T attract more customers? **Good research question**.
7. Why did the Challenger Shuttle explode? **Good research question**
8. Which genes are associated with increased risk of breast cancer? **Good research question.**
9. How does Google’s search algorithm work? **Bad research question.**  The question is too broad. A better question would be: How does the accuracy of Google’s search algorithm compare to the accuracy of Yahoo’s search algorithm?