

**Here are a few questions you can ask yourself about a topic you want to study:**

1. Is there a discussion about the topic which gives you a real chance to criticise different evidence?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 2
  - b. **No** – If the issue pretty self-evident and there is no opportunity for discussion, this is not a topic you should pursue for your Cambridge Research Report.
2. If there is a debate possible, is it one that you care about?
  - a. **Yes** – got to question 3
  - b. **No** – Your chosen topic should provide room for debate, but most importantly, you should care about the topic if you are going to succeed in this project.
3. If there is a debate and it is one in which you are interested, can you find evidence on both 'sides'?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 4
  - b. **No** – You will need to demonstrate that there are contrasting perspectives within your chosen topic for your Cambridge Research Report project.
4. Can you establish different perspectives on the issue which have a good range of views, beliefs, and assumptions underlining them?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 5
  - b. **No** – Contrasting perspectives on your topic are crucial to your report, without them this topic should not be used.
5. Is it an issue which can open up into all sorts of different aspects or is it really quite limited?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 6
  - b. **No** – Choosing a topic that is too limited might make opportunities to develop a suitable question too restrictive.
6. Can you see yourself enjoying the research, developing ideas and actually writing 5,000 words about this topic?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 7
  - b. **No** – unless the topic engages you to an extent that you are willing to work on it for many months, you have chosen the wrong topic.
7. Can you see the issue being open enough that your own initial ideas might change as a result of the research and the thinking that you undertake?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 8
  - b. **No** – in order to succeed in this project, you must choose a topic that you are willing to consider in an open-minded manner. You will be expected to reflect on your learning journey in your research report.
8. Is the interest you have in the topic already sufficient to enable you to start asking a few penetrating questions about it?
  - a. **Yes** – go to question 9
  - b. **No** – you must be prepared and know enough about your topic to ask the right sort of questions.
9. So what? Does this topic **really** give you a compelling answer to the inevitable 'so what?' question that one of your friends or relations is bound to ask you at some point?
  - a. **Yes** – This seems like a topic worth considering!

**No** – If you can't answer the 'so what?' question, you're probably considering the wrong topic for you.