

Tikrit University

Collage of Education for Humanities

English Department



Research paper

Third Year

Choosing and Narrowing a Topic

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Chapter Two: Choosing and Narrowing a Topic

Choosing and Narrowing a Topic

Choosing a topic is one of the most important steps in academic writing and research. A well-chosen topic helps the writer stay focused, organize ideas clearly, and produce meaningful results. On the other hand, selecting a topic that is too broad or unclear can lead to confusion, weak arguments, and difficulty in completing the assignment. Therefore, learning how to choose and narrow a topic is an essential skill for students and researchers.

Choosing a Topic

The first step in the research or writing process is choosing a general topic that fits the requirements of the course or assignment. Common broad topics include education, technology, health, social media, environment, and social issues. When choosing a topic, it is important for the writer to select something that is interesting and relevant. Interest plays a major role in maintaining motivation and engagement throughout the research process.

In addition, the topic should be researchable, meaning that enough information, sources, and references are available. A topic with very limited sources can make it difficult to support ideas with evidence. At the same time, the topic should match the academic level of the student. Topics that are too complex may require advanced knowledge or research methods, while topics that are too simple may not allow for deep analysis.

Narrowing the Topic

After selecting a general topic, the next step is narrowing it. Broad topics are often too general to be discussed effectively in a limited number of pages. Narrowing a topic helps the writer focus on a specific aspect of the subject, making the research more manageable and precise.

There are several ways to narrow a topic. One method is narrowing by population, such as focusing on teenagers, college students, or elderly people. Another method is narrowing by location, for example studying an issue in a specific country or city. Time can also be used to narrow a topic by focusing on

a particular period. Finally, a topic can be narrowed by concentrating on a specific issue, such as causes, effects, challenges, or solutions.

For example, instead of choosing a broad topic like “Social Media,” the topic can be narrowed to “The impact of social media on academic performance among high school students.” This narrowed topic is clearer and allows the writer to explore the subject in greater depth.

Importance of Narrowing a Topic

Narrowing a topic is important because it helps the writer define clear objectives and research questions. It also makes it easier to organize ideas, select relevant information, and avoid unnecessary details. A focused topic allows for deeper analysis and stronger arguments, which improves the overall quality of the work.

Moreover, a well-defined topic helps readers understand the purpose of the paper and follow the discussion easily. It shows that the writer has a clear direction and a good understanding of the subject. In academic writing, clarity and focus are highly valued, and narrowing the topic plays a key role in achieving them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, choosing and narrowing a topic is a crucial step in academic writing and research. Selecting an appropriate topic that matches the assignment requirements and personal interests, then narrowing it to a specific and manageable focus, leads to a clearer, more organized, and more effective paper. Students who take the time to carefully choose and narrow their topics are more likely to succeed in their academic work and produce high-quality research.

Thesis Statement: It is the main idea of the paper (is the essence of a paper and everything else in the paper is aimed at supporting it). Through the process of writing the research everyone may choose to state his/her topic either as a question or as a hypothesis, an assertion of a possible conclusion. The answer to the question or hypothesis will become the thesis statement.

Thesis statements have two parts: a subject and an assertion. All thesis statements, then, have a subject and an assertion about that subject. A good thesis statement has a narrowed subject and a precise assertion.

Thesis Statement Should be between 1-2 sentences and no more than 25-30 words. It should be clear, concise, and focused on the main point or argument of the paper

Here are some examples of thesis statements:

1.The title: Social media as a tool for promoting hate language

Thesis Statement: “Social media, is known as a medium for global communication. Unfortunately, it has been turned into a powerful instrument for the spread and amplification of hate language, fostering a breeding ground for prejudice, discrimination, and animosity, thereby undermining the principles of inclusivity and civility in our interconnected digital society”.

2.The title: Psychological Challenges encountered by EFL University Students in Learning Speaking

Thesis statement: “Knowing speaking challenges faced by the students is very essential and helpful for both students and teachers. Analysing them enables the teachers to find out what kind of challenges prohibit their students during speaking class and try to evaluate and overcome those challenges together.

3.The title: Analysis of The Theme of Revenge in Hamlet

Thesis statement: “Hamlet is a sorrowful hero who is madly looking for vengeance for his beloved father’s demise, murders everyone who stands on his way, and eventually manages to take revenge by killing King Claudius, the man who murdered his father.”

Choosing a topic for a thesis paper

Here are some recommended procedures to choose a topic for a thesis:

1-Choose a general topic that interests you.

2-Do some quick, preliminary reading to learn more about your topic and to see whether enough sources appear to be available.

3-While doing your preliminary reading and throughout your research, develop a "working" thesis statement and continue to refine it.

Here some tips you must avoid in choosing a topic

- 1- Do not choose a topic that's trite.
- 2-Do not choose a topic that's too contemporary.
- 3-Do not choose a topic that's too obscure.
- 4- Do not choose a topic just because you have read an interesting book it.

The elements of Thesis and Dissertation

A Thesis or Dissertation consists of three elements:

1-The preliminaries (front mater)

2- The Body of the paper

3-The reference materials (back mater or end mater)

Preliminary consists of:

Title page: The first page of a Thesis, dissertation, or other research project. It presents the title, the full name of the writer and the submission statement, which includes the faculty or school, the institution and the degree sought, the month and year in which the degree is to be granted as it is shown below: