Choosing a Topic - Part 1 Database help to identify a topic

Madison College Libraries provide access to thousands of publications through our dozens of library databases.

Then select the link, 'Browse databases by A-Z list'.

Among the long list of databases that appears, there are a few that are especially good for choosing a topic.
In the third column, there are two databases, Opposing Viewpoints and Points of View Reference Center, that are especially good for topic selection. Click on ‘Opposing Viewpoints’ [image: screenshot of Opposing Viewpoints database link highlighted] Text Captions: Choose Opposing Viewpoints

Here you can select from the long, alphabetical list that appears, or use the dropdown menu to select a more narrow category. [image: screenshot of issues index page in Opposing Viewpoints] Text Captions: Issues Index

For all of the topics listed, you'll get an introductory essay that does a good job of outlining the major issues for this particular topic. [image: screenshot of Celebrity Culture Topic page in Opposing Viewpoints] Text Captions: Topic: Celebrity Culture

As you read the overview article, you may encounter several aspects of this topic that interests you. [image: screenshot of Overview article for Celebrity Culture topic in Opposing Viewpoints database] Text Captions: Read the Overview Article!

In so doing, you might come away with several topic ideas that are more narrow than the one you started with. Text Captions: Get Ideas from the Overview Article Possible topic ideas...Fame as a top goal by young people Fame and social media Fame in the information age
In addition to the overview article, Opposing Viewpoints offers other source material, such as newspapers, magazine articles, academic journals, videos, and even viewpoint essays, all on that same topic. In addition to the overview article, Opposing Viewpoints offers other source material, such as newspapers, magazine articles, academic journals, videos, and even viewpoint essays, all on that same topic. [image: screenshot of variety of formats available including newspapers, journals, videos, websites, audio and more with magazines selected]

The videos and audio reports are also a great way to get interested in a topic. [image: screenshot of formats available with audio and video highlighted] Text Captions: Available Videos

Here are 34 news videos on the topic of school shootings. [image: screenshot of videos available] Text Captions: Choice of Videos

Videos are a great way to generate more specific topic ideas. Videos are a great way to generate more specific topic ideas. [image: screenshot of “Guns: Did Newtown Change Anything” video player] Text Captions: Use videos to generate topic ideas

Everything in Opposing Viewpoints that can be read can also be listened to. In addition, the database provides a number of tools for you to email articles to yourself, Cite them, download them, or even translate them into several languages. [image: screenshot of Article with Listen link and icon highlighted] Text Captions: Text to Speech & Tools

What is the impact of undocumented immigrants on the U.S. economy? Is a path to citizenship the same as amnesty? What has been the impact of undocumented immigrants on pay and working conditions in the food and clothing industries?
Slide 19 – thesis. Remember, a topic idea is not a thesis. What you will need to do is to work with your research questions. To develop an arguable statement. For example, look at those that guide the viewpoint essays in Opposing Viewpoints.[image: screenshot of article with title highlighted = "hip-hop gives youths a needed outlet for self-expression"]

Slide 20 - ask us!

If you need assistance with any of these steps along the way, contact the librarians of Madison College Libraries. We’re here to help![image: screenshot of Get Help! options from reference and research help guide]

Text Captions: Research Help

Slide 21 – Thanks

Image: HOWLER logo
Text Captions: Thanks
for viewing this HOWLER tutorial!