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

Click 'cc' button for closed-captioning

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

To get started, in the center of our home page change from 'Books/AV' to the 'Databases' tab.

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]

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]

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]

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]

In so doing, you might come away with several topic ideas that are more narrow than the one you started with.
Slide 13 – formats. 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]

Slide 14 - videos
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]

Slide 15 - choice of videos
Here are 34 news videos on the topic of school shootings. [image: screenshot of videos available]

Slide 16 - Newtown video
Videos are a great way to generate more specific topic ideas. [image: screenshot of "Guns: Did Newtown Change Anything" video player]

Slide 17 - TTS and Tools
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]

Slide 18 - questions
[image: photo of capital with gathering and protest sign "no more families torn apart"]
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]