How to Narrow Your Research Topic

A challenge in writing a research paper is narrowing down your topic. If your topic is too broad, you may encounter two major problems.

1. Too much information to manage
2. Inability to state an effective thesis

You can avoid these problems by applying the following limitations to your topic.

1. Time
2. Location
3. People/Person
4. Events/Objects

Example Topics:

French Literature → **Time:** 18th Century French Literature

**Place:** 18th Century Literature in Southern France

**People:** Women’s Literature in 18th Century France

**Events:** Illuminated Manuscripts in 18th Century French Literature

Pollution → **Location:** Pollution in the Fraser River

**Time:** Pollution in the Fraser River, 1960-1986

**Events:** The Salmon Fishing Industry and Pollution

**Person & Events:** David Suzuki and Pollution Activism

*Remember: These are only TOPICS. Your thesis statement must make a point about your topic.

Ex: Excessive pollution in the Fraser River from 1960 to 1986 is largely attributed to the salmon fishing industry.