

## Module: Research Strategies

### Lesson: How to Choose a Research Topic

#### Step 1: Review your Criteria

- Are you being asked to complete primary research or secondary research or a combination of the two?
- Will your results be presented in a paper or a report?
- How long and/or how detailed a paper or report is your instructor expecting?
- Are there any other special instructions?

#### What is....?

##### Primary Research

-  Experiments
-  Surveys
-  Interviews
-  Observations

##### Secondary Research

-  Consult Books
-  Read Articles
-  Watch Videos
-  Search Databases

#### Step 2: Do a Timing Reality Check

- **Primary Research:** you may need to make use of nearly all the time provided to collect an adequate amount of data.
- **Secondary Research:** begin researching as soon as possible in case you need to request a book or article that is not locally available.

*Leave enough time for...*

Research + Review / Analysis + Writing

A clear understanding of the expected criteria for the project will help you to formulate a plan of action and begin budgeting your time.

Instructors will give you an adequate amount of time to complete your research project...

...it is up to you to make good use of this time!

## Step 3: Test out a Preliminary Topic

Let's take a very general, very broad subject - like double-dipping a chip - and see how we can choose and test a preliminary topic using two common approaches: "curiosity" and "making a case "...



### Subject: "Double-dipping a Chip"

#### Curiosity

Identify a topic that you are curious about that relates to the general subject you have been asked to research.



"Is it **really** that bad to double-dip?"

#### Making a Case

Attempt to make a case about a topic in order to persuade other of your point-of-view.

"Double-dipping **should not** be a party foul."



Once you have a preliminary topic, you can begin to do some initial research to see if the topic warrants further development.

#### Primary Research Example

Begin formulating an experiment that tests bacteria levels on double-dipped party snacks.

#### Secondary Research Example

Begin to check some database articles to see if there is available research about communal food and the spread of germs.

Topics with few secondary sources or requiring overly complex research may be frustrating or even impossible to work with. It's better to start over at this point than to have to make major changes down the line.