

Crafting research questions

1. Narrow and specific in scope.

*Appropriate to the length of the assignment, not a book or dissertation.
Addresses a specific part of a debate, not wide-ranging issues.*

Too broad:

What are the hazards of fad diets?

Better:

What are the hazards of low-carb diets?

2. Debatable, not bland or overdone.

Is it a debatable question of interest or have many others already answered that question?

Bland:

What is obsessive-compulsive disorder?

Better:

What are promising treatments for obsessive-compulsive disorder?

3. Grounded in empirical data, facts, and logic—not a moralistic argument.

Is the evidence from academic or scientifically based research studies-- not essays, commentary, or unsubstantiated popular sources

Too much opinion:

Is it wrong to share music files on the Internet?

Better:

How has Internet file sharing affected the earning potential of musicians?