

Journal 9/25/18

What is a social topic that you would be interested in researching?

Why does it interest you? What do you want to know?

Are there any benefits that could come from the topic being researched?

Unit 2: Research Methods

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Writing a Sociological Question

Pick a topic that really interests you

- Don't start by trying to figure out what is the "right" question to pick.
- Start by thinking of topics that:
 - really grab your attention
 - you really want to know more about.

Narrow it down to a question

For example, let's say that you are really interested in why women earn less than men.

That is a great question, but it is a big one.

You will not be able to answer it in a ten-page paper.

You could narrow it down by saying that you want to look at why there is a difference in income between male and female doctors or business executives. Those are manageable questions.

Is your question sociological?

- Make sure that your question is sociological.
- A good basic definition of a sociological question is as follows:
 - Sociological questions are questions that examine the social meaning or patterns of a phenomenon.
- The key here is that it has to be social
 - involving groups rather than individuals
 - has to address patterns or meanings.

When formulating a question

Your question should be one that:

- lends itself to sociological analysis
- is not a "yes" or "no" question
- has more than one plausible answer
- you can get the information to answer
- is answerable in the page length allotted

Let's take the example of AIDS.

Here are three very interesting questions about AIDS.

1. What treatments are effective in prolonging the lives of AIDS patients?
2. Does having AIDS increase the likelihood a person will be depressed?
3. Does treatment for HIV vary by social class and ethnicity?

In your notebook

Which questions are not sociological and which are? Explain why or why not.

1. What treatments are effective in prolonging the lives of AIDS patients?
2. Does having AIDS increase the likelihood a person will be depressed?
3. Does treatment for HIV vary by social class and ethnicity?

In your notebook

Which questions are not sociological and which are? Explain why or why not.

1. What treatments are effective in prolonging the lives of AIDS patients? **Medical**
2. Does having AIDS increase the likelihood a person will be depressed? **Psychological**
3. Does treatment for HIV vary by social class and ethnicity?
Sociological

In your notebook

Write 5 sociological questions that:

- lends itself to sociological analysis
- is not a "yes" or "no" question
- has more than one plausible answer