
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

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Introduction

Today we are going to talk about how to craft a good research question. We will discuss:



The types of questions we ask when we do research



What a research question is, and the research question's place within the research process



How to craft a strong research question



How our research question can evolve over time, and how it will guide our work.



The process of crafting a research question is critical for in-depth research projects such as essays or presentations.



The act of crafting a research question is an opportunity to connect personally with a topic.



What kinds of questions do we ask when we do research?

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

Pupil's Record. City of New York: Department of Education, 31 Jan 1919. Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. **C PUPIL'S RECORD** *Jan 9. 1919* CITY OF NEW YORK

Name *Schoenmann Mabel* Born *8-29-05* Emp. Cert. No. _____
Family Given
 Parent *Charles* Special Aptitudes _____ 7B Geog. _____
 Attended _____ days from 13th birthday to end of term *Miss Jan. 31, 19*

No. Street Fl. No.

2 E. 3rd

School	Bor.	Date Entered	Class	Present	Abs.	Late	Con.	Wk.	Not proficient in	School	Bor.	Date Entered	Class	Present	Abs.	Late	Con.	Wk.	Not proficient in
130	9	9.9.12	A ²	63 ⁴	29 ⁴	0	A	6											
"	"	1.31.13	1B ²	89 ⁷	17 ⁰	0	A	A											
"	"	6.27.13	2A ²	84 ⁵	5 ⁵	0	A	A											
"	"	1.30.14	2B ²	92 ²	6 ²	0	A	A											
"	"	6.30.14	3A ²	85 ¹	4 ¹	0	A	A											
"	"	1.29.15	3B ²	88 ⁴	7 ⁴	0	A	A											
"	"	6.30.15	4A ²	82 ²	7 ³	0	A	A											
"	"	1.31.16	4B ²	74 ⁴	23 ⁴	0	A	B ⁺											
"	"	6.30.16	5A ²	83	2	0	A	B ⁺											
"	"	2.2.17	5B ²	90 ³	3 ³	0	A	A											
"	"	6.29.17	6A	Skipped															
"	"	6.29.17	6B ²	82	0	0	A	A											
"	"	1.31.18	7A	91	1	0	A	B											
"	"			83	8	0	A	B ⁺											

Graduated January 1919

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

Report Card. City of New York: Board of Education, Apr 1915. Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History.

Attendance and Punctuality

	Oct. 31	Dec. 15	Jan. 31
ABSENT	7	1	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
LATE	0	0	0

First Report

In view of this pupil's ability, he (she)

- Is doing very well
- Is doing satisfactory work
- Could do better
- Shows little effort

I have read this report
Parent's Signature: *F. Wagman*

Second Report

In view of this pupil's ability, he (she)

- Is doing very well
- Is doing satisfactory work
- Could do better
- Shows little effort

I have read this report
Parent's Signature: *F. Wagman*

Third Report

In view of this pupil's ability, he (she)

- Is doing very well
- Is doing satisfactory work
- Could do better
- Shows little effort

I have read this report
Parent's Signature: *F. Wagman*

Class next term: *6-5*

43

Rm. 509

Form 77-6725-(2A-6B)-600M-7-45

P. S. *161* Borough *Brooklyn*

Board of Education
City of New York

Report Card

Term beginning *Sept. 1916*

Name *Wagman Judy*

Class *5-1-2* Room *502*

Teacher *Mrs. R. F. Levine*

TO PARENTS:

The school is trying to aid the growth of your child in scholarship, in health habits and in character. To get the best results, inside and outside school, your help is needed.

The principal and the teacher will be pleased to talk matters over with you.

NAME *Wagman, Judy*

In the development of these traits, the home shares responsibility with the school.

TRAINING IN PERSONALITY

Desirable Traits	Oct. 31	Dec. 15	Jan. 31	
	Mar. 15	May 15	Jun. 30	July
1. Works and plays well with others	S	S	S	S
2. Completes work	S	S	S	S
3. Is generally careful	S	S	S	S
4. Respects the rights of others	S	S	S	S
5. Practices good health habits	S	S	S	S
6. Speaks clearly	S	S	S	S
7. <i>Home Work</i>	S	S	S	S
8. <i>Self Control</i>	B+	A	A	A

MEANING OF RATINGS

S—Satisfactory U—Unsatisfactory
 I—Improvement is shown
 A—Excellent B—Good
 C—Passable D—Failing

When per cent. ratings are used, *75*% is the passing rating, except in Spelling, where *90*% is required.

Scholarship

	Nov. 15	Mar. 15	May 15	Jan. 31	Jun. 30
Reading	B+	B+	B+	B+	B+
Literature					
Composition	B-	B	B-	B	B
Spelling	98	100	98	100	100
Arithmetic	95	90	88	92	92
Geography	80	82	82	84	84
History and Civics	95	90	85	80	80
Penmanship	5	5	5	5	5
Health Education					
Art					
Music					
Nature					
Sewing or Construction					
<i>Activity Unit</i>					B+
<i>Height - 56 1/2"</i>				56 1/2"	
<i>Weight - 95</i>				88	

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT

First Period	Second Period	Third Period

What kinds of questions do we ask when we do research?

Based on these sources, we could ask:

- When did Mabel Schoennmann graduate?
- What factors may have contributed to girls' education in New York City?
- What was the impact of education on girls in early 20th century New York City?

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- What factors may have contributed to girls' education in New York City?
- What was the impact of education on girls in early 20th century New York City?

Let's reflect:

- Which of these questions could we respond to by looking at a single source?
- Which question would require us to construct a response using both sources?
- Which question is not possible to answer with these sources?



Mabel Schoenmann graduated in 1919, and we can answer this question by looking at a single source.



Attendance, health, and personality may all have contributed to both Mabel and Judy's education, and we can construct this response by looking at both sources.



We can't see the impact of education on girls in early 20th century New York City by looking at only these two sources; we will need to examine a variety of sources.



What kinds of questions do we ask when we do research?



Guiding Questions

- Are very simple.
- They might have a yes / no answer.
- They often start with a question stem like who, what, when, where, or why.
- They always end with an answer.
- We can usually answer a guiding question by looking at one source.



Guiding Questions

- When did Mabel Schoennmann graduate?



Essential Questions

- makes us think more.
- We will have to search for the answer, and we may have to analyze one or more sources in order to craft a response.
- An essential question needs at least one full sentence for an answer.
- We will often need more sentences in order to explain our answer.



Essential Questions

- What factors may have contributed to girls' education in New York City?



Research Questions

- The overarching question that guides our entire project.
- We will only have one main research question, although it may lead us to ask many other questions.



A research question is clear



A research question is focused



A research question is arguable



Research Questions

- What was the impact of education on girls in early 20th century New York City?

This is not a good research question:

Did Jackie Robinson play for the Brooklyn Dodgers?

- There is only one answer to this question

This is not a good research question:

“Why is visiting historic places helpful?”

- This question is not focused
- This question uses unclear language



The act of crafting a research question is an opportunity to connect personally with a topic.

To craft my research question, I should reflect on aspects of my research topic that are personally interesting to me, and things I want to know about my topic.

I might ask:

- What classes did New York City students take in 1919?
- How many schools were in New York City in 1919?
- Did girls and boys attend classes together in the early 20th century?
- How did girls' school attendance increase or decrease during the 20th century?

Next, I choose one of these questions and transform it into a research question.

My research question should be clear, focused, and arguable.

We have some words that we often use when we transform questions into research questions. They are:

- Cause
- Effect
- Compare
- Impact
- Change
- Influence

Let's take the question:

- How did girls' school attendance increase or decrease during the 20th century?

I'll change it to:

- How did changes in girls' school attendance in New York City during the 20th century impact their opportunities in life?

Now it's time to plan my research:

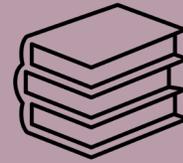
Research Question:

How did changes in girls' school attendance in New York City during the 20th century impact their opportunities in life?

Information to look up:

- Girls' school attendance numbers in New York City in the 20th century
- Changes in the rate of women's participation in the workforce in New York City in the 20th century
- Changes in the types of jobs available to women in New York City in the 20th century
- Changes in the amount of money women earned in New York City in the 20th century

**My question isn't
as focused as I
thought!**



Let's focus my question more:

I previously wrote:

- How did changes in girls' school attendance in New York City during the 20th century impact their opportunities in life?

I'll change it to:

- How did changes in girls' school attendance in New York City in the 1920s and 1930s impact the jobs they were prepared for in the 1940s and 1950s?

Let's plan out our research again:

Revised Research Question:

How did changes in girls' school attendance in New York City in the 1920s and 1930s impact the jobs they were prepared for in the 1940s and 1950s?

Information to look up:

- Girls' school attendance in New York City in the 1920s and 1930s, as compared with previous decades
- Jobs that women were eligible for in the 1940s and 1950s, which may not have been available to them previously
- Factors aside from education that may have helped women gain these jobs in the 1940s and 1950s

Let's start our research!



Wrap-Up

Today we talked about how to craft a good research question. We learned about:

- The types of questions we ask when we do research
- What a research question is, and the research question's place within the research process
- How to craft a strong research question
- How our research question can evolve over time, and how it will guide our work.

THANK YOU!

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