



Study Skills: Picking a Topic and Title

Pick a topic based on:

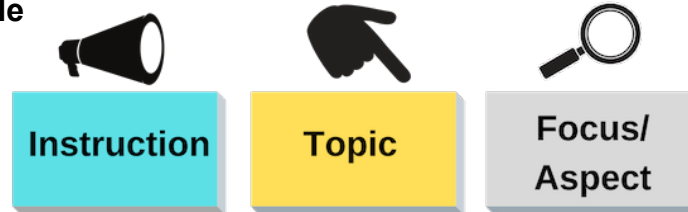
- a development or trend within your discipline
- a subject of interest from a lecture
- an area that raises a debate
- a topic that draws on personal experience and practice

(Levin, 2011)

Assessing suitability checklist (O'Leary, 2018, p. 89):

Questions	Yes/No
Is the question right for me?	
Is the question right for my discipline	
Is the question well-articulated (clear, easy to understand)?	
Is the title doable? (Enough research, not too wide)	
Does the question get the tick of approval from those in the know? (Get feedback from tutor)	

Forming your title



- There are normally three parts to titles: an instruction, topic and focus.
- An **instruction** tells you what to do e.g., compare. The **topic** is your main area of interest and the **focus/aspect** narrows the topic down (Gillet, 2019).
- Narrow a topic through aspects such as time, place, perspective or aspect.

Common Instruction Words (Cottrell, 2003, p. 155):

Analyse	Examine closely; pick out key features and points
Compare	Show similarities and differences; could suggest which is preferable.
Discuss	Write about important points; maybe look at for/against.
Evaluate	Assess the worth by using evidence

Tip: click to see more [instruction verbs](#); which ones relate most to your approach?



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Example Title Formats

Question:

How do "The unfinished swan" and "Scanner sombre" use visual techniques and revelatory mechanics to produce meaningful experiences and propel players through game-spaces?

Single Statement:

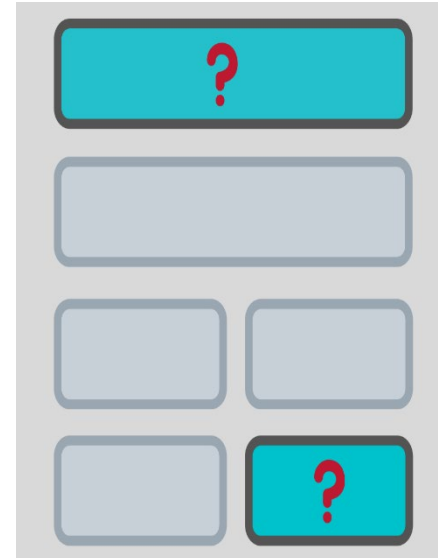
An exploration into the narrativity of the frame.

Two-part statement:

Modernism versus ornament: debating the effectiveness of communication through graphic and artistic poster design.

Statement, followed by question:

Gender is a drag: how is feminine identity performed through practices of dress?



Which of the 4 formats works for you?

Tip: use these title building tricks (Leahy, 1992):

1. Write a question beginning with Who, How, Why, Is/Are, Do/Does or Will.
2. Look at some of your draft ideas or writing: are there any phrases or sentences that could form a title?
3. Take the title you just wrote and twist it by changing a word or adding a pun.
4. Find two titles you've written that go together. Join them with a colon.

Reference List

- Gillet, A. (2019) *Understanding the task*. Available at: www.uefap.net/preparing/preparing-task/preparing-understanding-the-task-introduction (Accessed: 10 June 2019).
- Cottrell, Z. (2003) *The study skills handbook*. 2nd edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Leary, Z. (2018) *Little quick fix: research question*. London: Sage.
- Leahy, R. (1992) 'Twenty Titles for the Writer.' *College Composition and Communication* 43, (4), pp. 516–519. JSTOR. doi:10.2307/358644.
- Levin, P. (2011) *Excellent Dissertations!* Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education.