

# Fall Research Paper



# Purpose

- Research a topic and develop a thesis driven essay defining and proving the topic's impact on some aspect of African history (ancient or modern)
- **Not an informational report.**
- Argue how your topic is historically significant and prove that argument with concrete factual support.



# Topic vs. Question

- Your *topic* is a noun or phrase
  - Marie Antoinette
  - the 100 Years' War
  - Fascism
- Your *question* should be a complete sentence.
- Lets look @ a few past examples



# Focus

- Too broad a topic means only covering the surface of that person or issue
  - *The Russian Revolution*
- Focus on one issue within that topic
  - *How did Tsar Nicholas' policies contribute to the Russian Revolution?*



# Type of Questions: Reference

- **Referenced questions** are typically answered with known facts or statistics.  
*You will likely have to ask some reference questions in your research.*

- **Ex: What percentage of drug-related crime in 1999 was committed by dealers, not users?**



# Type of Questions: Report

- Review or report questions are typically answered with what is generally known about a fairly narrow topic.
- Ex: How did the original thirteen colonies become the United States?





# Type of Questions: Research

- Research questions are open-ended.
- They require a variety of accumulated information from different sources to develop an answer, and the student is required to draw his or her own conclusions.
- Ex: How does Hawaii's location and climate affect its economy?



# Some ways to begin a research question

- Why...
- How...
- What are the effects of...
- What are the consequences of...
- Contrast (then & now)
- What was the influence of \_\_\_ on \_\_\_?





# What does a good research question look like?

- A good thesis question may result from your curious observations of primary source material, as in:
  - *"During World War II, why did American soldiers seem to treat Japanese prisoners-of-war more brutally than German prisoners-of-war?"*
- Or, good thesis questions may challenge accepted wisdom, as in:
  - *"It is commonly believed that the Middle Ages in Europe were a dark and unrefined period for Western civilization; is this inaccurate?"*
- Finally, a good thesis question may complicate a seemingly clear-cut topic, as in:
  - *"Puritans took Indians' land for wealth, but were psychological factors involved as well?"*

