

Pre Writing Exercise 3: Asking Questions

Asking Questions about a Subject

Asking questions is a resourceful form of [prewriting](#). You can ask questions to gather important information on a subject that you think you want to write about, to narrow a subject that you have already chosen, and to determine whether it makes sense to write about your chosen subject.

Ask Questions to Develop a Viewpoint on a Subject Ask the journalist's "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how" in order to get a sense of the subject's scope and of the way in which you may want to approach the subject--the angle that makes sense for you to take when thinking about the subject.

Ask Questions to Narrow a Subject Ask questions about your subject and use the answer to activate another question until you come to a question that is a good stopping place (a focused question that you know you can research, or a focused question that you can answer on your own with examples and details). For example:

Subject: Education

Education in what country?	the U.S.
What level of U.S. education?	education for children
What level of childhood education?	Head Start
What do I want to know about it?	special programs
Any particular programs?	reading readiness
How effective are Head Start	
reading readiness programs?	

Or

Subject: Education

Education for whom?	college students
What type of college student?	adult, returning student
What problems do adult, returning students face?	

As you develop a "chain" using each answer to generate another question, your subject both narrows in scope and becomes more complex--more appropriate for a college-level [essay](#) which requires some depth of thought.