

When writing an essay the first thing that is needed is a **topic**, which is what your essay is about. If given a choice, try to find something that sparks your interest since it will likely be easier to write such an essay.

A common problem of topic choices is that they are too broad, which means they cover too much an area. This unfocused essay topic usually leads to a vague and generalized essay, boring both to write and to read. Therefore, when thinking of a topic, try to concentrate on a specific element or part of that topic.

For example:

TOPIC: *War*

- *Am I writing of one war or of war in general?*
- *Which war do I wish to write about? WWI? WWII? The Gulf War? "War" taken more metaphorically, between the sexes, siblings, or members of different races?*
- *Am I concentrating on the history of the war itself, or its causes or outcome?*
- *What specific events or examples will illustrate my points?*

Another problem is narrowing your topic too much. You do not want to have a topic that is so focused that you are very limited in what you can write, argue and support.

General subject: Media

Narrowed topic: Commercials

Specific topic: How commercials manipulate their audience

General subject: Dragons

Narrowed topic: Fire-breathing dragons

Specific topic: Problems in fighting the medieval fire-breathing dragon.