Have you read the assignment?

Read the assignment.

Do you know the following:
- How many pages is the paper supposed to be?
- What types of resources you should cite?
- How many resources you should cite?
- Guidelines for topic selection from your professor?

Guidelines for topic selection from your professor?

Ask your classmates or professor for help understanding the guidelines.

Have you selected a topic?

Time to start background research. Check the library catalog for books and a database for information on your topic.

Use these to get ideas for topics:
- Your interests and passions
- Trade Magazines (ask a librarian or your professor for help finding these)
- CQ Researcher (search or browse here: http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/, get full text from the Reference Collection)
- Opposing Viewpoints Database (on the library’s webpage)
- Your textbook
- A quick library catalog search
- Subject Encyclopedias (in the Reference Collection)
- Encyclopedia Britannica (on the library’s webpage) or Wikipedia

How much information is there on your topic?

Way too much. There are tons of books and hundreds of articles.

Not enough. There’s hardly anything written about my topic at all.

Just enough. I see a couple of books with useful chapters and a handful of appropriate articles and web pages.

Turn your topic into a research question, which you will use to guide your research.

Check out the library’s E-Resources by Subject for helpful web pages and databases to start your research.

For help with this or any other step in your Research Process, please contact a West Library Reference Librarian. reference@txwes.edu