1. CHOOSING A TOPIC

What are three things on your mind right now?
Note: They do NOT have to be class-related
1. 
2. 
3. 

Think carefully about these interests. Are there any aspects of them that fall within your assignment parameters?

I’m not sure what I want to write about...

What are the requirements of your assignment? Page length, topic restrictions, etc.?

I have an idea for my topic...

What is your potential topic?

I’m not sure what I want to write about...

What about this topic interests you? If you can’t answer this question, go back to brainstorming topics!

Tentative topic:

What is your potential topic?

What are the requirements of your assignment? Page length, topic restrictions, etc.?

2. BRAINSTORMING SEARCH STRATEGIES

Synonym or Related Keyword:

Main Idea #1 (in one or two words)

Synonym or Related Keyword:

Main Idea #2 (in one or two words)

Synonym or Related Keyword:

Main Idea #3 (in one or two words)
3. FINDING RESOURCES ON YOUR TOPIC
Using a general library database, try out a search for your topic using the search terms you brainstormed in Part 2.

What keywords did you use to search?

How many results did you get? Does that seem like more than you expected? Less?

What is the first resource that shows up in the search? Does it seem relevant to your research interest?

Are there any resources on the first page of results that look promising to you? Write down the titles here.

4. MODIFYING YOUR SEARCH
Now change your search up—you could choose to try totally new keywords from your original brainstorming, different combinations of words, or adding another search term to your original search.

How did you change your search?

How many results did you get? Is that more or less than last time? What might be the reason for that change?

What is the first resource that shows up in the search? Does it seem more or less relevant to your research interest than the last first result?

Are there any resources on the first page of results that look promising to you? Write down the titles here.