

Campusweite Schreibwerkstatt

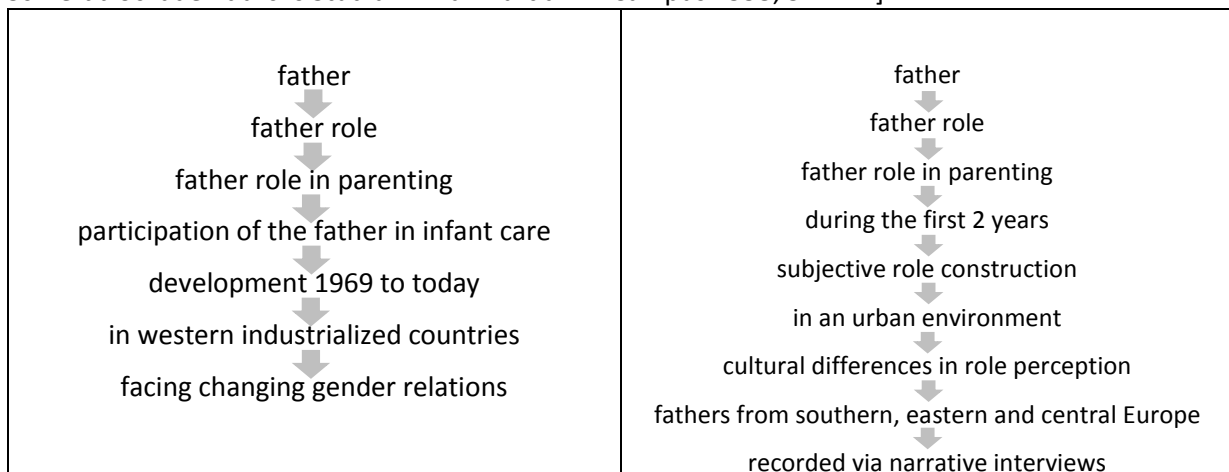
Limiting a topic

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Once you have found a suitable general topic, you then need to define and justify a niche in it. Methods for limiting your topic can help you find out whether your subject fits the scope of your scientific paper.

The following pages will present you to different examples and methods for limiting your topic. You should use only those tools that you consider appropriate and helpful.

Examples for specification of a general topic [vgl. Kruse, Otto: Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt. Ohne Schreibblockaden durchs Studium. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus 1993, S. 224f.]



[vgl. Kruse, Otto: Lesen und Schreiben. Wien: UVK 2010, S. 78.]

Unsuitable topic	Suitable topic
Language development in early childhood	Development of sentence formation during the second year
East-West conflict	Changes in the image of the ‚East‘ in ‚Der Spiegel‘ between 1989 and 1993
Human rights situation in the third world	Changes in the UN human rights policy in respect to conflicts in Africa around 1989
Environmental policies in the USA	The struggle about drilling rights in Alaska during the second term of George W. Bush

Criteria for limiting a topic

[vgl. Franck, Norbert/Stary, Joachim: Die Technik wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens. 16. Aufl. Paderborn u.a.: Schöningh 2011, S. 161; Kruse, Otto: Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt. Ohne Schreibblockaden durchs Studium. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus 1993, S. 126]

Goal:

- getting to know and use criteria in order to limit a topic

Procedure:

- Below follows a list of ideas that may help you limit your topic. Not every criteria fits every discipline or topic.
- Choose criteria you can apply to your topic and formulate appropriate, limited variations.

1. Time: from... until..., in the ...th century, in the classical period
2. Place: in Frankfurt, in the Alps, in Northern Germany
3. Institutions: in Universities, in federal state museums
4. Group of persons: adolescents, women, employees
5. Source: in a daily newspaper, in a documentary
6. Person: in the works/writings/personal statements of ...
7. Disciplinary aspects: pedagogical, theological, linguistic ...
8. Method: narratological analysis
9. Theorists: according to ...s model
10. Connection to a second topic/situation: in consideration of ...
11. chosen aspects/examples/particular cases: the penal system as bureaucracy, the church as a male world

Often, several criteria are combined, e.g.

- municipal politics of the SPD in the postwar period
- The influence of the agriculture lobby on Bavarian agriculture politics in the 1980s
- Women as target group for TV commercials in the 1970s
- Political protest in American pop music. The songs of Woody Guthrie

Pentagon Plan

[vgl. Frank, Andrea/Haacke, Stefanie/Lahm, Swantje: Schlüsselkompetenzen. Schreiben in Studium und Beruf. Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler 2007, S. 77.]

Goal:

- activating and documenting prior knowledge
- judging your work status

Procedure:

- write a short text to every aspect of the pentagon, or simply take notes.
- Think: Which subject area is already well thought through? What aspects should you work more on?

