Steps to Writing a Research Question

What does your instructor want you to demonstrate?

(What are the purpose and parameters of the assignment?)

What type of paper are you required to write?

(How will you organize your ideas?)

☐ ANALYTICAL PAPER - breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.

☐ EXPOSITORY (EXPLANATORY) PAPER - explains something to the audience.

☐ ARGUMENTATIVE (PERSUASIVE) PAPER - makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.¹

What do you already know about the topic?

1 Purdue Online Writing Lab, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/, 2014.
What do you WANT to learn about the topic?

What do you NEED to learn about the topic?

Consult reference material and course readings to learn more about your topic.

- Course Readings
- Encyclopaedias
- Dictionaries & Thesauri
- Online Reference (i.e. Wikipedia)
- Biographical Dictionaries
- Bibliographies and Indexes

Using reference material and course readings organize important vocabulary using a concept map. Indicate how concepts are related to each other. Highlight the concepts that you do not understand.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Ended Research Question</th>
<th>Closed Ended Research Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List some possible research questions based on the type of paper you are required to write.</td>
<td>Based on the assignment parameters, write a research question that you will use to guide your research and your writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose one research question and refine it by specifying what people, events, or ideas you will focus on. Your research question will guide your research and writing.</td>
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