

**Trying to come up with a topic for the Student Research EXPO?**

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Try some of the methods below:

1. List 3 of your greatest interests. That is, topics that you think about when you are free to focus purely on your interests.
  - a. How might you be able to develop a research topic from one of these interests?
2. List 3 problems in the world that you believe are significant and in need of solutions.
  - a. What could you learn from studying the problem?
  - b. How could research lead to a solution or solutions?
3. Think of your favorite hobby.
  - a. Is there something that is annoying or doesn't work very well?
  - b. Are there changes that could be made to make you hobby more efficient or enjoyable?
4. What line of work do you wish to pursue in the future?
  - a. What problems exist in this field? What solutions could you pose?
  - b. How might the job be made easier?
5. Read current events! Are there health, industry, environmental, or social issues that would be timely, important, and fun to research?
6. Still not quite sure? Get out there and read in an "area" or broad topic in which you are interested. Here you may come up with an idea as you learn background information. The more informed you are about a topic the more easily you can raise a question. Make certain to keep records of where you find information so you can come back to it.

**Another APPROACH:**Adapted from [www.qacps.k12.md.us/cms/sci/FAIRCONT.HTM#idea](http://www.qacps.k12.md.us/cms/sci/FAIRCONT.HTM#idea)

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Once you choose your topic, use these questions to decide if it is a good choice:

1. Does the topic sound interesting to you?
2. Can you make some sort of measurement? (dependent variable)
3. Can you change something in the project that could impact your measurement? (independent variable)
4. Can you control all other variables so they do not impact your results?
5. Will you be able to find 3 literature research sources for your literature research section?
6. Will you be able to collect enough data?
7. Do you have the material that is needed for this experiment?
8. Do you need special equipment?
9. Can the project be completed in the allowed time?
10. What is the cost of completing the project; is it too expensive?
11. Are there requirements for the use of any vertebrate (frogs, mice, humans, etc.)?
12. Are you willing to get signed consent? For research projects involving minors, have (on record) signed statements from parents or guardians.
13. Are you willing to go beyond basic statistics for surveys? More statistics must be done on surveys.

**PROPOSED TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_