

**Research Paper Step One:
Choosing a topic and thesis, oral presentation, and reference list**

The JS 100W instructors have chosen the general topic of “Recruitment, Selection and Training.” However, you must develop a more specific topic. Ask yourself, “In the context of the recruitment process, the numerous phases of the selection process, and the months of training that a new recruit goes through, what would I like to know more about?” and, “Is there an area in which I already have particular knowledge?” For example, if you are presently employed with or intend to pursue a career with a particular criminal justice agency, you might consider examining how that agency recruits, screens and trains new personnel and how well they feel their approach works. Are their ways to reach out to underrepresented populations? Can the rising costs of screening and training be managed more efficiently by adopting different processes? Is the drop-out rate at the training level significantly high, possibly indicating that the screening process is flawed?

In the course of narrowing your topic, you will need to conduct document research on the web and at the library. As a source of supplemental information, you may interview a professional in the field; however, the interview will not count as one of the required sources for your paper. You will need to choose a topic that can be handled in a relatively short (8-10 page) paper. The topic should be stated as a question:

Example of specific topic: *“Can the effects of the transition from private citizen to a law enforcement officer be reduced by the use of a Veteran Officer Panel as a means to address potential problems and effective solutions?”*

Development of Thesis

A crucial step in writing is the determination of a clear thesis which can be supported. The thesis differs from the topic in that the topic tells what you are writing about, while the thesis states what you are going to say about the topic. For example, if the topic addresses the subtle yet powerful changes a new recruit goes through during the training process that can become damaging to the recruits personal life, then one might develop the following thesis:

“The incorporation of a Veteran Officer Panel in the police academy will lessen the effects of the training on the private and personal lives of the recruits.”

Keep in mind that you are not being graded on your opinion, but on your ability to communicate and support a point of view (your thesis). Supporting the thesis means utilizing appropriate and compelling evidence to clarify and support the point of view; that evidence will come from your research and interviews.

Thesis Presentation

You will be presenting your thesis orally to the class. You may use one 4X6 note card to help you with your presentation.

On the day of the presentation, (before your presentation), you will turn in the following:

- ❖ A minimum of a half page, up to one page description of the topic and your thesis
- ❖ A reference list of at least ten sources which you have found related to the topic. This list must be typed in APA style, and include a brief explanation of the article and how you intend to use it in your paper.

Reference List

The reference list is a list of 10 articles which relate to your topic, and which you may use for your research paper.

The list should be alphabetized by author's last name, and typed up in APA format. After each article citation, you must include a brief explanation (1-2 sentences) of why this article will be useful for your paper. This is a preliminary listing to show that you are able to do the research and find appropriate articles. You may not end up using all of the articles in your final paper.

After your thesis has been presented in class, the viability of the thesis will be discussed. Whether a thesis is viable for the research paper depends to a large degree on the availability of articles, peer reviewed and otherwise, in support of the thesis. If you run into trouble finding articles to include on the reference list, go see your 100W instructor or a librarian for guidance.