Teasing Out A Research Question from Your Topic

1. What is your assignment?  
   What type of paper is this? How might that influence your choice of topic?

2. What do you want to write about?  
   Whether you are certain of your topic or not, choose something you’re considering in order to start exploring possibilities.

3. Preliminary research: Run a quick search of news, blogs, current periodicals.  
   What has been written recently? Look for issues within the topic that prompt concern or controversy, perspectives by advocates and opponents, narrower aspects, etc.

4. What are the facts of your topic?
   - WHAT: Synonyms? Related or similar terms?
   - WHO cares? Individuals? Groups? Organizations?
   - Does WHERE matter? What places?
   - Does WHEN make a difference? Any significant dates?
   Optional: indicate issue or narrower aspect

5. Ask Why or How?  
   Open-ended questions with some specificity give direction and point out a path for research.

6. Question the question(s)

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