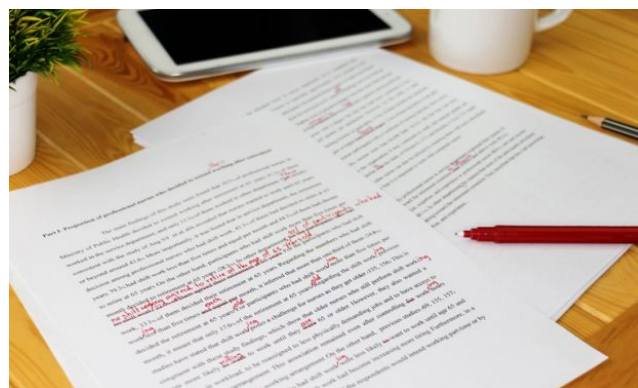




## How to choose a topic for your dissertation

Picking a topic for your dissertation can seem scary, so here are some tips to help you narrow it down

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By [Rutherford](#)

Choosing a topic for your dissertation is one of the toughest decisions that you will make while at university.

You want to find a topic that you find interesting, one that will enable you to do well and demonstrate your academic strengths and will also impress a prospective employer with your interests and abilities. And, of course, you want to avoid a topic that will lead you down a blind alley or paint you into a corner.

The last major submission of your degree, your dissertation is also expected to prove that you can process complicated information and order it coherently. An added bonus would be for your dissertation to help prepare you for your future career.

To ensure that both the final dissertation and the skills that you will gain in preparing it will help you in pursuit of your chosen career, begin by identifying the kind of work that you hope to be doing two or three years after graduation. (Almost no one gets their dream job within a year or two of graduating; you still have things to learn – and so you should consider your first job, possibly your first two jobs, as training still.)

On one side of a piece of A4 paper, describe this job, its challenges, its demands and its responsibilities as clearly as you can. Make a list of the knowledge and abilities that you will need to do this job. (If you find this difficult, this may be a sign that you do not yet know this job well enough to be sure that it is what you want.)

Now, on the other side of the paper, list the major things that you have learned and the skills that you have developed during your time at university that are relevant to this job.

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**(<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/blogs/university-grading-errors-are-more-common-you-might-think>)**

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Now ask yourself: if you had the power to design and deliver one additional final-year unit, one that would provide the knowledge and skills that you currently lack – but which are required for the job you want – what would this unit teach? What questions would it answer – and what would it be called?

Consider the areas of your degree that you are interested in and yet have not covered in great depth. Or think about how your degree subject could progress in the next few years. This is what your dissertation can centre around.

Consider those who graduated from journalism, marketing or politics in 2000 just before the proliferation of social media. If by the end of their studies, these students had not learned how to recognise the impact of this new technology on the future of their industry – not only how things are done, but the kind of things that can be done – even the brightest graduates will soon have found their once-promising career prospects reduced.

The topic of your dissertation should show off the skills you have acquired while studying as well as take into account your future career.

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#### **HAVE YOUR SAY**