

Tips for Narrowing Your Topic

If your topic is too broad:

You will have too many categories that relate to different aspects of the topic. For example, if your topic is “dogs,” some of your categories might be “finding and choosing a dog,” “getting shots at the vet,” “feeding,” “grooming,” “training,” “walking,” and “exercise.” But if you narrow the topic to “finding a dog,” you have these categories: “at a breeder’s kennel,” “at the ASPCA,” “at a local adoption agency.”

If your topic is too narrow:

You won’t be able to come up with multiple categories. For example, if your topic is “the eye of a hurricane,” then you can describe the eye, but that’s only one category.

If you have a “just-right” topic:

You can find three to four categories related to the topic. For example, if your topic is “World War II combat aircraft,” you can explore these categories: “the P-51 Mustang,” “the B-29 Superfortress,” and “the F4U Corsair.” Each paragraph can discuss the benefits of the fighter plane and describe a mission.

Ask these questions about your topic and its categories:

- * Does my topic have three to four categories?
- * Can I include enough details and examples for each category?
- * Do I need to narrow my topic? Do I need to broaden it?