# How to Find a Subject for Scientific Projects (e.g. Term Paper, Thesis)

**IT IS ALWAYS A CHALLENGE TO FIND A SUBJECT FOR ONE`S SCIENTIFIC PROJECT. THE FOLLOWING STEPS WILL HELP YOU FINDING A SUBJECT THAT IS INTERESTING AND PRACTICABLE.**

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<td><strong>Interests</strong></td>
<td>Ask yourself: When have I last been proud of myself? Which topics have I already dealt with? Which are my fields of interest? In which field would I like to (advance) my knowledge? You get further starting point when asking yourself: What has been surprising in the recent past? What should I know? Which processes should be known (in general)? What is different today compared to the past? (You can find more questions in Kruse (2004:193f.))</td>
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| 2 | **Previous knowledge** | After finding an interesting subject you should discover what you already know about it. There are multiple ways to do so. Here are two methods:  
   - **Brainstorming:** Write down all you know about a subject. Everything is right! Take 15 minutes. Afterwards, try to draw connections between single thoughts. Which fit together? Which ones are standing out? Why is that?  
   - **Questions:** Write down all the questions you have regarding the subject. Keep in mind that easy questions tend to be the most important ones. |
| 3 | **Practicability** | Investigate whether there are sufficient sources related to your subject. If so, please check whether they are available. Moreover, you should make inquiries as to who can support you with your project (e.g. lecturers). |
| 4 | **Narrow down your subject** | There are multiple ways to narrow down a subject, e.g. by  
   - selecting one aspect  
   - limiting the sources used  
   - defining a region (geographically)  
   - defining a period in history  
   (You can find more ways in Rost (2005:279f.)) |
| 5 | **Aims** | You should become aware of the aims of your project.  
   - Ask yourself: Which question do I want to be answered by my project?  
   - End the following question: My project shows/ interprets/ discusses/ analyses... |

**Some subjects one should rather avoid including subjects which are...**

- too personal
- too abstract
- too ambitious
- too hard for you to connect with
- too "trendy"
- in need of sources which are hardly available