

Choosing a Research Paper Topic

In the Academic Writing course, you will write a 1500-word research paper in English. You are free to write about any topic you like, but it is important to choose a topic you are interested in and care about and that has a certain amount of controversy surrounding it. In your research paper, you will try to convince the reader that your views about this topic are reasonable and make sense. If you do not feel passionate about the topic, you will not convince the reader of anything. It is also important to think of a topic which you can say something new and original about. Bad research papers are often ones that simply retell old information. You also need to be careful to choose a topic that you can find new information about in books, journals, newspaper articles, or on the Internet. By reading around the topic and by using good information to support what you want to say, you can write a really strong research paper, especially if you feel passionately about the topic.

The topic needs to be something serious, something which is likely to be of concern to a large number of people. The issue is likely to be problematic (controversial) in some way. People may have very different opinions about this topic. Some will be in favour of one solution; others will be in favour of a completely different solution. Some people may think that there is no problem at all. Your job is to try to convince the reader that your solution is reasonable.

In the past, students have often written about current issues affecting Japanese society and in their research papers they have tried to find internal and international solutions to these problems.

Before you go to your first Academic Writing class, you should:

- 1. decide which topic you will write about;**
- 2. do some reading around the topic;**
- 3. try to figure out what it is you want to say about the topic (what points do you want to make?).**

If you have any questions, please send them to Mr. Ashwell (tashwell[AT]komazawa-u.ac.jp). I am afraid I cannot give you individual advice about your topic, but I will try to answer any general questions you may have.