

Some Suggestions for Choosing Your Research Topics

While the possibilities for a literature research paper are endless, a listing of some common approaches and categorizations could serve as a starting point:

- **Genre of literature:** Select a genre, such as poetry, drama, biography, historical fiction, or mystery, and show changes over time.
- **Patterns:** Find connections in one work, a genre or an era.
- **Literature of a particular era:** Are the authors of a time period constrained by the society they live in, or do some transcend it?
- **Focus on one country's literature:** American, African or British literature and explore the unfamiliar — Japan, India, etc.
- **A chronological analysis** of how one author's works and writing style evolved over time.
- **The use of symbolism and literary devices:** How does an author use elements such as light and dark to foreshadow or advance a plot?
- **Compare and contrast:** As an example, themes and portrayals of society in Balzac's *Father Goriot* and Brett Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*.
- **Writing as an impetus for change:** Writers may indirectly, gradually cause change in society, or in other cases force change. Look at the Realistic novel for instance.
- **Poetry:** offers many avenues to explore including themes, varied writing devices and styles.
- **Analyze the ideological differences:** between one writer and another and how their views informed their writing.
- **Compare and contrast devices:** Analyzing the protagonists' developments in response to the new ideas they encounter.
- **Gender roles:** How are the roles of men and women portrayed in the novel? Are they distinctly different? Do they have equal rights? What gender expectations do they follow or fight against?
- **Politics:** What issues in politics does this novel address? Discrimination? Rights? Equality? Religion: How is this novel religious? What beliefs is it promoting or questioning?
- **DO NOT** worry about the changes that you may bring to your research outline. Through your readings you can change as many times as necessary. The more you read the better you improve it.