

Developing Stronger Research Questions



The research question must be appropriate to the particular subject in which the essay is submitted. In history, this means that it must focus on the human past and not be of a trivial nature. The research question must be clearly and exactly focused, and stated in both the abstract and the introduction of the essay.

What will you measure?

How will you measure it?

Through what sources?

What will you measure?

“The impact of **Abbasid Queen mothers** on the **strength of their sons’ rule.**”

“The impact of **economic class relations** in **directing the French Revolution.**”

“The extent to which **World War II** **altered college football.**”

“How **computers** changed the **college experience** in the 1950s.”

You are taking a **variable** and measuring the *“impact”* that that variable had on the **outcome.**

What will you measure?

“How **computers** changed the **college experience** in the 1950s.”

To what extent **did the use of new technology** impact people in history?

To what extent **did the use of computers** impact people in history?

(Early digital computers came about in the 1950s often on college campuses)

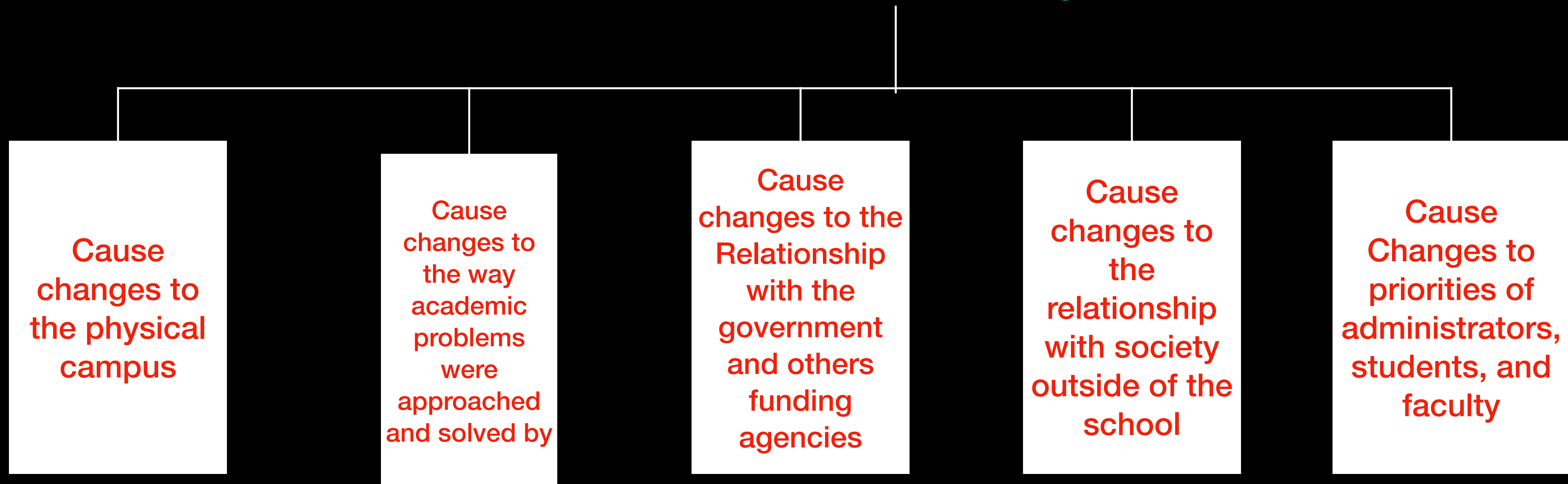
Or so, I learned in my background reading

To what extent **did the use of computers** impact college students in the 1950s?

Minimize the **variable** and minimize **the thing upon which you are measuring its impact** to make a project more manageable.

What will you measure?

To what extent **did the use of computers** **impact college students in the 1950s?**



Minimize the **variable** and minimize **the thing upon which you are measuring its impact** to make a project more manageable.

The more I can minimize the less work I have to do to complete the project.

What will you measure?

To what extent **did the use of computers**

Cause
changes to
the way
academic
problems
were
approached
and solved by

college students in the 1950s?

In the U.S.

In the South

In Georgia

At UGA and Georgia Tech

Minimize the **variable** and minimize **the thing upon which you are measuring its impact** to make a project more manageable.

The more I can minimize the less work I have to do to complete the project.

What will you measure?

~~To what extent~~ did the use of computers

Cause
changes to
the way
academic
problems
were
approached
and solved by

college students in the 1950s?

Often used when a student is making an assumption at the beginning of a project and can become hard to let the assumption go.

In the U.S.

In the South

In Georgia

At UGA and Georgia Tech

Yes
(Change)

Cause(s)
Significance

No
(Continuity)

Why

Why Not?

The more I can minimize the less work I have to do to complete the project.

“The impact of **economic class relations** in **directing the French Revolution.**”

To what extent did **upper middle class revolutionaries’ perceptions** of an aristocracy that was blind to the plights of the lower classes **motivate them to start a revolution** in the **Spring of 1789.**

You are taking a **variable** and measuring the **“impact” that that variable had on the outcome.**

The more I can minimize the less work I have to do to complete the project.

“The impact of **economic class relations** in **directing the French Revolution.**”

To what extent did **upper middle class revolutionaries’ perceptions** of an aristocracy that was blind to the plights of the lower classes **motivate them to start a revolution** in the **Spring of 1789.**

~~Aristocratic
views of
the poor
and middle
classes~~

~~Views of
the rural
peasants
about the
wealthy
and about
themselves~~

~~Statements
by
monarchy
about the
revolution
itself~~

Statements
by upper
middle
class about
their
motivations
for
revolution

You are taking a **variable** and measuring the **“impact”** that that variable had on the **outcome.**

The more I can minimize the less work I have to do to complete the project.

What will you measure?

To what extent did **upper middle class revolutionaries' perceptions** of an aristocracy that was blind to the plights of the lower classes **motivate them to start a revolution** in the **Spring of 1789**.

How will you measure it?

By seeing how often the upper middle class revolutionaries spoke about the way they felt the aristocrats viewed the lower classes and whether or not the revolutionaries used similar language in the laws and proclamations that they made during those early months of the revolution.

Through what sources?

By seeing how much significance historians have placed on *the perception of middle class revolutionaries as a cause of the French Revolution*

Statements
by upper
middle
class about
their
motivations
for
revolution

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources



Could you and a friend write on your topic using different sources?

If so, your question/topic is too broad!

The point is to make sure that your research efforts have clear direction so that you don't wander around

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