

Interest Inventory
Adapted from *The Curious Researcher* by Bruce Ballenger

Step 1: Generate Lists

Chose three (or more) of the following headings, and spend 10-20 minutes listing things you know or might want to know related to that heading. Ideas may come in waves, but if you get stuck, choose a new heading and start on that. Move back and forth between lists as necessary to generate as long of lists as possible.

PLACES, TRENDS, THINGS, TECHNOLOGIES, PEOPLE, CONTROVERSIES, HISTORY,
JOBS, HABITS, HOBBIES

Step 2: Review Lists

Review your lists, looking for any single item that looks promising (when you find one, circle it). Ask yourself questions like these: Is this something that raises potentially interesting questions? Does this item get at something I want to know more about?

Step 3: Generate Questions

For whatever item you've chosen, start brainstorming a list of questions you'd like to explore about the subject.

Step 4: Test your Questions

To test whether or not you have a good question, do some freewriting. What do you already know about your subject/question? What do you need to find out about? Write for a good while. If you keep generating material and stay interested, you are likely on track for a subject and question that will hold your attention throughout your writing project.