# Refining your Dissertation or Project Topic

If you’re in the initial stages of working out your dissertation topic, working through these questions may help you to refine and focus your proposal. If you’re in the middle or near the end of your dissertation and feel you’re too close to it to see it clearly any more, this exercise might help you regain perspective.

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| **What is your dissertation *about*?** | Helps you settle on a subject. Needs to be refined further or topic will be too broad  |  |
| ***What* about it? What aspects will you focus on?** | Helps you narrow down subject into a manageable project to explore in depth |  |
| **What are you going to *do*?** | Helps you avoid being descriptive, and think at a higher level |  |
| **What *question* will you answer?** | Helps you find a clear direction and tell when you’ve finished or gone off track |  |
| **What problem will you solve?** | Helps you justify why the project is worth doing |  |
| **What might your answer look like?** | Helps you develop aims or hypotheses and stay on track |  |
| **What literature, sources and methods/tools/ideas will you use to *reach it*?** | Helps you establish whether your project is feasible |  |