



The three-step process

The three-step process is a method that is helpful when developing a research question. Students can use it not only to name their topic, but also to consider what they want to find out in their work and why their project is relevant for potential readers.

Task:

Take 10-20 minutes and apply the formulation aids to your own topic. First work on I. the three steps and then II. the rewording on the back. The example serves as a guide.

I. Three steps

1. name the topic (= what am I writing about?)

'I am researching/working on/writing about...'

Example: I am researching medium-sized companies in Germany...

Your topic:

2. include the question (= what do I want to know?)

'... because I want to understand/find out/comprehend ...'

Example: ...because I want to find out how the usual measures for optimising personnel management are designed,

...

Your question:

3. define the research objective (= why do I want to know this?)

'... to consider/determine/test/find out ...'

Example: ... to find out whether these measures correspond to the categories of a modern corporate culture.

Your research objective:



II. rewording

Now rephrase what you have written under 2. into a **question**:

Example: Do the measures for optimising personnel management in medium-sized companies correspond to those of a modern corporate culture?

Now rephrase what you have written under 3. into a statement and complete the beginning of the following sentence: The **goal** of this paper is to ...

Example: determine whether the measures for optimising the personnel management of medium-sized companies in Germany correspond to a modern corporate culture.

Now you can develop a **working hypothesis** from the defined goal that begins as follows: I assume that...

Example: in most cases, measures to optimise the personnel management of medium-sized companies in Germany do not correspond to a modern corporate culture.

Source: Grieshammer, E. et al., Zukunftsmodell Schreibberatung. Eine Anleitung zur Begleitung von Schreibenden im Studium, Baltmannsweiler 2012.

