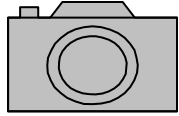


Getting Started

Focusing your writing is very much like focusing a camera. First, frame the picture you might want to take, and then focus on something specific within that picture.

One way to explore your focus is to ask yourself questions.



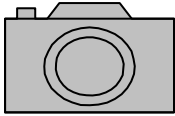
yourself:

If your assignment involves **informational** or **objective writing**, such as a world event or a problem in society, ask

- **WHAT** should I like to know more about?
- **HOW** is my world changing?
- **WHAT EVENT** is changing my world?

After you have written down a few ideas, expand on them. Ask yourself:

- **WHAT** problems need solutions?
- **HOW** can they be solved?
- **WHAT SOLUTIONS** lead to new problems?



If your assignment involves **critical**, **persuasive**, or other **subjective writing**, these questions might be helpful:

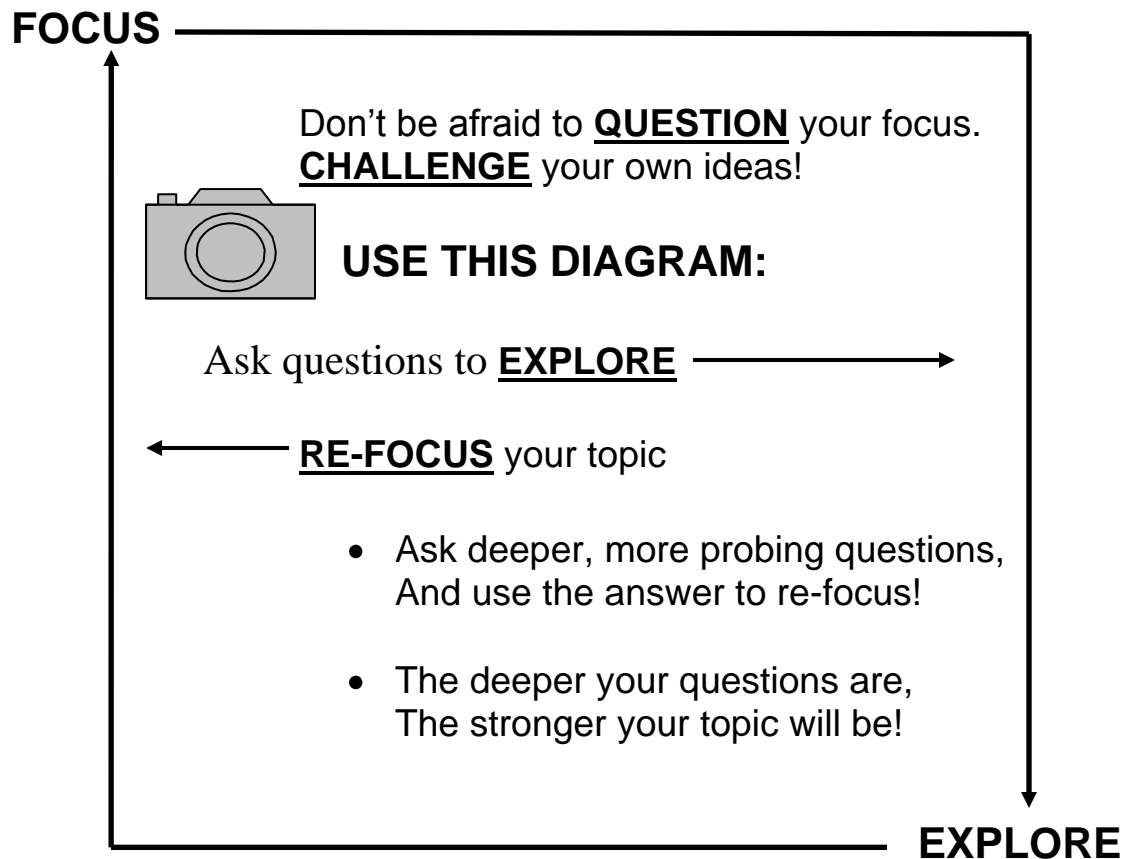
- **WHAT** makes me angry?
- **WHAT** influences my thinking?
- **WHAT** intrigues me?
- **WHY** do I agree or disagree?

Personal experiences might be answers to these questions.

Answer new questions about those experiences:

- **WHY** am I reacting so strongly?
- **WHY** am I making these connections?
- **WHAT** has changed about me because of this experience?

When answering these questions (and any others you think of), write down everything that comes to your mind—now is not the time to be critical. Everything that you produce is important because it helps to **limit**, **expand**, or **change** your focus.



A strong, clear and interesting topic is the result of in-depth questioning. The more you explore, the clearer your focus becomes.

REMEMBER THE CAMERA: A photographer looks at an object from many different perspectives before taking a picture. Think of your topic as a photographer's focus, and explore the possibilities! Don't be afraid to climb all around your ideas, and to look at them upside down. Ask every question that you think of, and write down every answer that comes to mind. Most importantly:

RE-FOCUS,

RE-FOCUS,

RE-FOCUS!