Worksheet: Narrowing Your Topic

Step 1: In question form, write your research topic here:

Step 2: Eliminate any “fluff” words such as *in, the, from*. What is left should be the key concepts of your topic. (Remember, you also don’t want to use words that describe measurement such as greater, less, increase or words like complicated or challenges. Instead, try to choose words that are specifically related to your topic.)

Step 3: The key to research is building a bank of words to use as search terms. To do this, find some words or phrases that are related to the words you came up with in Step 2. Try to think of ways you can break each idea down into smaller ideas (for example: Pet, dog, poodle—each term is more narrow that the one before it.)

_________________________  _________________________  _________________________
_________________________  _________________________  _________________________
_________________________  _________________________  _________________________
_________________________  _________________________  _________________________

Step 4: In a few sentences, please explain how you plan to combine your search terms and what kinds of results you expect to get for each combination.