

APA Style CENTRAL® Research Lab Book: Develop My Research Idea

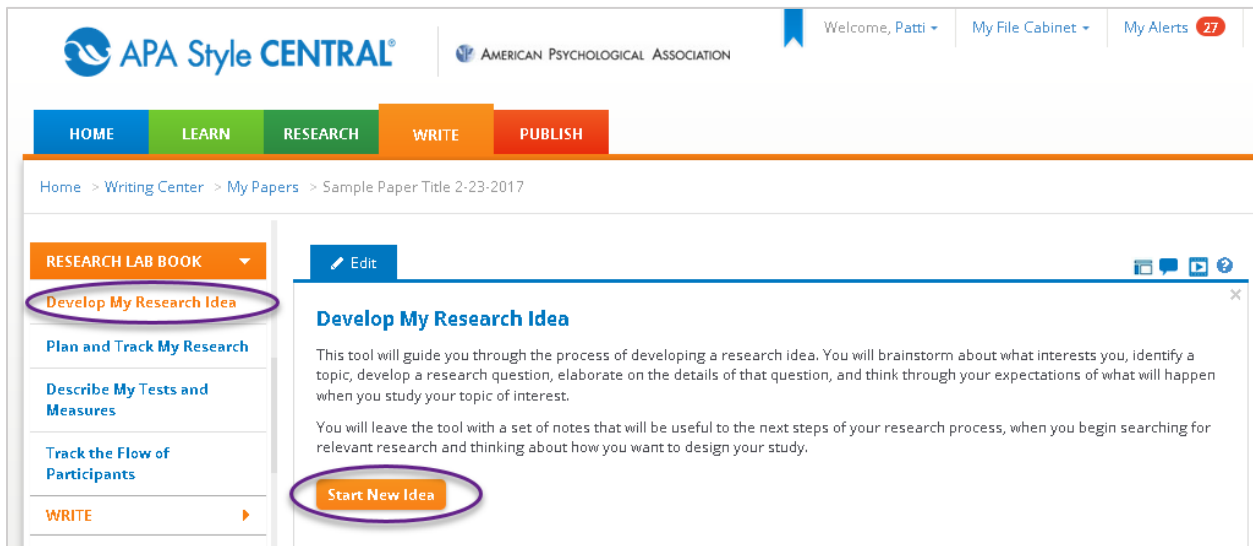
The Research Lab Book consists of four tools that will help you plan and document your research process: Develop My Research Idea, Plan and Track My Research, Describe My Tests and Measures, and Track the Flow of Participants. You can use any of these research tools individually or in conjunction with each other.

Develop My Research Idea

Develop My Research Idea will guide you through the process of shaping your research topic, from brainstorming to hypothesis generation. When you are finished, you will have a set of notes you can export that describe your research idea so that it's not too narrow nor too broad, preparing you to identify the relevant literature for your research and design a study.

Getting Started

The Research Lab Book tools are associated with papers in the Writing Center. In the Writing Center, create a new paper or open an existing one. Next, in the left navigation bar, click **Research Lab Book** to display these tools. Select **Develop My Research Idea** and click on the **Start New Idea** button to begin the 6-step process:



After you click the **Start New Idea** button, APA Style CENTRAL will display a color-coded number line that becomes a linked header for navigating between each of these main steps as you complete them:

- Step 1: Generate Ideas
- Step 2: Identify Topic
- Step 3: Develop Research Question
- Step 4: Elaborate Research Question
- Step 5: Describe Expectations
- Step 6: Export Notes

Your current step, displayed in orange, is linked to any previously saved steps (blue), while any remaining future steps are grayed out:



At each step, you'll be presented with information that will help you develop your research idea. This includes an explanation of the step, an example of what an answer might look like, and a question to answer. You can provide your answer in the form of notes or a formally written paragraph.

2 Identify Topic

In this step, you will determine your research topic. Begin by reviewing your answer to the previous question.

What's something that you've observed in yourself or the world around you that you find curious or interesting? What aspects of this phenomenon are interesting to you?

I am interested in why people choose certain animals as pets. When I was choosing a pet for myself, I was attracted to getting a puppy or a kitten, at least in part because I found them so cute. I also imagined being able to hold and pet them. However, other people choose pets that are definitely not cute or particularly cuddly, like tarantulas or snakes. What factors make people choose certain kinds of pets over others?

You will now refine your interests into a more specific research topic. Your research topic describes the focus of your study more precisely, clarifying the relationship or phenomenon you want to study.

Examples:

- If your interest is in student athlete performance, your topic might be "the effect of relaxation and positive thinking on student athlete performance."
- If your interest is in attraction, your topic might be "the relationship between familiarity and attraction."
- If your interest is in personality characteristics, your topic might be "the differences between shyness and introversion."

What phrase best describes the focus of your study? *

At the bottom of each screen, click the **Save & Continue** button to move to the next step. If you need to go back and revise an answer in a previous step, either use the **Back** link at the bottom of the page, or click the step in the number header at the top of the screen. (Do not use the browser's back button: it will return you to your list of papers.) APA Style CENTRAL remembers where you are in the process, so you don't need to complete all of the steps at once.

What phrase best describes the focus of your study? *

* Fields marked with an asterisk are required.

Back
Save & Continue to Step 3 »

Exporting Your Notes

Once you've completed all of the steps, Step 6 allows you to export your notes. Click **View & Print My Notes** to export a .docx file, which can be opened by most word processing programs:

Develop My Research Idea

1 Generate Ideas
2 Identify Topic
3 Develop Research Question
4 Elaborate Research Question
5 Describe Expectations
6 Export Notes

6 Export Notes

Now that you've thought through your interests and ideas, you have a set of notes that will help you begin your research. They have been saved to your Research Lab Book. You can view them and print or export them to your computer.

View & Print My Notes

Back

The resulting file contains your paper's title page formatted in proper APA Style along with the questions and your answers for each of the steps in Develop My Research Idea:

Develop My Research Idea for Sample Multiexperiment Paper

Step 1: Generate Ideas

What's something that you've observed in yourself or the world around you that you find curious or interesting? What aspects of this phenomenon are interesting to you?

I am interested in why people choose certain animals as pets. When I was choosing a pet for myself, I was attracted to getting a puppy or a kitten, at least in part because I found them so cute. I also imagined being able to hold and pet them. However, other people choose pets that are definitely not cute or particularly cuddly, like tarantulas or snakes. What factors make people choose certain kinds of pets over others?

Step 2: Identify Topic

Contact Us

For additional information or assistance with APA Style CENTRAL, contact support@apastylecentral.org or call us at (202) 336-5650 or (800) 374-2722. TDD/TTY: (202) 336-6123.

Have a specific question about APA Style®? Write to StyleExpert@apa.org.