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# INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

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# What is Research?

Discussion points:

- What is your perception of research?
- Why research?
- What does research involve?

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# What Is Research?

- Research a process of systematic inquiry that is designed to collect, analyze, interpret, and use data to understand describe, predict, and control a phenomena

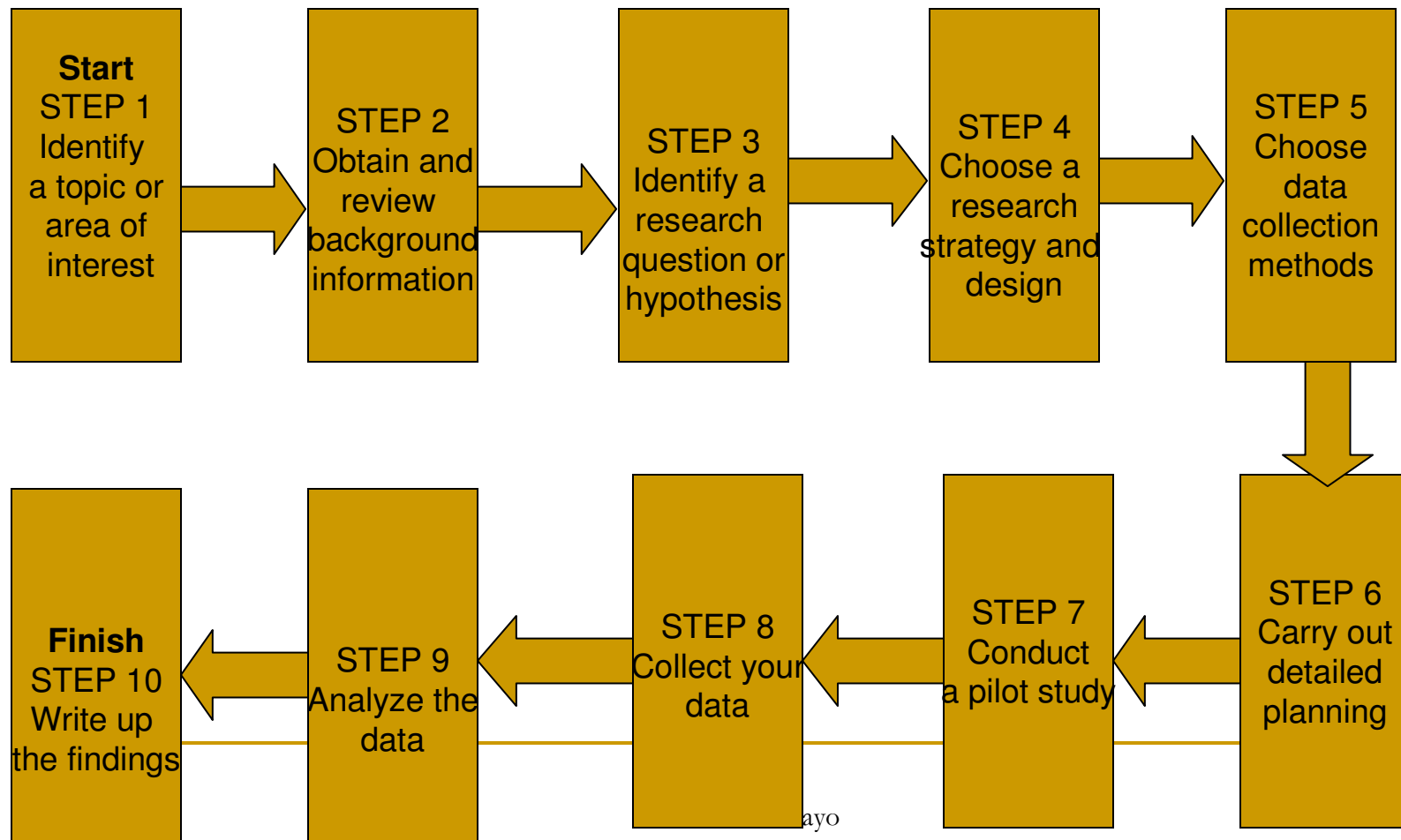
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# What Is Research Cont'd

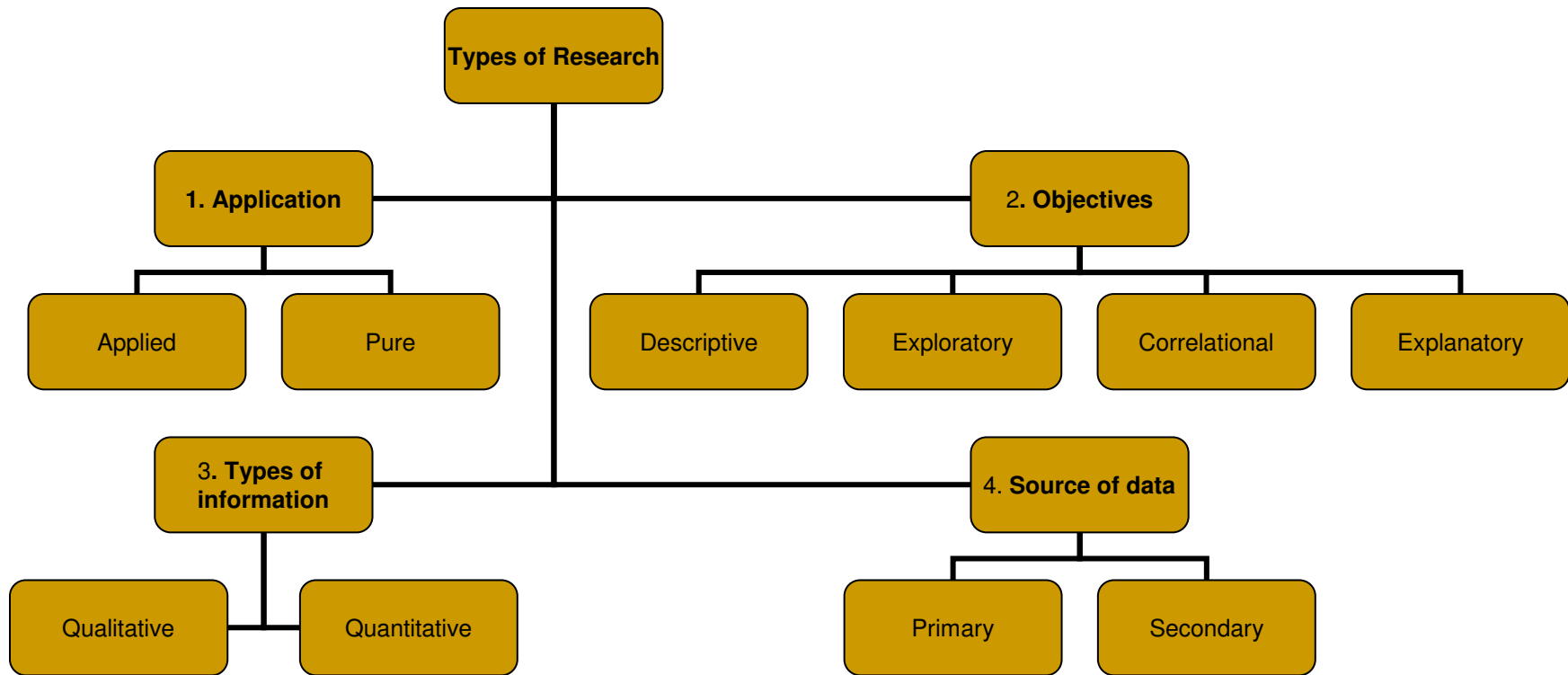
- It is objective: Unbiased solution to the problem; conclusion based on evidence
- It is based on observable experience or empirical evidence. Ideas can be tested
- It employs carefully designed procedures and rigorous analysis.

# What Is Research Cont'd

Research process involves the following:

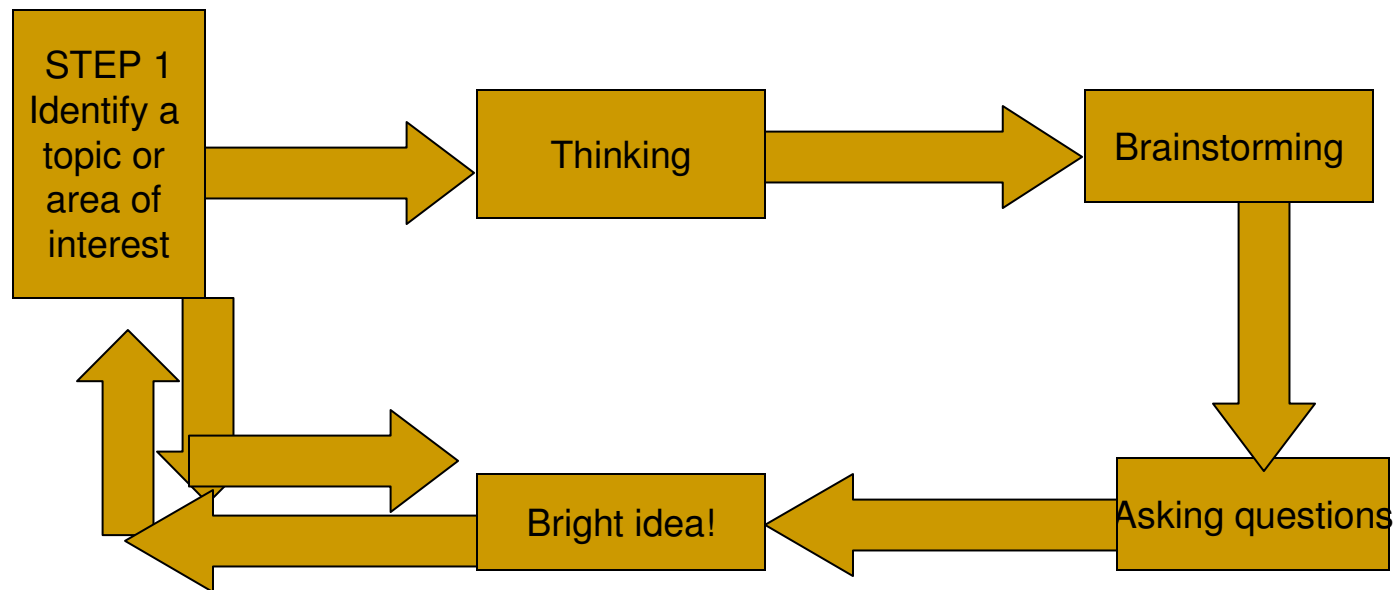


# Types of Research



# Identifying a Research Topic

## ACTIVITIES



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# Identifying a Research Topic Cont'd

- The idea that you come up with will have to be **researchable**: can be **tested** based on the **evidence**.
- **Sources of ideas:**
  - i. Interesting literature/ study.
  - ii. Reading/hearing something that you believe is not true/ injustice.
  - iii. Reading about a research study that is intriguing, or whose validity you question
  - iv. Desire for a particular type of study e.g. observation or in-depth interviews.
  - v. There is a practical problem whose solution you do not know.



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# Identifying a Research Topic Cont'd

Ask the following questions about the ideas you come up with:

1. Is the proposed research **possible**?
2. Is the idea **relevant** to your course/ profession?
3. Is the project **interesting** enough to you?
4. Is the proposed research **ethically** justifiable?

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# Identifying a Research Topic Cont'd

## **Factors influencing the choice of a topic:**

1. Values.
2. Knowledge gaps.
3. Solving problems and influencing policy.
4. Resources: time and money.
5. Enjoyment and interest.

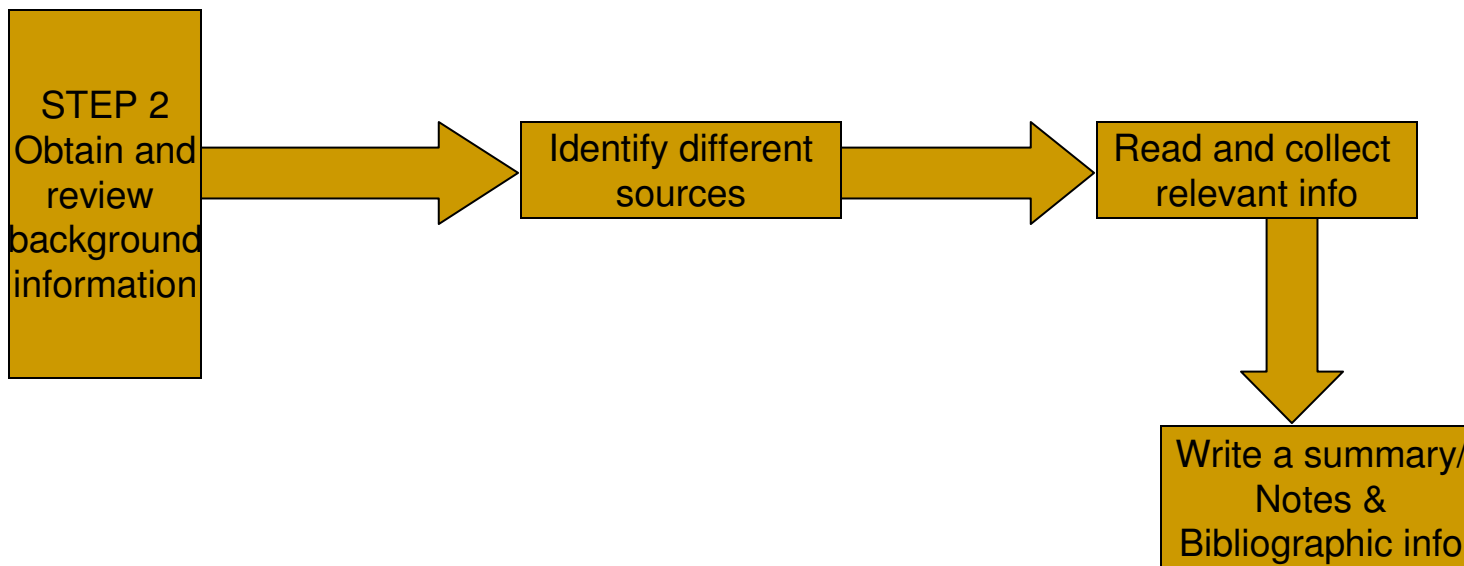
**NB:** Once you have identified a topic, narrow/  
refine it to a manageable size.

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# Literature Review

## Obtain and review background information

### ACTIVITIES



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# What Is The Purpose Of A Literature Review?

- To demonstrate your scholarly ability to identify relevant information and to outline existing knowledge.
- To identify the 'gap' in the research that your study is attempting to address, positioning your work in context of previous research and creating 'research space' for your work.

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# What Is The Purpose Of A Literature Review? Cont'd

- To evaluate and synthesise the information in line with the concepts that you have set yourself for the research.
- To produce a rationale or justification for your study.
- Provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study.

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# What Is The Purpose Of A Literature Review Cont'd

- Provides a benchmark for comparing the results of the study with other findings.
- It prevents you from duplicating work that has been done before.

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# What Is The Purpose Of A Literature Review Cont'd

- It helps you become more familiar with the various research approaches that might be used in your study.
- Should provide you with a convincing argument why your research is needed.

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# Questions to be Answered by the Literature Review

- What are the key sources?
- What are the key theories, concepts and ideas?
- What are the major issues and debates about the topic?
- What are the main questions and problems that have been addressed to date?



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## Questions to be Answered by the Literature Review Cont'd

- What are the political standpoints?
- What are the origins and definitions of the topic?
- How is the knowledge on the topic structured and organised?

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# What do I Need to be Able to do In order to Write a Literature Review?

- Identify your research questions.
- Identify and locate appropriate information.
- Read and critically evaluate the information that you locate.

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# What do I Need to be Able to do In order to Write a Literature Review? Cont'd

- File and store your readings and notes including bibliographic details.
- Plan, organise and write critically about the literature that you have located.

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# How Could I Write My Literature Review?

- Organize your information in the way that makes most sense .
- Some Possible Ways of Structuring a Literature Review:
  - Chronological organisation
  - The 'Classic' studies organisation
  - Topical or thematic organisation
  - Inverted pyramid organisation

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# Discussing and Evaluating the Literature

- Critically examine the literature:(Look at methodology, statistics, results, theoretical framework, the author's purpose, etc. Include controversies when they appear in the articles)
- Make your 'voice' clear through: (attitude marker; emphatic expressions and relational marker)

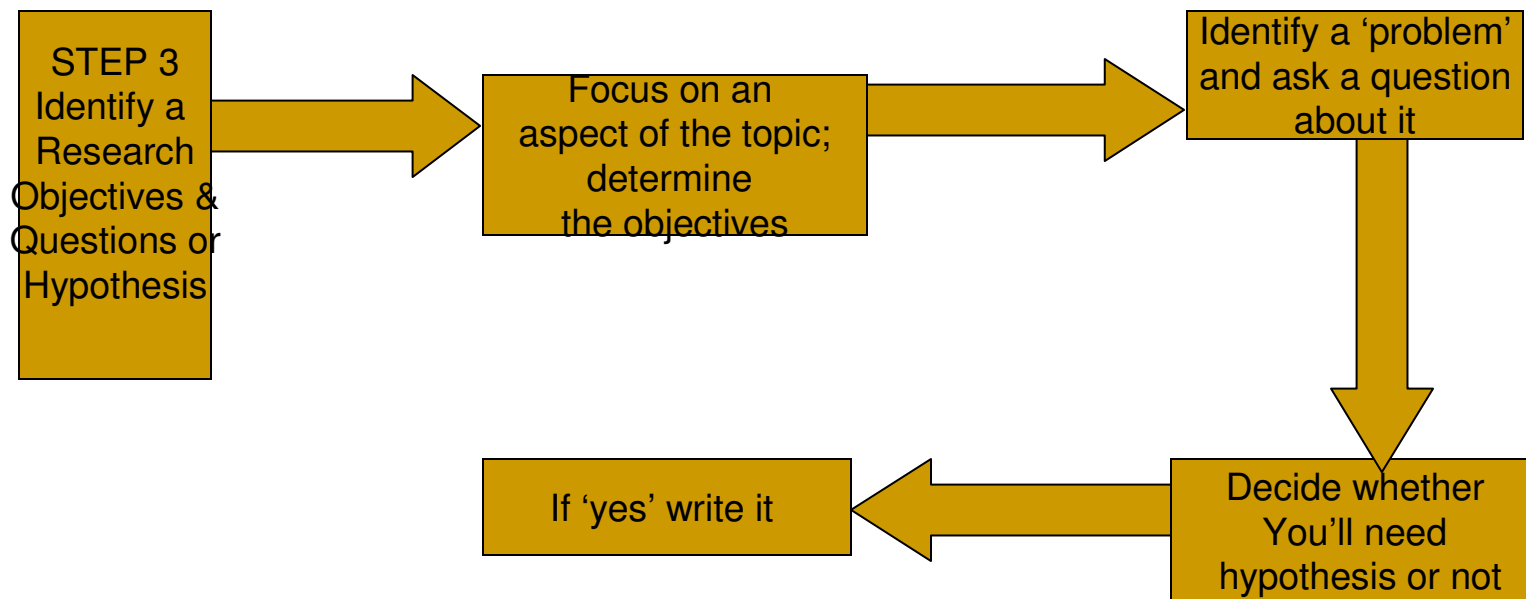
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# Conclusion of Literature Review

- Reiterate your argument (thesis)
- Discuss questions that remain unanswered by the literature.
- Identify what has been accomplished by the literature.
- Identify what has not been studied.
- Establish what debates need to be settled.

# Identifying A Problem, Objectives Questions Or Hypothesis

## ACTIVITIES



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# Identifying And Defining The Problem

Identifying a problem for research will usually depend upon what area of work the organization deals with, perceptions of a problem, a real need for information and the viability of the project (financially, legally, etc). Research will be useful:

- When there is a lack of information about an issue;
- When a community or group feel that their opinions have not been heard;



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# Identifying and defining the problem

- When policy-makers are considering a policy and the likely impact is not known clearly;
- When there is need to monitor a process.

Once you have an idea about a problem or issue you wish to research on:

- Make a draft title of the study
- Make a rough sketch of the problem/issue

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# Research Objectives

## **Importance of objectives:**

1. Guide decisions in the selection of respondents, instruments and study area.
2. Help to limit the scope of literature review
3. Clarify the variables of the study.
4. Organize the study in clearly defined parts/ phases.

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# Research Objectives Cont'd

Qualities of effective objectives:

1. Are specific
2. Are measurable
3. Are focused
4. Are operational (expressed in active verbs)
5. Are realistic/ achievable

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# Research Question Or Hypothesis?

- You will need to produce an hypothesis or a research question based on the type of research you wish to do and the theoretical approach you take.
- If you want to test an existing theory, you will need an hypothesis.
- Hypothesis is simply a prediction of what you will find based on the evidence available. It is deductive.
- Research questions are used in a qualitative approach. You work from evidence to theory. It is inductive.

# Questions VS Objectives

Research Questions	Research Objectives
1. Why have organisations introduced team briefing?	1. To identify organisation's objectives for team briefing schemes
2. How can the effectiveness of team briefing schemes be measured?	2. To establish suitable effectiveness criteria for team briefing schemes.
3. Has team briefing been effective?	3. To describe the extent to which the effectiveness criteria for team building have been met.

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# Reflection

1. **Topic identification:**
  - Brainstorm several topics that you might be interested in exploring for your research project
  - Think about your ideas for a while and decide which topics appeal most to you.
  - Reduce your brainstorm list by discarding some ideas until you are left with the most interesting one.
  - Think about whether the topic is possible, relevant, meaningful, and ethical.

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# Reflection Cont'd

## 2. **Background information:**

- Where can you get background information from?
- Have you identified a range of different sources?
- What kinds of information are you looking for?
- What are you going to do with the information that you obtain?
- How will you relate the background information to your research idea?

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# Reflection Cont'd

## 3. Hypotheses/ Research questions

- Are you going to use hypotheses, research questions or both?
- What is your general research question?

## 4. Objectives

- Formulate objectives that answer the research questions.



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# Break