

# The Research Life Cycle: First-Year English

The beginning of the process is not as simple as it seems. To get to a researchable **IDEA**, students must...

- consider relevant course texts and topics
- conduct preliminary research
- ask an authentic research question  
(not a predetermined argument disguised as a question)

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## **Authentic research question:**

Recently the popularity of electronic cigarettes has increased for smokers in the U.S. With help from the media, specifically commercials targeting smokers and the people around smokers, the use of e-cigarettes has increased greatly. Why are e-cigarettes so popular? The media portrays the e-cigarette as a non-smoke, water vapor using cigarette. It is also seen as more beneficial and healthier. How true is this if it's still a cigarette? Are e-cigarettes healthier than cigarettes and how aware is the world?

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**Argument disguised as a research question:**

Recently the popularity of electronic cigarettes has increased for smokers in the U.S. With help from the media, specifically commercials targeting smokers and the people around smokers, the use of e-cigarettes has increased greatly. The media portrays the e-cigarette as a non-smoke, water vapor using cigarette. But why is the American public so easily fooled by these lies?

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## Student Goals:

- use research to find plausible and credible responses to the question
- develop a full understanding of the topic, including a range of divergent viewpoints
- synthesize ideas from research with your own ideas
- engage in the complete research process  
(idea ► final product based on a research-driven thesis)
- identify the importance of your findings and their implications (who cares and why?)

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## **English 1010**

### **I - Source evaluation and synthesis assignment**

idea to early synthesis through integration of key quotations

### **II - Synthesis paper project**

deep synthesis to the final stage of the research life cycle

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## Common Student Pitfalls

- conducting inadequate preliminary research before developing the research question
- beginning with an argument instead of a question, thus narrowing their search parameters prematurely
- rushing too quickly through the source evaluation without drawing connections between the research articles
- failing to carefully evaluate researched information for credibility and applicability to the project

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## The Takeaway

- every step in the process is crucial
- students can't rush or fake a step; the arrows move in two directions for a reason
- we must give students the guidance to succeed and opportunities to fail, back up, and restart parts of the research life cycle