

Controversial Topics

Controversial topics are issues about which people have very strong yet divergent feelings and opinions, which lead to much debate and argument. These feelings and opinions may be due to religious, social, or political beliefs. Controversial topics tend to polarize people, who often make strong arguments for and against the subjects.

These broad topic ideas may help you select a research paper topic. Most topics will need to be narrowed:

Abortion
Acquaintance rape
Advertising Ethics
Affirmative Action
AIDS in Africa
Alcohol and/or cigarette advertising
Animal Rights
Anti-Semitism
Anti-trust suit against Microsoft
Assisted Suicide
Australian Aborigines
Bilingual education/English-only controversy
Bioethics
Biotechnology
Business Ethics
Capital Punishment
Censorship
Civil Liberties and Anti-Terrorism Measures
Class Action Lawsuits
Campaign finance reform legislation
Chemical and biological weapons
Cloning
Conscientious Objectors
Corporate Corruption
Corporate Responsibility
Creationism
Cuba's foreign relations with the United States
Detainees legal rights in wartime

Dress Codes in School
Drug Legalization
Drug Testing
Earth First, Greenpeace or another environmental group
Ebonics and Black English
Endangered Species
Environmental Ethics
Environmental justice
Euthanasia
Evolution
Faith-based initiatives
False Memory
Family leave
Federal financial aid: Hope Scholarship and other tax credits (see *The Student Aid Game* by Michael McPherson and Morton Schapiro)
Female Genital Mutilation
Foster care system reform
Foreign Aid
Free Speech
Freedom of the Press
Gay Parents
Gay Rights
Gays in the Military
Globalization
Gun Control
Gulf War Syndrome
Harry Potter Controversy
Hate Crimes
Hate Speech
Health Care Reform
Holocaust Denial
Holocaust Reparations
Home Schooling
Homelessness
Human rights violations in China or another country
Immigration issues
Inclusion (could limit by disability, i.e., deaf students)
Insanity Defense

Internal Revenue Service reform
Landmines
Lead poisoning
Legal Drinking Age
Liquor advertising on television
Logging on public lands (see *Tree Huggers: Victory, Defeat and Renewal* by Kathie Durbin and *The Legacy of Luna* by Julia Butterfly Hill)
Maori People
McCarthyism
Media and Terrorism
Media Images of African-Americans
Media Images of Women
Media in Wartime
Medical Ethics
Medical Marijuana
Medical Malpractice
Mental Health Policy
Minimum Wage
Miranda Rule
Multiculturalism
NAFTA
Napster (Internet copyright issues)
National parks – public use versus environmental protection issues
Negative political campaigns (see *Going Negative* by Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar)
Nuclear and Hazardous Waste
Nuclear Disarmament
Nuclear weapons development in India, Pakistan or North Korea
Ocean pollution
Organ selling
Parole
Pharmaceutical Industry
PLO
Police Interrogation
Political Ethics
Pornography Debate
Prescription Drug Reform
Privacy
Pro-Choice Movement

Pro-Life Movement
Prosecution of juveniles as adults
Public executions
Racial profiling
Religious expression in the workplace
Right to Bear Arms (Second Amendment)
Saddam Hussein, Vladimir Putin or another world leader
Sanctions against Iraq
School choice or educational vouchers
School Violence
Search and Seizure (Fourth Amendment)
Separation of Church and State
Sex offender notification laws
Sexual harassment (see Hostile Environment: The Political Betrayal of Sexually Harassed Women)
Smoking bans
Social Security
Sports stadium funding (e.g., the Cardinals' proposal for a new stadium)
Standardized Testing
Stem cell research
Steroids
Student press freedom
Students' rights (see We the Students: Supreme Court Cases For and About Students)
Surrogate Motherhood
Tax Reform
Teenage Pregnancy
Three strikes laws
Tiananmen Square
Tibet
Tobacco Industry
Tobacco lobby or another lobby
Toxic waste disposal (Times Beach incinerator, etc.)
Transracial Adoption
2000 presidential election controversy
U. S. Patriot Act
Violence in the Media
Victims' rights

Whistleblowing

Wildfire control – federal policy

Wolves' return to Yellowstone National Park

Women in the Military

Women's rights in the Middle East

Working Mothers

Workplace Diversity

Workplace privacy issues (see *The New Battle Over Workplace Privacy* by

William S. Hubbard)

Year Round School

Zero tolerance in schools