

Choosing a research topic

On the following page, I've listed a few research topics for you to choose from. You have the option of doing your own research question. I encourage you to develop your own research topic and research question. If there was a particular question you had in one of your previous economics classes, I encourage you to take this opportunity to investigate this question further. To get ideas, I encourage you to look through news sources, and even textbooks from your previous economics courses.

Recommended news sources

(full article access through the CSU Library System, Eureka):

<i>Sacramento Bee</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>Washington Post</i>	<i>Financial Times</i>
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	<i>San Jose Mercury News</i>
<i>The Economist</i>	<i>USA Today</i>
Marketplace (via NPR)	

Online blogs and columns:

(links available on the course web site under "Resources"):

Aplia http://econblog.aplia.com/	This site has applications of economic theory to current events
Freakonomics http://www.freakonomics.com/blog/	This site is maintained by the authors of <i>Freakonomics</i> . It includes their commentary on current events.
Everyday economics	This column by Steven Landsburg has interesting applications that use economic analysis
The undercover economist http://www.slate.com/ (Type column name in the search window on the left)	This column by Tim Hartford (author of <i>The Undercover Economist</i>) has columns similar to that of Landsburg
Brad DeLong's Semi-Daily Journal http://delong.typepad.com/sdj/	Brad DeLong (macroeconomist and economic historian at Cal) maintains this blog with commentary on current events. You can search for his blog entries by topic.
The Capital Spectator http://www.capitalspectator.com/	A blog with more of a finance/business flavor. Often makes use of data to make a point to the audience.
Blaahg http://www.blaahg.blogspot.com/	A blog with commentary on current events, usually from a global perspective

*** Several of these blogs consist of commentary. You should always go to the primary source of the article referenced to become familiar with the topic. Don't rely on one person's opinion in choosing your topic.

Sample research topics

I've included ideas for research topics below. Feel free to use one of these for your paper, or to create your own topic.

- Education production functions and student performance (Economics of education, public economics)
Are changes in school expenditures associated with changes in student performance?
- Education resource allocation patterns among inner cities and rural areas (Education and public economics)
How do uses of educational resources differ in urban versus rural area schools?
- Poverty across the United States (Public economics)
How do the state of the economy, demographic factors, and social insurance programs affect poverty rates?
- Competitive balance in professional sports (Sports economics)
Has competitive balance in professional sports changed over time? What are the most important determinants of this change? How is competitive balance related to the pool of talent? This could be applied to any professional sport.
- Sports facilities in cities (Sports economics)
Do new sports franchises (or new stadiums) have a positive effect on economic growth in cities?
- New car sales in the United States (Microeconomics)
Which factors are most important for explaining new car sales?
- Electricity rates and deregulation (Energy economics, microeconomics)
How have deregulation and privatization affected the availability and price of energy for consumers?
- Small business success across the states (Microeconomics, industrial economics)
How do economic and demographic variables affect the rate of small business success across states?
- Geographic distribution of inventions within the U.S. (Industrial organization, macroeconomics)
Which factors are most important in explaining patents across U.S. states?
- Minimum wages and unemployment (Labor economics)
Does the minimum wage increase unemployment among teenagers? Minorities? Does this vary by region?
- The impact of HIV/AIDS on economic growth in developing countries (Macroeconomics/labor economics)
Does the incidence of this disease affect long-run economic growth?
- Convergence across U.S. states (Macroeconomics)
Do states converge according to the predictions of the Solow growth model?
- Testing Okun's Law across regions (Macroeconomics)
What are the implications of Okun's Law for individual countries? Or across regions within a country?
- Natural rate of unemployment across countries (Macroeconomics)
How do unemployment insurance and social welfare programs affect unemployment across countries?
- Institutions and economic growth in emerging economies (Macroeconomics, international economics)
Do institutions affect economic growth? What is the magnitude of their importance in emerging and underdeveloped economies?
- Commercial bank profitability (Money and banking)
What are the determinants of commercial bank profitability in the U.S.?
- Predicting stock prices (Money and banking)
Do stock prices behave according to efficient markets?