Exercise 2: Define and Refine the Topic

Exploring a topic can help you two ways—you can narrow your topic and also see if you can locate enough information. Your focused topic and keywords will then help you find relevant credible sources.

Concept Cloud
Write down anything and everything related to your main idea.
(Use Google or Wikipedia to help here.)

The main idea you want to research.

Keywords: Select two to four keywords to combine together from the box above. You will use these keyword combinations to search for credible sources.

Remember: Add or subtract keywords to fine tune your search results.

Adapted from University of Virginia Library’s “Thinking Tool: Choosing a Topic and Search Terms” by Burks and Wolnick.