Define and Refine the Topic

Exploring a topic can help you two ways—you can narrow your topic and 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.)

Who
U.S.
3rd World countries
native americans
farmers
Coca Cola / Nestle
pro-water organizations
politicians

Water
The main idea you want to research.

30 years from now
1950's
present day
Oklahoma
Southwest United States
India
Africa
Indian Reservations

What
H20
water crisis
water shortage
water contamination
human right?
water rights
water wars

How and Why
water waste
health
overconsumption
climate change
dams
water theft
oil spills
aquifers

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

Water rights, Nestle, Native Americans, California

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 Woinick.