

Research question examples

Andriessen (2011) gives a handy overview with examples of the types of research questions you can ask.

Research function	Example questions
Defining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In what class can it be categorised?• Should it be part of this family?• What is its nature?• How is it oriented compared to the bigger picture?• What is the theoretical perspective?• How can it be characterised?• What is it an example of?
Describing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the characteristics?• What properties does it have?• How does it come to be?• What does it consist of?• Who are or what is involved in it?• What are the key steps?• What does it look like?
Comparing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the differences?• What are the similarities?• Where do they differ?• At what points are they similar?• Are they the same?
Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the value of ...?• How well does it work?• What are positive points?• What are negative points?• How suitable is it?• How preferable is it?• What are the advantages?• What are the disadvantages?
Explaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is this the way it is?• How did it come to be that ...?• What are the causes?• What is this a consequence of?• What reasons apply?• What are the backgrounds?• How could this have happened?
Designing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can be done to remedy this?• How can it be improved?• How should it be done?• What are appropriate measures?• What should – and should not – be done?