Sample Statements of Research Problems

with help from Booth, et. al., *The Craft of Research*

Topic	Question	Significance
the specific topic of your research; what you're going to look up	what question you're trying to solve by getting that information	why it's important; the broader implications; so what?
I am interested in researching...	*...because I want to understand...*	*... , which is important because it helps us better understand...*
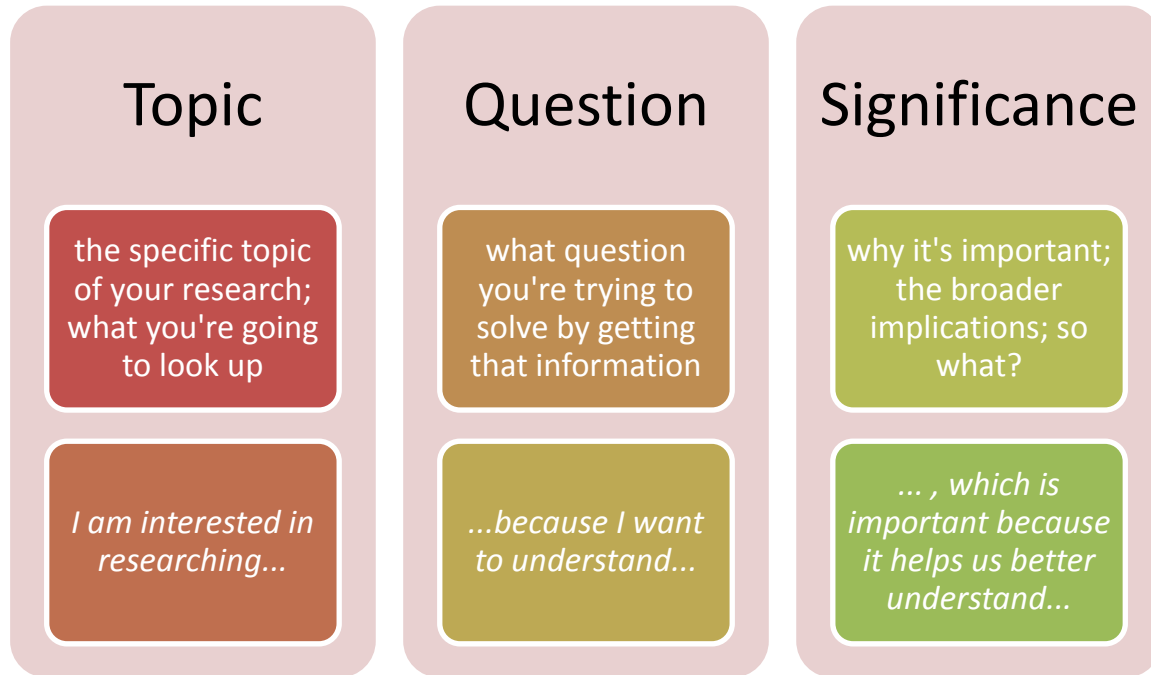
I am interested in researching the early modern religious significance of fish [TOPIC] **because I want to understand** what it means to call Caliban a fish in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* [QUESTION], **which is important because it helps us better understand** Shakespeare's possible Catholicism. [SIGNIFICANCE]

I am interested in researching stories of the Alamo **because I want to understand** why voters responded to them in ways that served the interests of local Texas politicians, **which is important because it helps us better understand** how regional self-images influence national politics.

I am interested in researching the 1961 and 1998 versions of the film *The Parent Trap* **because I want to understand** how the character of the mother changes between the two films, **which is important because it helps us better understand** how depictions of mothers in film changed in the last part of the 20th-century.

I am interested in researching Edna St. Vincent Millay's experience with Spanish-speaking cultures **because I want to understand** the setting of her 1920 poem "Recuerdo," **which is important because it helps us better understand** Anglo-Hispanic relations after World War I.

I am interested in researching early Tudor deer-hunting practices **because I want to better understand** how the metaphor of deer hunting works in Thomas Wyatt's poem "Whoso List to Hunt," **which is important because it helps us better understand** the social implications of men and women who compare themselves to hunted animals in literary texts.