

Defining the Research Question

It is important to be clear, before commencing research, about precisely what you are trying to find out and check that this fits the criteria for your project.

Researchers often use the PICO Method (Richardson, 1995) as a framework to formulate a research question.

The key components of **PICO** are:

- **Population/problem** – specific individuals or issue to be addressed
- **Intervention** – what action is being investigated
- **Comparison** – controls or comparisons
- **Outcome** – what is the result to be measured or observed

Example research questions:

- *How does the daily use of TikTok affect the attention span of 14-year-olds at a specific high school?*
- *How does New Zealand compare to the United Kingdom in mortality outcome for low-income people with chronic illnesses?*