Step 4:  
Exploratory Research



**What Is Your Working Central Question?**

**Introduction:** The first step in developing your capstone topic is to identify a working central question. Since your capstone project requires that you answer a central question, you should try to select a question that interests and that you feel passionate about. Your central question will be the focus of your research. You should start with a general question that requires more than just a yes/no answer. You will be required to do preliminary research based on your central question. During this step, you must submit your question along with a list of sources to your advisors before your capstone project can be officially approved. Your central question does not need to be super complex but it does need to be researchable, related to your career pathway, and readily useable for a capstone project which could be visually presented and that demonstrates the depth of the core 21st century skills you have learned during your years here at Weymouth High.

**Central Question Examples:**

* Example 1: A student in the Math Academy might concentrate on data analysis.

Central question: “How can data analysis be used to calculate the effects of pollution on the weather in New England?”

* Example 2: A student in the Humanities Academy might concentrate on teaching.

Central Question: “How can lessons that involve hands-on learning more effectively help young children learn?”

**My central question is:**

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**Central Question Check List.**

**□ The Central Question addresses a theme from your academy.  
□ The Central Question requires more than a yes/no answer.**

**□ The Central Question can be expressed as a capstone project which will demonstrate the depth of learned 21st Century skills by the student or students.**

**□ You have read 5 sources about your central question.**

**□ You have included with this step an annotated bibliography for at least 5 sources you have read. Citations should be in MLA style and annotations should provide a summary, evaluation, and application of the information in the source. (See page 15 for guidance.)**

**□ The Central Question submission includes a preliminary description of how the student/students plan to address the capstone project which will answer your central question.**

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| **Place your description of how your capstone will answer the central question here.** |

**□ The Central Question submission includes a discussion of who will benefit most from this project (e.g. fields of study, professionals, community).**

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| **Place your discussion of the impact of your capstone here.** |

**□ The Central Question submission identifies any preconceived beliefs and what you will do to ensure your research results is not effected by bias in your analysis, interpretation of results, and implementation of the capstone outcome.**

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| **Discuss your preconceived beliefs here.** |

**□ The Central Question includes an explanation of why you feel it is important.**

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| **Discuss why your central question is important here.** |