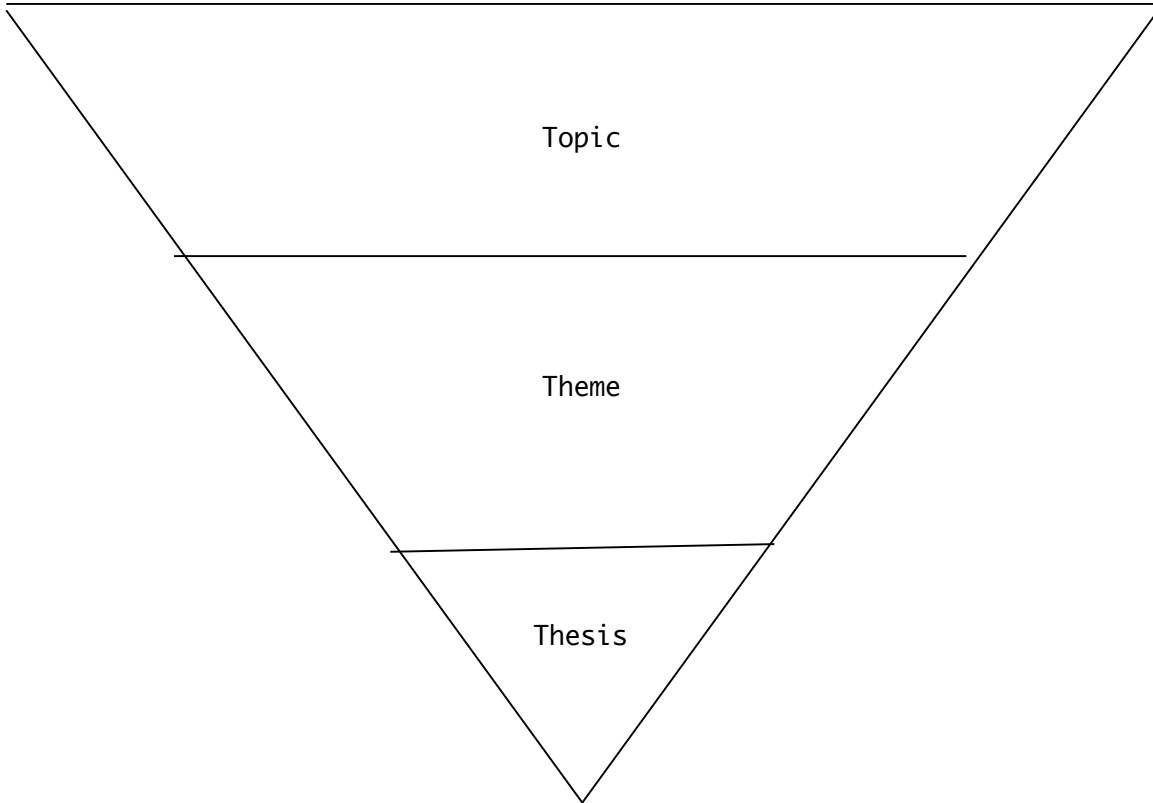


## Topic-Theme-Thesis

Schema to organize & analyze and then break down into subtopics that then generate keyword lists

Flow of lessons that take you through the process: topic/theme/organize ideas/get key works/find articles/paraphrase, and cite, and then develop Works Cited



**Topic** is the broadest of content divisions or headings: Middle Ages, Social issues affecting students' lives (10<sup>th</sup> Grade Persuasive Letter), Religion

**Theme** is connections, relationships, Religion in the Middle Ages, Economics of Free Market Economy, the role of the Supreme Court in American life

**Thesis** is generalizations, theories, debatable premises, arguable points

Use a graphic organizational schema to divide, categorize and analyze a topic

2 x 2 matrix  
Major Axis System

Characteristics:

**One Axis** is fixed; parameters that MUST be met, questions that MUST be answered, material that MUST be covered.

**Second Axis** represents divisions selected by the teacher (or by students)

Graphic Organizational Schema to Divide, Categorize, and Analyze a Topic

(Research Task Related to Persuasive Essay on Topical Issue)

Why do you care? Why is this a good or bad thing	What's the possibility for change?	Arguments against?	What's the evidence	What are some key words related to this that could be used in an information search?	Who do you write to?

Graphic Organizational Schema to Divide, Categorize, and Analyze a  
Topic  
(Research Task Related to Historical Biography)

	<b>Geographic &amp; Political Parameters</b>	<b>Political Setting and Factors</b>	<b>Personal Accomplishments</b>	<b>Impact on Future Events</b>
<b>Cleopatra</b>				
<b>Elizabeth I</b>				
<b>Julius Caesar</b>				
<b>Henry II</b>				

Alison Ferrier

English 10R Example

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT: The 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Persuasive Letter**  
**Lesson Plan: Defining Topics/Themes/Thesis and Ultimately**  
**Developing Specific Keywords to Aid in Research Searching**

**Objectives:**

At the end of this lesson, students will:

- Understand how to develop a topic related to a research assignment, and how to break it down according to associated keywords, using a simple graphic organizer (grid).
- Understand how to use keywords to locate articles and other relevant information in a database such as ProQuest.

**Opening Activity (3 min):**

**Materials:**

- Graphic organizer for developing a list of key words
- Computer stations with access to newspaper/periodical databases

**Instructional Procedures:**

- Students must choose a topic (an issue in modern society) in which they have personal interest.
- They must define a focus within that topic (something they would like to see changed about the topic), note why they care about the topic, and define to whom they will address their letter.
- Students will receive direct instruction in how to structure their letter, which must be at least three body paragraphs with several specific examples.
- They will also receive direct instruction in where to find the best research/support for their topic.

**Activity:**

To develop a list of key words, it is necessary to choose **one** of these subtopics that will be developed into a thesis. Students will use the graphic organizer for developing a list of key words, but this time choose a much more specific theme off the original list of topics that were detailed in the previous set of graphic organizers. Use this theme as an example to demonstrate how to develop a list of key words.

**Activity:** Students will meet with cooperative groups, partners, or work individually (as appropriate) to brainstorm and complete a graphic organizer for a different topic on their own.

**Activity:** Teacher/Librarian can take a completed Graphic Organizer, and demonstrate to the class how the keywords chosen might work in a database. Students can see and then practice broadening and narrowing search terms, in order to increase or decrease the number of relevant results.

**Class discussion and sharing:** Meet as a large group and have each lab group present their graphic organizer of key word lists. Give students a chance to add additional ideas. Also, discuss where students might look for sources now that they have their list of key words.

**Lesson Procedure:**

- 1) In order to move kids toward the T cubed, or the 3 T's Triangle (*Topic* → *Themes* → *Thesis*), an example would be the following:
- 2) BRAINSTORM TOPICS ABOUT WHICH STUDENTS CARE (i.e. social issues, issues within our school, community, country, the world):
- 3) TOPICS ABOUT WHICH I CARE: (Could relate to school, family, home, topics learned in school--Students should come up with at least FIVE):

TOPICS	WHY DO I CARE?	OTHER WORDS or PARTS/Issues of this TOPIC (These may become KEY-WORDS)	POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE?	ARGUMENTS AGAINST?	WHAT D-BASES WILL YOU SEARCH 1 <sup>st</sup> ? (and to whom could you write?)
Video Games					
Safe Rides Program					
Wearing Hats in School					
Cruelty to Animals					
Abortion					

4) THEN, as a class, we could pick ONE of the above possible topics and Work through it using the grid.

5) For this example, I will choose VIDEO GAMES. See Below:

TOPIC	WHY DO I CARE?	OTHER WORDS or PARTS/Issues of this TOPIC (These may become KEY-WORDS)	POSSIBILITY FOR CHANGE?	ARGUMENTS AGAINST?	WHAT D-BASES WILL YOU SEARCH 1 <sup>st</sup> ? (and to whom could u write?)
<u>Video Games</u>	My brother plays them all the time	Violence of video games	Legislation to make them less violent	1 <sup>st</sup> Amendment Rights/ Constitution	ProQuest Direct
	I don't like them-waste of time?	Vulgar language	More Parental Warnings or Controls	A Parent's right to choose for their children	Lexis-Nexis
	They take away time from other more valuable activities	Explicit Content	Age limits for buying certain video games		Custom Newspapers
	Recent News of Kids Stealing and flying Airplanes because they learned how to fly from video games	Sexual Content on Video Games			Galenet

6) NOW, we have specific KEYWORD/Subtopics by which to search.

7) **FROM THIS, I MIGHT DEVELOP THE FOLLOWING THESIS:**

(For a student writing to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), an organization that helps to legislate about Video Game Ratings)

*“Due to excessive the excessive violence within them and the dangerous risks/mindsets that they encourage, video games need to have stricter legislation created by the FTC to prevent teenagers and kids below the age of seventeen from playing them.”*

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8) From here, I might demonstrate to students during our first day in the library research lab, how to use one of our databases and plug in some key words from above in order to find specific and pointed articles on our thesis.

e.g.           “Video Games” AND Violence  
      OR “Video Games” AND Ratings  
      OR “Video Games” AND “Vulgarity”  
      OR “Video Games” and “Sexual Content”

From here, hopefully students would find ample articles to begin perusing, and we could then use one of these articles to teach how to PARAPHRASE.

Mike Dono

Global History 9 Example

**Research Task: Biography of Important Historical Figures**

**Lesson Plan: Choosing/Refining a Topic**

**Objectives:**

**At the end of this lesson, students will...**

- Understand how to develop a list of key words that will be used to conduct an effective search for biographical information on a person of historic significance

**Materials:**

- 10 biographical vignettes (brief but comprehensive biographies)
- Access to computer workstations with OPAC (SHS Book collection on line)
- Graphic Organizer for developing keyword search
- How does

**Instructional Procedures:**

- Students are assigned to research an individual of consequence in World History. They are instructed to read and summarize 10 biographical vignettes.
- Based upon this reading, students choose a subject and a theme related to their subject (an area in which the individual was particularly effective or influential.)
- Students use the vignette-based reading to generate an initial list of keywords.
- Students use a graphic organizer to arrange keywords from broadest to narrowest.
- Students use their keywords to perform searches in the following:
  - Greenwood Daily Life On Line
  - ProQuest
  - Somers High School OPAC
- Students perform and refine searches as necessary to locate information relevant to subject and theme.
- Based upon relevant information located, students can:
  - Redefine theme
  - Refine research questions
  - Create a thesis statement

Sarah Franchino

Science Environmental Science Example

**Lesson Plan: Developing A Key Word Search**

**Objectives:**

**At the end of this lesson, students will...**

- Develop a list of key words that will be used to conduct an effective search for information on a specific topic
- Make independent judgments about the usefulness of a source
- Develop a “best sources first” search strategy

**Opening Activity (3 min):**

**Materials:**

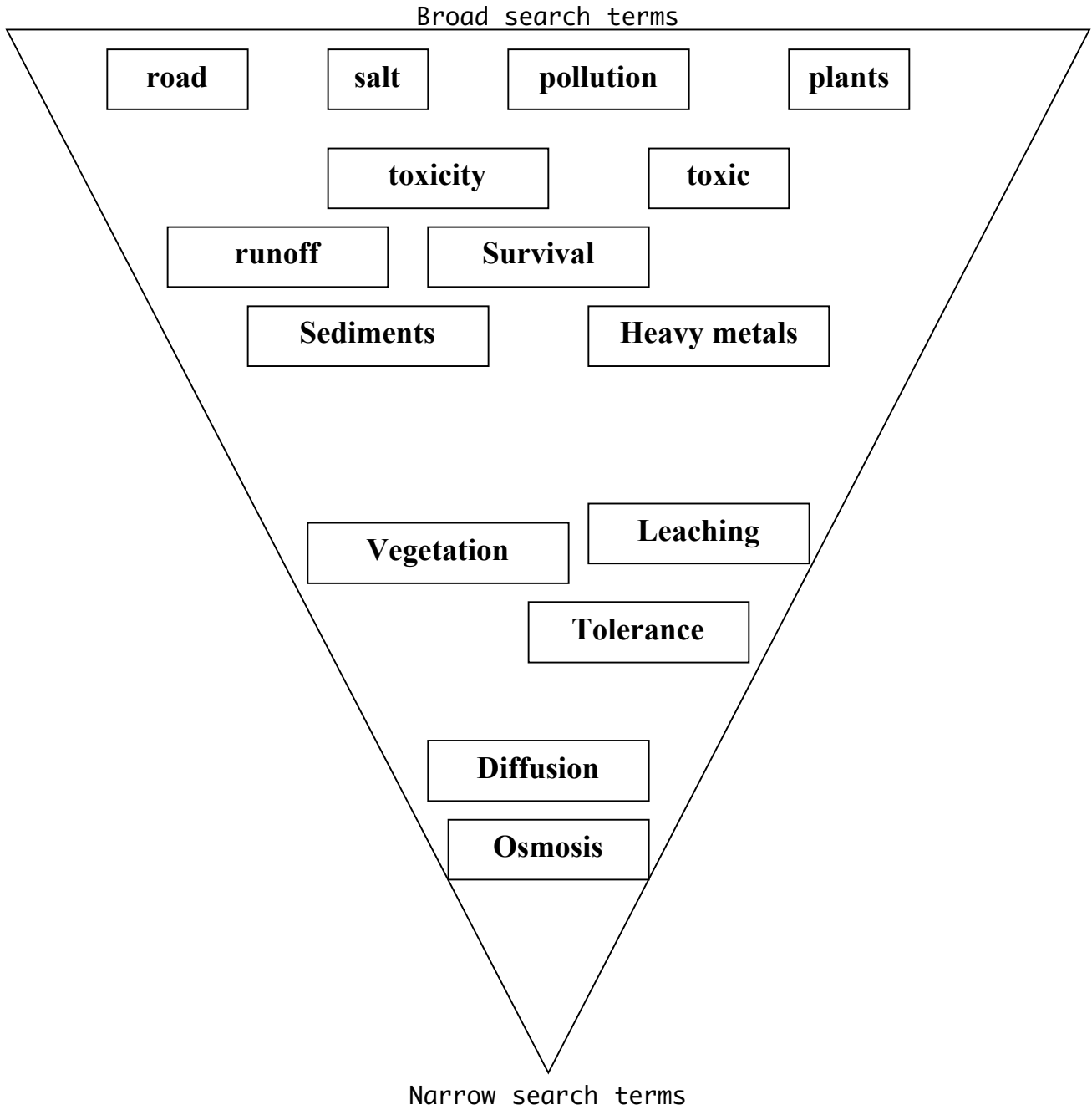
- Eco-columns
- Ecology books and/or computer access
- Graphic organizer for developing a list of key words

**Instructional Procedures:**

***Mini-Lesson (10 min):*** Return to the general topic of pollution that was used as an example in the previous lesson. This time the topic has already been developed into several subtopics that could be used for a research project. To develop a list of key words, it is necessary to choose *one* of these subtopics that will be developed into a thesis. Use the graphic organizer for developing a list of key words, but this time choose a much more specific theme off the original list of topics that were detailed in the previous set of graphic organizers. Use this theme as an example to demonstrate how to develop a list of key words.

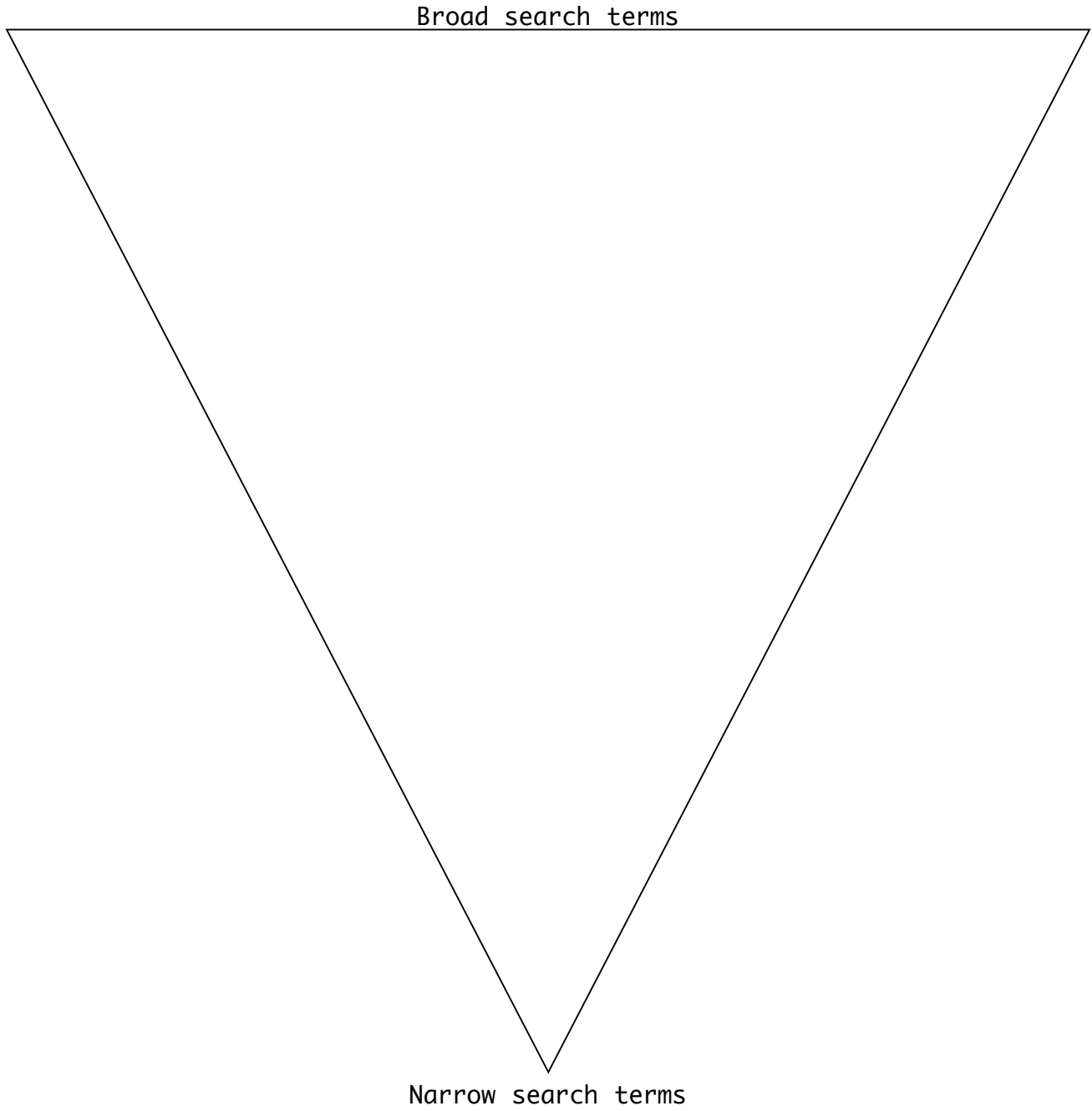
Graphic Organizer for Developing a List of Key Words

Topic:                   The effect of salt runoff on survival of plants                  



Graphic Organizer for Developing a List of Key Words

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_



**Activity (20 min):** Students will meet within their lab groups to complete a graphic organizer for a different topic on their own. Each group will choose a different topic from their first set of graphic organizers developed during the previous class period.

**Class discussion and sharing (10 min):** Meet as a large group and have each lab group present their graphic organizer of key word lists. Give students a chance to add additional ideas. Also, discuss where students might look for sources now that they have their list of key words.

**Closure:**

Check in with the progress of developing a testable hypothesis...

Sarah Franchino

Science Example

**Lesson Plan: Refining a Research Topic**

**Objectives:**

**At the end of this lesson, students will...**

- Refine a research topic from the general to the specific
- Distinguish between a topic and a thesis
- Develop a testable hypothesis

*\*The purpose of this lesson is to begin to develop a research project based on the eco-columns that students have created in a previous class period. The eco-columns are a simulated ecosystem with a dry, a moist, and a wet environment each incorporating living organisms that are interdependent on one another.*

**Opening Activity (3 min):**

Brainstorm a list of possible topics for a research project. These topics will be broad, general ideas of factors that effect ecosystems. Possible ideas may include pollution, competition, climate, circadian rhythms, food webs, predator/prey interactions, symbiotic relationships, succession, or circadian rhythms.

**Materials:**

- Eco-columns
- Ecology books and/or computer access
- Graphic organizer for analysis of topics

**Instructional Procedures:**

**Mini-Lesson (10 min):** Choose one general topic from the list generated by the brainstorming session. Use the graphic organizer for analysis of a topic to demonstrate an example of how to break down a topic into potential more specific themes.

## Graphic Organizer for Analysis of Topics

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Pollution \_\_\_\_\_

How is it happening?	What are the possible effects? Why is it important?	Sources of Information?
Acid rain	Change in pH of water, soil Changes in buffering capacity Adding nitrogen to ecosystem Cascade effect of interdependent organisms	Databases: ProQuest, Galenet, ScienceDirect Books Periodicals
Oil spill	Toxic to organisms May coat feathers causing hypothermia, drowning May enter lungs of marine mammals Bioaccumulation	
Salt runoff	Osmosis and diffusion Sediment pollution Runoff of heavy metals Concentrate in bodies of water	
Sewage spill, fertilizers (nutrient loading)	Eutrophication Plant overpopulation Algal blooms, red tides Oxygen depletion	

## Graphic Organizer for Analysis of Topics

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

How is it happening?	What are the possible effects? Why is it important?	Sources of Information?

**Activity (20 min):** Students will meet within their lab groups to complete a graphic organizer for a different topic on their own. Each group will choose a different topic from the list brainstormed at the beginning of the class period. As groups break off and receive topics, it may be a good idea to list of a few quick ideas for subtopics.

- Climate: drought, flood, heat, cold
- Competition: for light, for space, for food
- Circadian Rhythms: reversing night and day, increased intervals of light and dark
- Food webs: missing trophic level, extra organism at an existing trophic level, abundance or deficiency or food sources
- Predator/prey: camouflage, defense mechanisms, population densities
- Symbiosis: mutualism, gas exchange, parasitism
- Succession: changes made to the environment by living organisms

**Class discussion and sharing (10 min):** Meet as a large group and have each lab group present their graphic organizer of topic ideas. Give students a chance to add additional ideas.

**Closure (to be continued during the following class period):** Provide each group with a copy of all the graphic organizers generated by the class. Ask each group to choose one subtopic to develop into a testable hypothesis. The group should formulate an experimental question based on the subtopic developed in class. The anticipated answer to this question will be the hypothesis. (The teacher will check the development of these during individual meetings with each lab group.)

