Preliminary Topic

Traffic safety

Now do some preliminary reading and thinking
  – Google
  – news/magazine articles
  – journal titles/abstracts
  – library book titles & chapter headings

LOOK FOR USEFUL SEARCH TERMS, TAKE NOTES!
Some ways to narrow a topic

- Geography
- Time frame
- Population
- Subcategories, components or specific example(s) of larger theme
- Compare/contrast two places, times, populations etc.
Reducing speed limits has significant safety and environmental benefits, and Calgary should lower limits in order to protect its citizens.

(which may evolve as I continue to research)

Always identify 2 or 3 key concepts in the topic, which you will want most of your research sources to address in some way.
Develop a rich vocabulary to describe key concepts

- Speed limits, traffic bylaws, regulations
  - highway speed limits, residential speed limits
- safety, traffic safety, injuries, fatal, fatalities
  - pedestrian, pedestrians
- cyclists, bicycles
- motor vehicle collisions
- environment, environmental
  - emissions, carbon emissions
  - climate, climate change

Refine as you research, think like an expert
Construct effective searches

- **Good searches:**
  - “speed limits” pedestrian safety
  - traffic speed injury
  - “traffic speed” environmental impact
  - vehicle speed environmen*

- **Poor search:**
  - effects of reducing speed limits on pedestrian safety

**Smart researchers always:**

- Use keywords or **very** short phrases
- Avoid sentence fragments/strings of words
- Put important phrases inside “quotation marks”
- Avoid slang and use terms an expert would use