Research Activity: Narrowing a Topic

Question: You are taking a history course, and your general topic is: The effect of the Renaissance on education. When you start searching, you see that there are over 120,000 peer-reviewed scholarly articles! Time to narrow your topic. You decide to narrow using tool #5: Type. Which of the below research questions narrows by a demographic (type of person)?

A. What was the effect of the Renaissance on women's education?
B. What was the effect of the Renaissance on education in Florence?
C. What was the effect of the Renaissance on scientific education?
D. What was the effect of the Renaissance on education in the 17th century?

Question: You begin researching the effect of the Renaissance on women's education. However, you are still seeing too many results! What is the best way to continue searching?

A. Stop researching the effect of the Renaissance on women's education and choose a new topic – there are just too many results!
B. Ask a classmate to help refine a topic for you.
C. Choose another tool to further narrow your topic. For example, the effect of the Renaissance on women's education (type) in Italy (place).

Question: You have started doing research about how our health is affected by pesticides. But this topic is general and there are too many results! How can you narrow using Tool #2: Breaking the topic into smaller parts?

A. By focusing on a place that uses pesticides - Canada. What are the effects of pesticide use on Canadian health?
B. By focusing on one aspect of health - respiration. What are the effects of pesticides on respiration?
C. By focusing on a demographic that uses pesticides - rural farmers. What are the effects of pesticide use on rural farmers health?
D. By focusing on a time period - 1950's. What were the effects of pesticide use on health during the 1950's?