

Help:Topics

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A topic is a single issue that commentators have expressed opinions on. Because Discourse DB is a **political opinion** database, every topic must be political in nature. More specifically, it must be about some action that a government, or the voting public in some region, has taken, or might consider taking.

What topics fit in Discourse DB?

Topics that would be appropriate can be grouped into the following types:

- **Political elections** - an election should be represented as a topic, and each candidate running in it should be represented as a position.

Example: "United Kingdom general election, 2009"

- **Military conflicts** - any conflict a nation is involved in as part of a military or law-enforcement operation. Topics should strive to be as specific as possible; for example, "2003 invasion of Iraq" would be better than "Iraq War".

Example: "2003 invasion of Iraq"

- **Judicial rulings** - any court ruling that has a political implication

Example: "McConnell v. Federal Election Commission"

- **Legislation** - any bill or referendum that is either pending, or was already voted on

Example: "Canadian Parliament Bill #12345-A"

The following would **not** be acceptable topics:

- "Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi's handling of the war on terror" - too general
- "Senator Bob Bobson calls Senator Charles Charlson 'a coward'" - this is rhetoric that doesn't translate into any political action.

The following may or may not be an acceptable topic:

- "Terrorist bombing in Karachi" - the actions of a non-government organization, terrorist or otherwise, are not considered relevant to this database, *unless* there is some proposed

government action to respond to them.

Topics that are too general might well be appropriate to serve as topic *categories* - see "Help:Categories"

Representing topics

A topic's page should include a short, neutral description of that topic, along with, preferably, several links to web pages that explain the topic in further detail. In addition, there can be, and often will be, one or more *positions* associated with a topic - statements expressing a view relating to this issue; see Help:Positions.

The name of a topic should reflect the topic in an unbiased and unambiguous way. It is recommended to take the cue from Wikipedia on the naming of specific topics, whenever possible.

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