THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are several good sources on the web outlining what a problem statement is and what one should look like. Here are just a few of the sites I found:
http://explorations.sva.psu.edu/lapland/LitRev/prob1.html#anchor400348
http://resources.cleary.edu/page/Writing+an+effective+problem+statement
http://web.utk.edu/~wrobinso/540_lec_problem.html
http://www.personal.psu.edu/cvm115/proposal/formulating_problem_statements.htm

Your Problem Statement clearly identifies your research problem and then motivates it. A good problem statement accomplishes at least four tasks:

1. It clearly states the issue or problem to be addressed. Included in this is a clear statement of the research question and testable hypotheses.
2. It introduces the reader to the importance of the problem. The reader is oriented to the significance of the study and the research questions or hypotheses to follow.
3. It places the problem in a context, for example, of bigger issues or prior research. It might include some survey of the literature, but for this assignment the literature review is not a major part. Your citations are not exhaustive, just sufficient to defend the research question as relevant and interesting.
4. It provides the framework for the research, indicates generally what is probably necessary to conduct the study (for example, data needs) and explains generally how the analysis will be done.

Your problem statement is your map, giving you direction to a final goal.