

HOW TO WRITE A LITERATURE REVIEW

What is a literature review?

- A literature review is a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic.

What is the purpose of a Literature Review?

- It allows you to show your ability to identify relevant information and to outline existing knowledge.
- To evaluate and combine the information in line with the concepts that you have set yourself for the research.

What sources can I use?

- Literature covers everything relevant that is written on a topic, books, websites, journal articles etc. Check with your teacher if in doubt.

How do I write my Literature Review?

Starting your Literature Search

- Find out what has been written on your subject.

Noting the bibliographic details

- Write down the information required for a bibliography of each source you read. This will save time later on.

Reading the Literature

- Take notes as you read the literature. Examine its' strengths and weaknesses in relation to your research. Take notes not only of the information, but also your thoughts about this information. This will help you put your ideas together when you start writing.

- Identify the source
- Analyse the arguments
- Examine the research methods
- Evaluate the results
- Analyse the conclusions and implications

Writing the Literature Review

- The review has an introduction, body and conclusion, well-formed paragraphs and a logical structure. However, the literature itself is the subject of discussion.
- You should link the literature to your research question, show how it supports or extends the topic or the existing knowledge in the area. You should highlight strengths, weaknesses and omissions of the literature.
- Your viewpoint should be clearly seen in the literature review.

The introduction should include:

- The nature of the topic under discussion
- What you will be including or excluding
- The basis for your selection of the literature

The conclusion should include:

- A summary of general conclusions that are being drawn
- A summary of where your future assignment sits in the literature

The body of the review could include paragraphs on:

- Current research studies
- Current discoveries about the topic
- General conclusions that are being drawn
- Methods and practices currently in use
- Differing outlooks, opinions and viewpoints

Adapted from:

Academic Skills Centre: Writing a Literature Review, 2006, viewed 16 January 2012,
<<http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/writing/literature>>

Burton, Lorelle J. 2007 2nd ed. An Interactive approach to writing essays and research reports in psychology. John Wiley & Sons Australia, QLD.