

LITERATURE REVIEWS



A literature review is composed after extensive research on the work published on the selected topic. The writer must read and understand the research in order to *summarize and synthesize* information. A literature review demonstrates how the writer's own research fits into the discourse.

Starting a literature review

⇒ *Consider the themes that connect your sources*

How is the research similar? What links the arguments together? Are you noticing any trends? Is there any information missing from current research?

⇒ *Create a thesis statement for direction*

After considering themes, think about the direction you want your literature review to take. What perspective will your literature review give on the material?

Organizing a literature review

Chronological – writing about resources according to when they were published

Thematic – writing about resources according to the topic they address

Methodological – writing about resources with respect to the methods of the author(s)

Writing recommendations

⇒ *Use evidence*

Your interpretation of the research must be supported by evidence.

⇒ *Stay focused*

You should only use main points that are relevant to the nature of the review.

⇒ *Try to paraphrase often*

You should use direct quotations sparingly, as paraphrasing shows that you understand the material. However, you should be cautious to represent the author's ideas accurately.

⇒ *Summarize and synthesize information*

You need to connect the information in each paragraph to your own work.

⇒ *Maintain your voice*

You should be mindful of maintaining your own voice throughout the review, while presenting other authors' ideas.

* Information adapted from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill Writing Center