

## How to Write a Literature Review Tip Sheet

### What is a Literature Review?

A literature review is a critical analysis of published information on a particular topic within a specific period. It is an examination of the written work of scholars and researchers in a given field. It can include a simple summary, comparison, or analysis of different studies. It usually has a summary of each source. Those summaries are organized in chronological, thematic, or methodological order. A literature review might also provide a new analysis of past material, or combine new with past analysis. It is written mainly in the structure of a simple essay made up of three elements; an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

### Why do we write a Literature Review?

A Literature review provides a helpful guide to a given topic. It should give a strong background to the topic of the research paper. You demonstrate your understanding of the topic by analyzing then synthesizing the information for the following purposes.

- To specify what has already been written on a topic.
- To provide an outline of key concepts.
- To identify main connections or structures.
- To identify any gaps in the field.
- To specify strengths and weaknesses.
- To identify any conflicting information.

### How to write a Literature Review?

- Decide on what you need to convey in the literature review.
- Do enormous research of the current literature.
- Find out what has been written on the topic.
- Determine how many resources you need.
- Choose relevant resources.
- Critically read each resource and look for the related arguments.

- Use a matrix, table, or concept map to determine how the different sources are associated with each other.
- Find any gaps in the literature that needs further research.

## **Literature Review Layout**

### **Introduction**

Your introduction should provide an outline of the following.

- Why are you writing a literature review?
- Why is the topic important?
- The standards used for your literature selection (e.g. sorts of references used, date range...etc).
- The organizational structure of the review.

### **Body Paragraphs**

Each body paragraph should address several themes that are related to your topic. You may want to synthesize many of your reviewed readings into each paragraph to show an obvious connection between the sources. You may also want to critically analyze each source to show how they contribute to the topic you are researching.

### **Conclusion**

Your conclusion should provide a summary of the following.

- The main disagreements and agreements found in the literature review.
- Any gaps in the field.
- Your overall point of view on the topic.

## **References**

- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. (n.d.). Literature Reviews. The Writing Center. <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/literature-reviews/>
- Queensland University of Technology. (n.d.). Writing a Literature Review. QUT cite|write. <https://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/litreview.jsp>