



Tips for Writing a Literature Review

A Literature Review (LR) offers insight into the academic conversations related to a topic. Because writing a LR is an extensive process, use these tips to guide your writing process:

- 1) **Decide which LR structure is best for your topic** (i.e., narrative, focused, methodological, meta-analysis, argumentative, integrative, historical, theoretical).
- 2) **Determine the structure of the LR based on its context** (i.e., class assignment, dissertation, or article *and* your academic discipline).
- 3) **Identify the best organization for your content** (i.e., chronological, perspective, thematic, provenance, method, theory, genre, etc.).

Note that most LR follow the same organizational structure:

Introduction	Body	Conclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Topic overview→ Goal of LR→ Context: issues, relevant, missing information→ Research goals based on research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Explanation of topic divided into themes→ Explanation of existing research, methods, and history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Summary and evaluation of presented research→ Areas for further research→ Justification for your research

- 4) **Annotate as you read your sources** (What is the author's argument? What methods are used in this research? What are significant findings and claims? What are the connections to your purpose? What do you think is important or interesting about the literature? Is anything missing? Use these notes to inform your body paragraphs).
- 5) **Present and discuss rather than list your sources** (What is the topic of each paragraph? Is it a theme? An author? A method? Remember to organize your paragraph content to introduce, illustrate, and discuss the topic).
- 6) **Alternate the ways you integrate the literature** (e.g., quotes, summaries, paraphrases), and review your reference style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
- 7) **Always leave time to review, revise, and proofread!**

