



WRITING A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature:

- Focuses on a specific topic – your argument or problem as stated in your thesis
- Compiles the research that has been published on the topic by recognized scholars and researchers
 - Provides background for the problem or puts the problem into historical perspective
- Informs the reader about the current concepts and state of research on the topic and any controversies
- Describes the pros and cons of particular studies and may suggest areas for further research
- Organizes the citations thematically into a narrative that can serve as the introduction to your report or that can be an individual essay

A review of the literature is NOT:

A *literary* review describing and evaluating a specific book, poem, play, etc.

An exhaustive, alphabetical list of every work consulted in your research, nor a list of references cited

An annotated bibliography listing references and adding a brief notes about the value of each source

Suggestions for further reading

ONLINE HELP with LITERATURE REVIEWS

<http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/literaturereview.html>

HOW TO...Write a Literature Review from U of California Santa Cruz – short bullet points

<http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/ReviewofLiterature.html>

UW-Madison Writing Center – more about organizing and writing the lit review not much on searching and evaluating

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html

UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center – chatty handout explaining the steps, organization and general how to of writing a lit review

also annotated bib handout:

http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/annotated_bibliographies.html

http://www.library.american.edu/Help/tutorials/lit_review/index.html

American U – What is, and is not, a literature review? With an example lit review of critical thinking (19 pages).

<http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/EL21LIT.HTM#using>

Language Center, Asian Institute of Technology – Research based - 10 Questions the Lit Review should answer; example review – good and bad analyzed

http://edgenet.edgewood.edu/LSS/writingcenter/articles/lit_review.htm

Edgewood's Writing Center - Step by step guide to writing and refining your literature review

FINDING REVIEWS OF THE LITERATURE

Most of the specialized databases will have scholarly articles that are either Literature Reviews or have a review of the literature as an introduction to the research.

Keys to finding them are:

ERIC – Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>“Literature Reviews”</i> is a <i>descriptor</i> – search in SU Descriptors (All) and combine with search terms on your topic - Limit to Journal Articles ▪ Eric Digests are brief, 3-5 page, full text articles that describes the current state of an issue and provide a bibliography, but does not evaluate the pros and cons of the studies cited. ▪ Search for your topic and limit Publication Type to: ERIC Digests in Full Text
PsycInfo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>PsycInfo</i> uses Literature Review as a Form/Content Type ▪ In EBSCO Select Methodology: Literature Review and combine with terms for your topic ▪ Publication Type – Review has book, software, etc. reviews
CINAHL (Nursing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select <i>Systematic Review</i> as a Publication Type and combine with terms for your topic
Medline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select <i>Review</i> as a Publication Type and combine with terms for your topic
Academic Search Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ LITERATURE reviews is a Subject Heading – change in Select a Field (optional) to in “SU Subject Terms” ▪ Select Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals ▪ Document Type <i>Bibliography</i> may or may not be helpful depending on topic of interest.
ProQuest Research Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Select Document Type: Literature Review and combine with your topic search terms ▪ Also try search terms and add: “literature review” or “review of literature” in second search box; gets “feature” articles or other types that are literature reviews ▪ Limit to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals
Business Source Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter topic search terms and add: “literature review” or “review of literature” in second search box ▪ Limit to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals
CMMC – Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter topic search terms and add: “literature review” or “review of literature” in second search box ▪ Limit to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals
SocINDEX with Full Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enter topic search terms and add: “literature review” or “review of literature” in second search box ▪ May also Limit to Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals
MLA (Languages & Literatures) RLIM (Music) ATLA (Religion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No option to limit results to literature reviews