

Purpose: A literature review places each theory, approach, intervention and study in the context of how it contributes to what is known, or not well understood or known about a subject. A literature review identifies new ways of interpreting previous research. A literature review points the way forward for further research.

Features: A literature review requires that you have read widely, and have critically evaluated each relevant theory, approach, intervention and study, in consideration of other theories, etc. For literature reviews, it is better to use primary sources (original) of information. There are different approaches to literature reviews depending on your purpose, and it is advisable that you consult your lecturer or subject outline before you proceed. How many studies, etc. are included in the literature review depends on your purpose, and, if part of a coursework assignment, lecturer's requirements, and time allocated.

Structure:

Introduction	The Body: A synthesis of your findings on the included studies, which allows you to make comparisons (explain the similarities and differences). This then tells us about a topic and identifies our knowledge gaps.				Conclusion
	Theoretical Base	Research	Results & Discussion (Validation & Justification)	Limitations & Implications	
Introduce the topic: 1. What is the research topic about? 2. Have you narrowed this this area to a particular topic? Establish a context: Why is your topic important?	What are the theories? Report different theoretical approaches: 1. Is there a clearly stated research question? 2. Are there hypotheses? Are they clearly stated? 3. Are the relationships between the main characteristics or values explicit and reasonable? 4. Are the hypotheses testable and the results interpretable? 5. Can you describe the differing research in a new and insightful set of categories?	What research has been done? How does this research validate (support) or conflict with the theoretical base? This step is very important. 1. Where does the research fall within the broader theoretical base? 2. What type of research has been conducted? (surveys, interviews, etc) 3. Is the research qualitative or quantitative? 4. Are there proper controls for the characteristics or values (variables) tested? 5. Could the design be improved? How? 6. Are the reliability and validity measures discussed? Is the choice of measure appropriate? 7. Is the population appropriate for the research question being studied? Is the sample specified and appropriate? Can the results be reasonably generalised on the basis of this sample?	Does the research support or conflict with the theoretical base? 1. Is the data appropriate for the study? 2. Are the statistical techniques appropriate and adequately described? 3. Are the control variables adequately handled in the data analysis? Are their other control variables that were not considered but should have? 4. Are the conclusions of the study consistent with the results of the statistical analyses? 5. Are alternative conclusions that are consistent with the differing kinds of research discussed and accounted for?	1. Are the theoretical and practical implications of the results adequately discussed? 2. Are the limitations of the study noted?	'Step away' from all the ideas you have reported. 1. What is your overall assessment of the adequacy of the study for exploring the research problem? 2. What can you say about the advancement of the theory and research in your chosen topic area? 3. Can you see any gaps or areas that need to be explored further?

Academic language:

- Academic words for reporting and connecting ideas:

To introduce an additional idea:	In addition, another reason/aspect/example, furthermore, moreover, besides, also
To introduce a similarity:	There is consensus/agreement, the writers/authors/researchers agree, commonalities include
To introduce an opposite idea or contrast:	On the other hand, in contrast, in spite of, Although, still, nonetheless, instead, compare this with, alternatively, otherwise, on the contrary, rather
To give an example:	For example, for instance, an example of this is, a further instance of this is
To list ideas in order of time:	First, first of all, first and foremost, second, more important, most important, more significantly, above all, most of all, concurrently, an additional
To introduce an explanation or make a stronger statement:	In fact, indeed
To introduce a result:	Accordingly, as a result, as a consequence, consequently, for these reasons, hence, therefore, thus
To point to evidence:	It can be seen that, the evidence is that, in support of this
To make a tentative statement:	Studies suggest that, perhaps, it would seem that, it tends to be the case that, studies indicate

- Hedging expressions:

It should be the case that...	Viewed in this way...
It might be suggested that...	There is every hope that...
It may be possible to obtain...	It is important to develop...
It is useful to study...	It is/is not known whether...
It is/it is not difficult to conclude from...	

Discipline examples:

- [A2013 \(Ecology and Indigenous Australian Culture\)](#)
- [Literature Review in Psychology, APA Style \(Charat\)](#)

Useful links:

- [Literature Reviews](#)
- [The Writing Guide](#)
- [Manchester Phrasebank](#)
- [Education Guide: Literature Reviews](#)
- [EndNote](#)

References:

- Booth, A., Papaioannou, D., & Sutton, A. (2012). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review*. London, England: Sage Publications.
- Morley-Warner, T. (2009). *Academic writing is...: A guide to writing in a university context*. Sydney, Australia: CREA Publications.
- Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (1981). *Writing Academic English* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing.
- Redman, P. (2006). *Good Essay Writing* (3rd ed.). London, England: Open University Press.