

Hello and welcome to the first lecture on topic 6 to learn how to write a literature review.

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to  
define what a literature review is  
list the main elements of a literature review  
organize the right structure of a literature review  
prepare a brief review in your field of research

Let's start from the question What is a literature review?

First of all, a literature review involves a systematic identification of necessary information related to a research problem.

By definition, a literature review is a critical summary of all published work on a particular topic.

It analyzes specific issues

It identifies trends in research.

It points out research gaps in existing literature

So, this is a very important part of every research, including, of course, yours.

Second question: what is the purpose of a literature review?

In a research, literature review is mainly used to:

define the problem that you plan to research further

reveal gaps in previous research by reviewing the findings or theories found

show how your study relates to or differs from previous studies

Ideally, a good literature review should present the frontiers of knowledge in the research area and answer the questions:

What is known based on previous studies;

What has yet to be found out or what can be investigated further.

You have to remember, writing a literature review is not just about summarizing the articles and books that you have read, but you have to analyze all this information.

The following key steps are important for writing a literary review:

focus on Keywords: identify the keywords, including variables, from your research topic or research problem.

Search Good Resources: find articles based on the key words by searching through good resources (databases/ journals). Write down the reference for the articles used too.

Extract Key Info. Extract the key information from the resources.

Compare and Contrast. Critically compare the info that you have gathered from various articles. Analyze and synthesize.

Link and justify. Make a link to your research problem and provide good justifications.

Third question: What are the key components of a literature review? It depends on the type of literature itself.

For theoretical literature, these would be  
the definition of concepts, keywords  
different views of the concepts  
and the relationship of the concept to others

For the empirical literature, these would be findings from related studies and  
comparison of findings

And the most important question is What to look for in articles?

I would advise the following:

Get to know the aims and objectives of the study

Find related concepts. Not all, but at least the key variables mentioned in the  
objectives.

Learn about the Method. You need to understand how the previous study was  
conducted (e.g., target samples, data collection procedures, etc.)

Study the Results. Synthesize the key findings especially by relating to your  
own research problem, not just the conclusions.

You can write your literature review using one of the following approaches:  
Chronological approach and Thematic approach.

In the chronological approach you describe each work in succession, starting  
with the earliest available information.

Here are some tips for using the chronological approach

Use this structure when you want to focus on how ideas or methodology have  
progressed over time.

Group and discuss your sources in order of their publication date.

Record the research and developments in each group.

Check how the field has developed over the years.

In the thematic approach that you are most likely to use, you organize and  
discuss existing literature based on themes or theoretical concepts you feel are  
important to understanding the topic.

Here are some tips for using the thematic approach

Remember that you need to do much more than summarizing each study.

Analyze existing knowledge on the topic with regard to certain important  
issues.

Draw the readers' attention to new angles or perspectives.

Start listing citations you may include in your paper.

And last, but not least, the structure of a literature review. What are the main  
elements of a literature review? The structure of literature review consists of  
introduction, methods, body (or main part), discussion & conclusion, references.  
Let's take a close look on these components. Here are tips on how to organize your  
literary review.

**Introduction.** Set some context; provide information about the field of study, the relevance of the chosen topic within the field, and the focus of the literature review.

**Methods.** Help readers understand your approach, describe the criteria used to select the sources or the way in which you have presented information.

**Body.** A chronological model has different paragraphs for different time periods; a thematic model has subtopics based on the different themes.

**Discussion & Conclusion.** Summarize the main contributions of significant studies, raise and discuss questions about the topic and field, clearly mention gaps in research, if any, and possible suggestions for further study.

**Reference.** Prepare a complete reference list that includes every important detail of all the sources you have referred to.

So, as a result of this lecture you got the following learning outcomes:

You are now able to

define what a literature review is

list the main elements of a literature review

organize the right structure of your literature review

prepare a brief review in your field of research

To test yourself, take a quiz that following this lecture.

This is the list of references used to create this presentation. You can find more useful links in the final section of this topic.

The following video lecture will give you tips for preparing a reference list.

Thank you for watching this!