

Literature Review

In your academic papers, it is important to review sources from experts in your field of study. The literature review involves a critical evaluation of scholarly works organized in a way that enhances and supports the overall claim or thesis statement. In many cases, a literature review is a portion of your research paper.

In a literature review, the word *literature* does not refer to novels, poetry, or plays. Instead, *literature* refers to scholarly sources, such as articles and books, on the topic you are researching.

Literature review contents

In your literature review, do the following.

- Introduce the topic of your research.
- Explain the goal of the literature review.
- When introducing each article, write the author's name and the title of the article.
- Briefly summarize the article's main points.
- Explain the importance of the article for your research. This includes:
 - **Analysis**
Critique the methodology and/or the conclusions made. If applicable, explain why some findings are viewed as stronger and some viewed as weaker.
 - **Synthesis**
Identify major studies and patterns or trends in the literature. Compare and contrast the focus, methodologies, results, or conclusions. Identify any controversies about the topic and provide examples of studies on both sides of the controversy.
 - **Conclusions**
Explain how studies contribute to an understanding of the original topic of the literature review.

Literature review organization

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), literature reviews can be organized by:

- **Concepts**
The information from your sources is arranged by common theories and ideas.
- **Methodological similarities**
The information is organized based on how the studies were conducted.
- **Historical development of the field**
The information is organized chronologically, or based on when the research was conducted.