

# Tips for Doing a Literature Review

Graduate Research and Writing Boot Camp

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# Learning Outcomes

- Explain the term literature review and the goal of conducting a literature review [LR]
- Discuss the importance of literature review in the research process.
- Locate and identify relevant materials and/or sources of existing literature/articles for literature review.
- Describe how to write a good literature review.



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# What is a literature review?

“A written summary of articles, books, and other documents that describes **the past and current state** of **knowledge** about a **topic**” (Creswell, 2002)

Existing chain of **knowledge** related to your research **topic** (Crosby and Salazar, 2021)

- “Is an account of what has been **published** on a **topic** by **accredited scholars and researchers**” (Taylor, n.d.)



# Why is literature review important in the research process?

- In addition to the body knowledge, it helps to gain and demonstrate skills in two areas:
  - 1) **Information seeking**- ability to scan the literature efficiently and effectively...
  - 2) **Critical appraisal of studies**: ability to apply principles of analysis to identify valid studies

# Why do we do literature review?

- ✓ Use to justify the importance of the study/research
- ✓ Place the study in historical context
- ✓ Define your research problem
- ✓ Refine research questions
- ✓ Identify appropriate methodology
- ✓ Identity appropriate instrumentation
- ✓ Identity the gaps
- ✓ Support findings/results

- For quantitative research literature review is done at the beginning of the study.
- For qualitative research, literature review may be use at the beginning of the study to justify the significance/importance of the study

(Creswell & Creswell, 2017)

# Reviewing the literature....

➤ “Reviewing the literature is one of the most exciting and significant aspects of doing research” (DePoy and Gitlin, 1994)

➤ But can be tedious, it involves time and hard work (Crosby and Salazar, 2021, pg 18)

➤ **Students underestimate the importance of literature review. Why?**



# Literature Review: Where to look for?

- **Peer reviewed Journals**
- Health Science/Public Health Journals:

Examples: American Public Health Association Journal, Journal of Health Promotion, BMC, Open Access Journals.

1. -Literature Review Search? Where/How
2. -Finding more literature
3. -When to stop the search
4. -How to organize and write the literature review section

- Electronic Database**
- Textbooks/Articles**
- Google scholar**
- Dissertations/Thesis**

## **GREAT EXAMPLES**

<https://www.galileo.usg.edu/csu>

<https://scholar.google.com/>

[What's New in MeSH \(nih.gov\)](#)

[PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

Medline, JSTOR search, Scopus

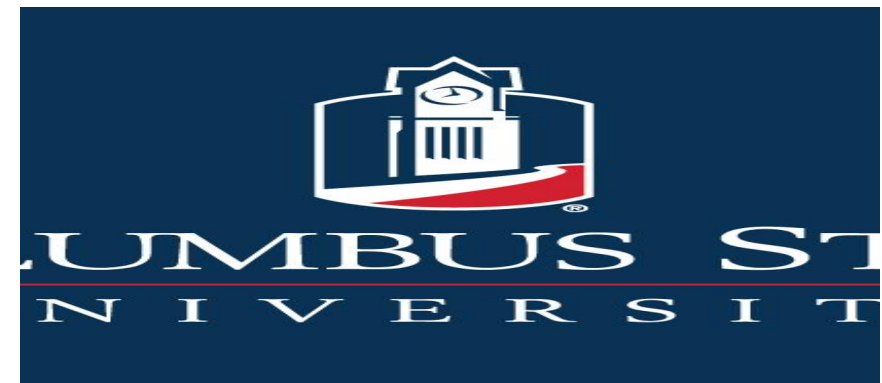
# How to begin search for the existing literature & literature review

- **No single way to conduct a LR.**
- **To do a good LR, you must search & read extensively**

Here are some recommendations:

- **Search & re-search literature**
- **Begin by identifying key words**
- **Search key words in the databases**
- **Recommend 50 articles to start with...depending on the study (primary and systematic review studies)**

- Skim this set of articles to determine if they will be useful for your study
- **Create a visual map to show how your study add to literature or where your study is in the large body of literature**
- **Take notes while reading**





# How to write your literature review

- Drafts summaries of most important articles
- After the summarizing, organize based on concepts, themes, research questions, objective
- Synthesize(blend information)
- Notify the gaps
- **USE EXAMPLES!**



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# Writing a Good Literature Review

Writing a good literature review section involves the following steps:

- a) Search for relevant literature (peer reviewed primary research studies articles and reports)
- b) Evaluate the sources of the information
- c) Identify themes, debates/discussions related to the topic and identify gaps in research/literature
- d) Outline the structure of the literature review section
- e) Write the literature review

# Tips for writing a literature review

- Like any academic paper, your literature review should have
  - Introduction
  - Main body (Be organized around research questions/topic)
  - Conclusion

## Remember

- ✓ Summarize & synthesize
- ✓ Identity themes
- ✓ Critically evaluate
- ✓ Write in well structured coherent paragraphs
- ✓ Conclude by summarizing the key findings/themes
- ✓ Cite appropriately (in-text citations!!!) & of course, add list of references

# Samples of Literature Review

## Samples of Literature Review!!!!

Examples of bad, better and best literature review

Click on the Oxford Learning link below to review samples of literature review

[Bad, Better, Best Examples of Literature Review - How to do your Social Research Project or Dissertation Resources - Learning Link \(oup.com\)](#)

# References

1. Creswell J. W. & Creswell D. (2017). Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach. SAGE, Los Angeles.
2. Crosby R. A. & Salazar L F. (2020). Essentials of Public Health Research. Jones & Bartlett Learning, Burlington MA.
3. Jacobsen K. H.( 2021). Introduction to health research methods: a practical guide. 3rd Edition, Jones & Bartlett Learning, Burlington MA.
4. Pautasso M. (2013). Ten simple rules for writing a literature review. PLOS Computational Biology, 3:7; e1003149.
5. Taylor D (n.d.) The literature review: a few tips on conducting it. Health Sciences Writing Center, and Margaret Procter Writing Support. [The Literature Review: A Few Tips On Conducting It | Writing Advice \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Thank you!!

