

# **A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Literature Review**

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<https://thediplomaticinsight.com/a-step-by-step-guide-to-writing-literature-review/>

A literature review is described as a systematic and critical assessment of published literature related to the research question or topic. It is meant to demonstrate the researcher's familiarity with the subject and establish the context for the research. In this short piece, some useful steps for knowledge seekers before writing a literature review for their thesis or other academic purposes have been highlighted.

### **Step 1: Exploration**

The first step involves exploring the topic you intend to investigate. In an online environment, such as the internet or a database search, take note of the keywords most relevant and closely related to your research question. For example, if your research question is about poverty alleviation in Pakistan, you should consider "poverty" as one keyword, "alleviation" as the second keyword, and then combinations like "poverty alleviation" or "poverty alleviation in developing countries," and so forth.

### **Step 2: Conducting research**

The second step involves conducting comprehensive research using academic databases such as JSTOR, Taylor and Francis, Springer, ProjectMuse, and other freely accessible online libraries that pertain to your research question, such as DOAJ, Semantic Web, and other open-access repositories. In these sources, you can explore research articles, ebooks, reports, and videos that are relevant to your research question. Utilizing proper keywords or controlled vocabulary is essential for effectively exploring a wide range of literature.

### **Step 3: Selecting resources**

This step is relevant for extracting the desired material from the chunk. In this step, you will screen and select resources closely related to your research question. This step will require you to read the titles, abstracts, or conclusions to identify the most relevant information from the extensive literature

### **Step 4: Reading and analyzing selected literature**

The fourth step involves thorough readings of the extracted literature with a critical analysis of the selected resources. Here, you can highlight findings using markers and pointers to emphasize significant insights from the selected literature.

## **Step 5: Organizing literature**

The fifth step entails organizing the most pertinent literature in a folder to identify patterns and gaps in existing research. In this step, you can group the sources based on common themes, findings, and methodologies that are most relevant to your research question.

## **Step 6: Identifying gaps in existing literature**

This step includes investigating the gap in the existing literature and your research question; in this step, one should pay attention to any missing areas that need to be addressed. This step will take you to the position of a broader academic context.

## **Step 7: Synthesizing information**

In this step, the focus is on synthesizing information gathered from the findings of existing literature. One should summarize their notes and cohesively organize them into paragraphs in a systematic order.

## **Step 8: Critical evaluation of literature**

In this eighth step, you can critically evaluate the literature by assessing its strengths and weaknesses. It is essential to select the most credible items to incorporate into your research findings. This step involves assessing the validity and reliability of relevant findings.

## **Step 9: Structuring findings**

In the ninth step, you should organize the findings in a well-structured and sequential manner. Typically, the process starts with an introduction that outlines the research question, followed by the presentation of the main themes or findings and concludes with a summary.

## **Step 10: Review and edit the literature review**

In this tenth and final step, the focus is on reviewing and editing the literature review. Here, one should carefully examine the entire piece of writing to identify any inconsistencies and gaps in the arguments. It is essential to avoid any mistakes during this phase.

Finally, literature is not merely a summary of sources extracted from a wide range of data. Instead, it involves critical analysis of previously published literature. Conducting a literature review in a quantitative or qualitative research method can be challenging; it demands careful attention, time, energy, and a deep understanding of the research topic, which enhances your academic reputation. Researchers may make mistakes while reviewing the literature. It's important to avoid these errors, such as summarizing without critical analysis. Instead, one should summarize the findings and critically assess how each source contributes to the existing research question. Another common mistake is chunking material from various sources. To avoid this, focus on selecting the most pertinent sources for your research questions. Failure to do so may lead to confusion in finding the right and precise research materials. Additionally, it's crucial to steer clear of sources that lack authenticity, such as open sources without publisher links or author information. Many researchers tend to rely on old and outdated literature, which can result in inaccurate conclusions or obsolete information. Furthermore, it's essential to avoid literature that lacks critical evaluation. Lastly, prioritize literature published in high-impact factor journals, which have been reviewed by editorial boards and cited by numerous researchers.

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