

## Literature Review

- A literature review is an organized discussion of published information relevant to a specific research area, summarizing and critically evaluating each work.
- It is not merely a descriptive list or a comprehensive survey of all writings on a subject.
- The focus is on synthesizing information and connecting various sources logically, highlighting their relevance to the research topic.
- It also involves critically analyzing the literature for gaps, limitations, and areas for further research.

Literature Review Tasks	Definition of Key Terms	What it Means
1. It <b>surveys</b> the literature in your chosen area of study	<b>Survey:</b> the process of finding, reading, analyzing, and organizing, novel conclusions from the results of the chosen literature on a particular topic or field	By reading, analyzing, and organizing the sources you collect, you are demonstrating a familiarity with a body of knowledge/topic/subject by showing you have read the relevant research that is out there.  <b>Think BIG PICTURE</b>
2. It <b>presents</b> the literature in an organized way	<b>Present:</b> To clearly show and/or outline	Once you know what information is out there on your subject or field, you will summarize the prior research and present it as part of your analysis. This helps establish the credibility of your work and your contribution to advancing the conversation and knowledge of the topic.
3. It <b>synthesizes</b> the information in that literature into a summary	<b>Synthesize:</b> To combine or put together separate readings, discussions, sources, etc. so that they make a connected discussion about a particular subject or topic	After you write your brief summary of the other literature, you must combine the sources in a logical manner. How are all the sources you chose connected? How are they not?  It also makes it clear how your project/research is linked to the larger topic.
4. It <b>critically evaluates</b> the information gathered for gaps, limitations, and further areas of research	<b>Critically Analyze:</b> To examine something complex in detail. To separate or break up something into its fundamental elements by carefully weighing, comparing, contrasting, critiquing, and evaluating all relevant factors	This is where you begin to judge the literature based on your developing expertise on a subject. You are checking for <b>gaps in the literature</b> (are some sub-topics covered thoroughly but others not?) and for <b>limitations</b> (were the methods and findings from a particular piece questionable?).  This is where you demonstrate what you have learned from others in your field and that your research is a starting point for new ideas. Why does your research matter and how does it contribute to the big picture?

Error	Solution
<p>Incorrect citation (missing punctuation, incorrect spacing, missing information, etc.)</p>	<p>Make sure you follow the citation guides exactly as they are written. Double and triple check for missing periods and commas, author names, dates, and spacing.</p>
<p>Not using “hanging” indent for citations</p>	<p>A hanging indent is when all lines <b>EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST line are indented</b> (see example below). To create a hanging indent in word, follow these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Place your cursor at the beginning of your citation and highlight it.</li> <li>2. Right click your mouse</li> <li>3. Select <i>Paragraph</i> from the resulting pop up menu</li> <li>4. Under <i>Indentation</i>, use the <i>Special pull-down menu</i> to select hanging</li> <li>5. Use the <i>By menu</i> to select 0.5"</li> <li>6. For multiple citations, make sure you hit enter after each citation and repeat steps 1-5.</li> </ol>
<p>Not knowing your own argument</p>	<p>What is the general direction on your research paper? What questions are you trying to answer? Make sure you do this <b>BEFORE</b> you begin looking for your resources.</p>
<p>Too many direct quotes and incorrect paraphrasing</p>	<p>Remember, the purpose of annotations is to write a summary <b>in your own words</b>. Only pull in direct quotes if you know that quote will be used in your final paper.</p> <p>Similarly, make sure that your interpretation or your paraphrasing is correct—often times, students convolute the true meaning of something written by someone else. Take the time to truly understand the author’s point, perspective, and statement before you paraphrase it.</p>