

# WRITING LITERATURE REVIEW

## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an essential component of academic research. It serves to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research related to your topic, placing your own work within a larger scholarly context.

### 1.a) How journals work: the review process

The academic journal publishing process relies heavily on a mechanism called **peer review**. This process ensures the quality and rigor of published research.

- **Submission:** An author submits a manuscript to a journal's editorial board.
- **Initial Screening:** The editor-in-chief or an associate editor quickly assesses the manuscript's suitability for the journal's scope. Many papers are desk-rejected at this stage.
- **Assignment to Reviewers:** If deemed suitable, the manuscript is sent to two or three external experts (peers) in the field. This is typically a single-blind (reviewers know the author, but not vice-versa) or double-blind (neither knows the other) process.
- **Review and Feedback:** Reviewers analyze the paper's methodology, findings, significance, and clarity, providing detailed comments.
- **Editorial Decision:** The editor synthesizes the reviews and makes a decision: Accept (rare), Minor Revisions, Major Revisions, or Reject.
- **Revision and Re-submission:** The author addresses the reviewers' comments and resubmits the revised manuscript, often with a detailed response letter.
- **Final Acceptance:** After one or more rounds of revision, the paper is accepted and moved into production.

This process is fundamental to the scholarly community, acting as a crucial filter for valid, high-quality research.

### 1.b) Ethical Guidelines and intellectual property

Academic integrity is non-negotiable in publishing. Students and researchers must adhere to strict ethical guidelines:

- **Plagiarism:** Presenting someone else's work, ideas, or words as your own without proper attribution. This includes self-plagiarism (reusing your own previously published work without citation).
- **Falsification and Fabrication:** Deliberately misrepresenting research data, results, or processes.
- **Authorship:** Only individuals who have made a substantial intellectual contribution to the work (design, data collection, analysis, or writing) should be listed as authors.
- **Intellectual Property (Copyright):** Understanding that published works are protected by copyright. When using extensive material, permission may be required from the copyright holder.

### 1.c) Why is publishing important

Academic publishing serves several critical functions for the researcher, the institution, and the public:

- **Dissemination of Knowledge:** It makes new findings and ideas widely available to the global academic community and practitioners.
- **Career Advancement (The "Publish or Perish" Principle):** Publication is often a primary metric for tenure, promotion, and funding acquisition in academic careers.
- **Validation:** Peer review confers a stamp of approval on the research, validating its methodology and conclusions.
- **Impact:** Published research can influence policy, business practices, and societal understanding.

#### 1.d) Communication with the editorial board

Professional and timely communication with the editor is crucial for successful publication.

- **Professional Tone:** Maintain a courteous and respectful tone in all correspondence, even when disagreeing with a reviewer's point.
- **Response to Reviews:** When revising a manuscript, provide a detailed, point-by-point response letter explaining exactly how and where you addressed every comment from the reviewers. If you chose not to address a point, provide a clear, scholarly justification.
- **Queries:** Direct all administrative and policy questions (e.g., status updates, policy clarification) to the editorial assistant or managing editor, and all substantive content questions to the editor-in-chief or associate editor.

#### 1.e) Construction of your literature review

A literature review is not merely a list of summaries; it is a synthesis of ideas. Its construction involves:

- **Scope Definition:** Clearly defining the boundaries of your review (what topics, time periods, and types of studies are included).
- **Structure:** Organizing the review thematically, methodologically, or chronologically, rather than source-by-source. Common structural approaches include:
  - **Thematic:** Grouping studies that share a common concept or finding.
  - **Methodological:** Grouping studies by the research methods used (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative).
  - **Chronological:** Tracing the evolution of a concept over time.
- **Argumentation:** The review should build a cohesive argument that leads the reader to the clear identification of a **research gap** that your current study intends to fill.

### Chapter 2: AGGREGATE REFERENCES

Managing large volumes of sources efficiently is necessary for any serious academic work. Tools and consistent practices are key.

#### 2.a) Zotero: online features

Zotero is a popular, free reference management software. Its online features significantly enhance collaborative and mobile research:

- **Cloud Synchronization:** Zotero allows you to sync your entire library, including citation data and attached files, across multiple devices and computers. This ensures your library is always up-to-date.
- **Group Libraries:** This feature enables researchers to create shared, collaborative citation libraries. This is vital for team-based projects, systematic reviews, or labs where multiple people need access to the same foundational research.
- **Web-Based Access:** While the primary Zotero application is desktop-based, the online account provides web access to your data, allowing for source review and light editing even when the desktop client is unavailable.

## 2.b) Bibliography

The terms "Bibliography," "Reference List," and "Works Cited" are often used interchangeably, but technical definitions vary by style guide.

- **Definition:** A bibliography is a list of all sources that a writer has consulted or cited in preparing a work.
- **Reference List (APA/Chicago-Author-Date):** A list that *only* includes sources explicitly cited within the body of the paper. This is the most common format in the sciences and social sciences.
- **Works Cited (MLA):** A list that *only* includes sources explicitly cited within the body of the paper.
- **Components of an Entry:** Regardless of the term used, each entry must contain the necessary information for a reader to locate the original source. This typically includes: Author, Date, Title, and Source (Journal, Publisher, URL, or DOI).

## 2.c) Different types of literature reviews

Literature reviews can take several forms, each with a different objective and rigor:

- **Narrative (Traditional) Review:** A broad, interpretive summary of the literature selected by the author. It often follows a thematic structure and aims to build a conceptual framework.
- **Scoping Review:** A preliminary assessment of the size and scope of available research literature on a specific topic. It identifies key concepts, types of evidence, and research gaps.
- **Systematic Literature Review (SLR):** A high-level, rigorous review that uses pre-defined, explicit, and reproducible methods to identify, select, and critically appraise all relevant research.
- **Meta-Analysis:** A statistical technique that combines the results of multiple quantitative studies on a single question to produce a pooled estimate of the effect. This requires the highest level of rigor.

## 2.d) Traditional literature reviews v/s systematic literature review

The distinction between these two primary forms is based on method and objectivity:

## **Feature**

### **Traditional Review**

### **Systematic Review**

### **Search Strategy**

Informal, selective, based on author knowledge.

Explicit, comprehensive, reproducible search across multiple databases.

### **Selection Criteria**

Implicit or not stated.

Pre-defined, clear inclusion/exclusion criteria.

### **Bias Potential**

High (author selects sources that support their view).

Low (methods aim to eliminate selection bias).

### **Purpose**

To provide background, synthesize concepts, and identify gaps conceptually.

To answer a specific, focused research question using all available evidence.

## **2.e) Advantages and disadvantages of traditional literature reviews**

Traditional reviews remain valuable, particularly in early-stage research or broad theoretical fields.

- **Advantages:**
  - **Flexibility:** The author can cover a broad range of topics and disciplines.
  - **Conceptual Depth:** Excellent for synthesizing theoretical models and historical developments.
  - **Ease of Production:** Less labor-intensive and time-consuming than systematic reviews.
- **Disadvantages:**
  - **Selection Bias:** The findings are heavily dependent on the author's judgment and may miss relevant sources.
  - **Lack of Reproducibility:** Because the search strategy is not explicit, other researchers cannot replicate the review process.
  - **Subjectivity:** The conclusions are more likely to be influenced by the author's pre-existing views.

## **Chapter 3: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEWS**

### 3.1 Systematic Literature Review Methodology

A systematic literature review (SLR) is paramount for creating evidence-based knowledge and requires strict methodological adherence.

#### 3.1.a) The importance of systematic literature review for organizations

SLRs are crucial outside of academia, especially in healthcare, technology, and policy sectors:

- **Evidence-Based Practice:** They provide the highest level of evidence, enabling organizations to move from anecdotal experience to data-driven decision-making.
- **Policy Development:** Governments and NGOs use SLRs to understand the full scope of existing evidence before funding or implementing new policies.
- **Product Development:** Companies use SLRs to assess the current state of technology or market gaps before investing R&D resources.
- **Reducing Waste:** By summarizing existing reliable studies, SLRs prevent the costly and unethical duplication of research.

#### 3.1.b) Identifying a research topic

The research topic for an SLR must be tightly focused to ensure the review is manageable and meaningful.

- **Relevance:** The topic must address a current gap in knowledge or resolve conflicting evidence.
- **PICO Framework:** In many fields, research questions are framed using the PICO elements: **P**opulation/Problem, **I**ntervention/Exposure, **C**omparison, and **O**utcome.

#### 3.1.c) Research cycle

Academic work proceeds through a predictable, iterative cycle that incorporates the literature review at its foundation.

- **Idea/Observation:** Identifying a problem or a curiosity in the field.
- **Literature Review:** Systematically exploring existing work to define what is known and to identify the critical research gap.
- **Research Question/Hypothesis:** Forming a specific, testable question based on the gap.
- **Methodology:** Designing the study to answer the question.
- **Data Collection/Analysis:** Executing the methodology.
- **Results/Interpretation:** Drawing conclusions.
- **Dissemination:** Publishing or presenting the work (which feeds back into the Literature Review step for the next researcher).

#### 3.1.d) Factors to consider when identifying a research topic

A viable research topic is one that is feasible, interesting, and significant.

- **Feasibility:** Is the topic too broad or too narrow? Do the resources (time, access to data/literature) exist to complete the work?
- **Interest:** Does the topic genuinely interest you? Motivation is essential for a long research project.
- **Significance (Theoretical/Practical):** Will the research contribute new knowledge (theoretical significance) or solve a real-world problem (practical significance)?
- **Originality:** Does the topic avoid merely replicating existing studies and instead fill an identified gap?

### 3.2 Documenting source material

Accurate documentation is the bedrock of academic integrity.

#### 3.2.a) Formatting Cited Material: The Basics

Every time you borrow an idea, statistic, or piece of information that is not common knowledge, you must cite the source.

- **Consistency:** Use a single style guide (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago) consistently throughout your entire document, including in-text citations and the reference list.
- **Completeness:** The information provided in the in-text citation must correspond exactly to an entry on your reference page.

#### 3.2.b) Citing Sources in the Body of Paper

Citations should be integrated smoothly to maintain the flow of your writing while clearly indicating the source of external ideas.

- **Seamless Integration:** Sources should support *your* argument, not replace it. Use signal phrases to introduce the source material gracefully.
- **Placement:** The citation should be placed immediately following the direct quotation, paraphrased idea, or fact.

#### 3.2.c) In-text citations

Depending on the style and how you frame the source, the citation will take one of two forms (using APA as an example):

- **Parenthetical Citation:** The author and date appear within parentheses, typically at the end of the sentence (e.g., The findings suggest widespread correlation (Smith, 2021)).
- **Narrative Citation:** The author's name is incorporated into the sentence structure, with the date following in parentheses (e.g., Smith (2021) suggests widespread correlation).

#### 3.2.d) Using Source Material in Paper

There are three primary ways to incorporate source material:

- **Direct Quotation:** Using the author's exact words, enclosed in quotation marks, and including a page or paragraph locator. Used sparingly to preserve an author's unique insight or definition.
- **Paraphrasing:** Restating the author's idea in your own words, maintaining the original length and detail, and still requiring a citation.
- **Summarizing:** Condensing the author's main idea or argument into a much shorter form, requiring a citation.

### 3.2.e) Summarizing Sources

Summarizing is an effective way to cover a large amount of information concisely.

- **Focus on Main Idea:** Capture the core thesis, primary methodology, and major findings of the source.
- **Do Not Analyze:** A summary should describe the source, not evaluate its quality (that is the role of synthesis in the literature review).

### 3.2.f) Formatting Paraphrased and Summarized Material

Proper attribution of paraphrased or summarized material is crucial to avoid plagiarism.

- **Attribution is Required:** Even though the words are your own, the idea originated elsewhere, and a citation is mandatory.
- **Sentence Structure and Vocabulary:** Change both the sentence structure and the vocabulary significantly. Simply replacing a few words is considered poor paraphrasing or plagiarism.

### 3.2.g) Introducing Cited Material Effectively

Signal phrases help the reader distinguish between your original ideas and those you are borrowing.

- **Using Action Verbs:** Use varied verbs to introduce the source, such as *argues*, *demonstrates*, *suggests*, *concludes*, or *found*.
- **Placing the Signal:** Introduce the author and year (in narrative citations) before the sourced material (e.g., According to Jones (2018), ...).

### 3.2.h) Short versus Long Quotations

The length of a direct quote dictates its formatting.

- **Short Quotations (Less than 40 words, APA):** Integrated into the text and enclosed in double quotation marks. The citation follows the quote.
- **Long Quotations (40 or more words, APA):** Set off from the main text in a free-standing block of text, starting on a new line, and indented half an inch from the left margin. Quotation marks are **not** used, and the citation typically appears after the final punctuation.

## Chapter 4: FORMATTING IN-TEXT CITATIONS

This chapter provides specific formatting guidance, using the Author-Date style (like APA) as the primary example for clarity.

#### 4.a) Print Sources

Citing print sources typically involves the author's last name and the year of publication. For direct quotes, the page number is also included.

- **Structure:** (Author, Year) or Author (Year).
- **Direct Quote Example:** "The study demonstrated a positive correlation" (Johnson, 2019, p. 45).

#### 4.b) Work by One Author

The simplest citation format includes only the author's last name and the year.

- **Example (Parenthetical):** The impact was immediate (Williams, 2020).
- **Example (Narrative):** Williams (2020) reported the impact was immediate.

#### 4.c) Two or More Works by the Same Author

When citing multiple works published by the same author in the same year, distinguish them by adding a lowercase letter after the year.

- **Example:** The initial findings were positive (Garcia, 2018a), but subsequent analysis showed a reversal (Garcia, 2018b).

#### 4.d) Works by Authors with the Same Last Name

If two different authors share the same last name, include the first initial of each author in all in-text citations to prevent confusion.

- **Example:** The framework was tested across three regions (C. Martin, 2015; J. Martin, 2019).

#### 4.e) Work by Two Authors

Cite both authors' last names every time the reference appears in the text.

- **Parenthetical:** Use an ampersand (&) between the names (e.g., (Lee & Park, 2021)).
- **Narrative:** Use the word "and" between the names (e.g., Lee and Park (2021) concluded...).

#### 4.f) Work by Three to Five Authors

In modern APA 7th edition, for three or more authors, cite only the first author's last name followed by "et al." (and others) and the year in every citation.

- **Example:** The initial phase took longer than expected (Ahmad et al., 2017).

#### 4.g) Work with No Listed Author

If the work has no author, use the first few words of the reference list entry (usually the title of the article or book chapter). Titles of articles and chapters are enclosed in quotation marks; titles of books, periodicals, and reports are italicized.

- **Example:** Policy changes led to improvements ("New Guidelines," 2022).

#### 4.h) Work Authored by an Organization

If the author is a government agency, association, or corporation, cite the organization's full name. If the organization has a common abbreviation, you can use the abbreviation for subsequent citations.

- **First Citation:** (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2023).
- **Subsequent Citation:** (NIMH, 2023).

#### 4.i) Two or More Works Cited in One Reference

When citing multiple sources within the same set of parentheses, arrange them alphabetically by the first author's last name and separate them with a semicolon.

- **Example:** Several studies have explored this issue (Chen, 2019; Davies, 2021; Miller & Smith, 2020).

#### 4.j) Famous Text Published in Multiple Editions

For classical works like ancient Greek texts or religious scriptures (which may not have a date), cite the author, but include the book, chapter, or line number instead of a page number.

- **Example:** (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, Book 3, Chapter 2).

### Chapter 5: AN INTRODUCTION, FOREWORD, PREFACE, OR AFTERWORD

#### 5.1 Citing Non-Standard Sources

Special rules apply when citing sources that lack typical publication identifiers or are non-recoverable.

##### 5.1.a) Electronic Sources

Most sources today are electronic, and their citation format is similar to print, but often requires a DOI or URL.

- **Journal Articles:** The primary elements (Author, Date, Title) are the same, but the source is the journal name and volume/issue number, followed by the **Digital Object Identifier (DOI)**.
- **Websites:** If citing a general website, include the site name and URL. If the site is the author, list the organization name once.

### 5.1.b) Online Sources without Page Numbers

Many online sources (web pages, e-books, online news articles) do not have stable page numbers. Use one of the following locators instead:

- **Paragraph Number (para.):** Count the paragraphs if they are short and easily countable (e.g., Smith, 2023, para. 5).
- **Section Heading:** Use a short or full heading from the section where the quote appears. A shortened heading in quotation marks is preferred (e.g., (Smith, 2023, "Key Findings" section)).
- **No Locator:** If no stable locating information (page, paragraph, or heading) is available, simply include the author and date.

### 5.1.c) Personal Communication

Personal communication refers to sources that a reader cannot easily recover, such as personal interviews, emails, text messages, or phone calls.

- **In-Text Citation Only:** Personal communications are **only** cited in the body of the paper and are **not** included on the reference page.
- **Structure:** Provide the communicator's initials and last name, the phrase "personal communication," and the exact date. (e.g., J. K. Richards (personal communication, July 14, 2023)).

## 5.2 Creating a Reference Page

The reference page is a standardized list of all sources cited in the work, allowing readers to verify and explore the evidence.

### 5.2.a) Formatting the Reference Page

The reference page must adhere to specific formatting rules for legibility and standardization.

- **New Page:** Start the reference page on a new page after the body of the paper.
- **Title:** The title "References" (or "Works Cited" or "Bibliography," depending on the style guide) should be centered and bolded (APA) or simply centered (MLA) at the top of the page.
- **Spacing:** The entire page should be double-spaced.

### 5.2.b) What to Include in the Reference Section

Clarity about inclusion is vital, especially for style guides like APA and MLA.

- **Rule of Thumb (Reference/Works Cited):** Only sources that were explicitly cited with an in-text citation in the body of the paper should appear on the reference page.
- **Exclusions:** Personal communications, general background readings not directly cited, and in some styles, classic works (like the Bible).

### 5.2.c) Navigating Reference Guide

The best way to ensure accuracy is to consult the official manual for your chosen style.

- **Templates:** Use the official style guide's templates for different source types (Journal Article, Book, Webpage, Report, etc.).
- **Consistency Check:** After generating your reference list, check that every entry matches the required sequence of information, punctuation, and capitalization.

#### 5.2.d) Formatting the Reference Section: APA General Guidelines

APA style is one of the most common formats in social sciences. Key formatting rules for the reference list include:

- **Alphabetical Order:** Entries must be arranged alphabetically by the last name of the first author. If no author is listed, alphabetize by the title (ignoring articles like 'A', 'An', or 'The').
- **Hanging Indent:** The first line of each entry should be flush with the left margin, and every subsequent line should be indented 0.5 inches (the "hanging indent").
- **Title Capitalization:** Book and article titles use sentence case (only the first word of the title and subtitle, and proper nouns, are capitalized). Journal titles, however, use title case.
- **Italics:** Titles of longer works (Books, Journals, Reports) are italicized.
- **DOI/URL:** Include the DOI or URL for online sources, formatted as a hyperlink.

**Important questions for full subject:**

### Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

1. **How journals work (1.a):** What are the major stages of the academic peer review process, and why is the editorial decision (e.g., Major Revisions) crucial to the dissemination of research?
2. **Ethical Guidelines (1.b):** Define plagiarism and explain the key ethical guidelines researchers must follow regarding authorship and intellectual property.
3. **Why publishing is important (1.c):** Beyond career advancement, what are two critical functions that academic publishing serves for the public or the scholarly community?
4. **Communication (1.d):** When revising a manuscript based on feedback, what is the most professional and effective way to address a critique from a reviewer that you disagree with?
5. **Construction of Review (1.e):** What is the main goal of a literature review's "Argumentation" phase, and what are the three primary structural approaches that can be used to organize the review?

### Chapter 2: AGGREGATE REFERENCES

6. **Zotero Features (2.a):** How do Zotero's "Group Libraries" enhance collaboration, and what is the benefit of using the cloud synchronization feature?

7. **Bibliography (2.b):** Differentiate between a "Reference List" (APA/Chicago-Author-Date) and a general "Bibliography" in terms of what sources they include.
8. **Types of Reviews (2.c):** Briefly describe the difference in rigor and primary goal between a Narrative (Traditional) Review and a Systematic Literature Review (SLR).
9. **Traditional v/s Systematic (2.d):** Explain the key distinction between traditional and systematic literature reviews based on search strategy and bias potential.
10. **Traditional Review Pros/Cons (2.e):** What is the main advantage of a traditional literature review (e.g., flexibility), and what is its primary risk or disadvantage?

### **Chapter 3: SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEWS**

11. **SLR for Organizations (3.1.a):** Provide two examples of why systematic literature reviews are important for non-academic organizations, such as in policy development or product design.
12. **Research Topic/Cycle (3.1.b, 3.1.c, 3.1.d):** How does the identification of a research gap (a product of the literature review) lead to a focused research question, and what does the PICO framework help define?
13. **Formatting Basics (3.2.a, 3.2.b, 3.2.c):** What two fundamental rules must be consistent when formatting cited material, and where exactly should a parenthetical citation be placed within a sentence?
14. **Using Source Material (3.2.d, 3.2.e, 3.2.f):** Differentiate between summarizing and paraphrasing, and explain why both still require formal attribution (a citation) to avoid plagiarism.
15. **Quotes and Signal Phrases (3.2.g, 3.2.h):** Why is the use of a signal phrase important for introducing cited material, and how does the 40-word length rule change the visual formatting of a direct quotation (using APA as the standard)?

### **Chapter 4: FORMATTING IN-TEXT CITATIONS**

16. **One Author (4.a, 4.b):** What specific information is required for a parenthetical citation of a print source authored by a single person, especially when citing a direct quote?
17. **Multiple Works/Same Name (4.c, 4.d):** When citing two different authors who share the same last name, what specific element must be added to the in-text citation to prevent confusion?
18. **Two vs. Three+ Authors (4.e, 4.f):** Explain the difference in how two authors versus three or more authors are cited in a modern APA in-text citation (focusing on the use of the word "and" or "et al.").
19. **No Author/Organization (4.g, 4.h):** When a work has no listed author, what element is used in the in-text citation instead, and how is a long organizational author's name typically handled after the first citation?

20. **Multiple Sources/Famous Texts (4.i, 4.j):** How are two or more distinct works cited within a single set of parentheses, and how are famous, classical texts usually cited instead of using a year and page number?

## **Chapter 5: AN INTRODUCTION, FOREWORD, PREFACE, OR AFTERWORD**

21. **Electronic Sources (5.1.a):** When citing an electronic journal article, what is the importance of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) compared to a standard URL?

22. **No Page Numbers (5.1.b):** If an online source lacks stable page numbers for a direct quote, what are the two acceptable locators that can be used instead?

23. **Personal Communication (5.1.c):** Why are personal communications (like private emails or interviews) cited only in the text and explicitly excluded from the reference page?

24. **Reference Page Formatting (5.2.a, 5.2.b, 5.2.c):** What are the basic formatting requirements for the Reference Page regarding spacing, indentation, and the rule for what sources must be included?

25. **APA General Guidelines (5.2.d):** List two of the three main APA formatting rules for reference list entries (Alphabetical Order, Hanging Indent, Title Capitalization).