# Literature Review Process

locate, select, evaluate...



Locate data & information relevant to the research topic

Select the most suitable sources to enhance your research

Evaluate and assess the data & information

If you are undertaking research for a project or dissertation, you will find that you will need to do a **literature review**, based on the findings of your **literature search**. This guide will give you information on how you could structure your literature review.

### **What is... a literature review?**

- a review of the writings, or literature, on a particular subject/topic.
- a review of the most relevant, recent and scholarly work in the subject/topic.
- a piece of writing that supports, evaluates and critiques your research topic.

## **Steps...** of a literature review process

Preparation of a literature review consists of the following steps:

- **Defining your topic:** think of all the possible keywords, synonyms, alternative forms. Set limitations if the area is too broad.
- **Searching for materials:** use search tools (such as the library catalogue, databases, bibliographies, the Internet, etc.) to find materials about your topic.
- **Evaluating the material:** summarize, evaluate and access what you have found in order to determine which material is relevant, significant and of good quality.
- **Organising the material:** synthesize your summaries to facilitate the creation of an organized and complete review that presents a new or interesting perspective of the topic.
- **Providing sources and location of relevant literature**: a literature review may play a role in future research papers. By providing links to your sources or any helpful additional information, you are laying the groundwork for successful future academic discoveries.

## **Writing...** a literature review

Like all academic writing, a literature review must have an introduction, body, and conclusion.

#### The **introduction** should include:

- the nature of the topic under discussion (the topic of your project, dissertation or thesis)
- the parameters of the topic (what does it include and exclude).
- the basis for your selection of the literature.

#### The **body** should include:

- an analysis of the literature according to a number of themes or topics that overlap with your research.
- provide insight into the relation between your chosen topic and the wider subject area.
- move from a general, wider view of the literature being reviewed to the specific focus of your research.

#### The **conclusion** should include:

- summarise the important aspects of the existing body of literature.
- evaluate the current state of the literature reviewed.
- identify gaps in existing knowledge.
- outline areas for future study; investigation; expansion.
- link your research to existing knowledge.

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