

The aims of writing a literature review education essay



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What is review of the literature?

A literature review is a write-up that aims to review the critical aspects of current knowledge on a particular topic. It's an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. Most often associated with science-oriented literature, such as a thesis, the literature review usually precedes a research proposal, methodology and results section. The purpose is to bring the reader up to date with current literature on a topic and form the basis for future research that may be needed in the area. A good literature review is characterized by: a logical flow of ideas; current and relevant references with consistent, appropriate referencing style; proper use of terminology; and an unbiased and comprehensive view of the previous research on the topic. It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries.

Besides enlarging your knowledge about the topic, writing a literature review lets you gain and demonstrate skills in two areas

Information seeking: the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books

Critical appraisal: the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

A literature review must do these things

Be organized around and related directly to the thesis or research question you are developing

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Synthesize results into a summary of what is and is not known

Identify areas of controversy in the literature

Formulate questions that need further research

A literature review is a piece of discursive prose, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. It's usually a bad sign to see every paragraph beginning with the name of a researcher. Instead, organize the literature review into sections that present themes or identify trends, including relevant theory. You are not trying to list all the material published, but to synthesize and evaluate it according to the guiding concept of your thesis or research question

If you are writing an annotated bibliography, you may need to summarize each item briefly, but should still follow through themes and concepts and do some critical assessment of material. Use an overall introduction and conclusion to state the scope of your coverage and to formulate the question, problem, or concept your chosen material illuminates. Usually you will have the option of grouping items into sections-this helps you indicate comparisons and relationships. You may be able to write a paragraph or so to introduce the focus of each section

How to do a literature search?

Defining the topic – In order to begin your literature review you must first define your research question. What is the purpose? What does it mean?

What are the key words? Are there other words which could be used, such as

synonyms, variations in spelling? What do you already know about the topic? What is the scope?

Compiling a list of keywords – Analyzing the topic of an essay question or research topic usually involves making a list of keywords or phrases. You will need to include all the key concepts or ideas contained within the essay or research question. It might be useful to include alternative ways of phrasing and expressing concepts and ideas. Think about both general terms and very specific terms for broadening and narrowing your search. The keyword or phrase is the basic unit of any search. You may find it helpful to consult subject dictionaries and encyclopedias, or a textbook glossary for the common terminology of the subject area. The use of an index and/or thesaurus is also advisable to establish the useful terms.

Identifying Resources – Information is available in a number of formats. It is important for you to understand the significance of various formats so that you know what will best suit your information requirements.

Books

Reference Materials

Journals

Conference Papers

Dissertations

Internet

Indexes/Abstracts Printed

Electronic Databases

Government publications

Thesis

Putting tables and figures

If you found the table or figure in a source, or if you developed the information in the table or figure from a source other than your own primary research, you must cite the full source just below the table or figure, and again include the full source in your list of references at the end of the thesis.

Table number and headline is always mentioned on top of the table. Figure number and headline is mentioned at bottom of the figure.

The source reference below the figure/table should be in a smaller font, in a bracket, in italics. Like this:

Table 4: Numbers Unemployed in Co. Roscommon, 2000 – 2004**Electoral District****Male****Age range****Female****Age range****Total**

(Source: Jones, D. 2004. Impact of unemployment in rural areas of Connacht 2000 – 2004. Dublin: Folens, p. 56.)

Figure 4: Air Supply in Burma (June 1944 to April 1945)

(Source: Jones, D. 2004. Environmental Concerns. Dublin: Folens, p. 56.)

2. Bibliography Formats

Each citation in a bibliography has to describe a resource in enough detail that someone can go to a library (or out on the net, or to a bookstore), and see it for themselves. Imagine going to a bookshop and saying, “ Hi. I need that book on World War II. You know, the one that mentions Hitler?” That’s why the specifics-formats, titles, authors, dates, etc.- are important.

Writing the assessment: What do I need to reference?

When you are writing your assessment, be sure to type in reference information as you add in the ideas of other authors. This will save you time and will ensure that you reference all sources properly. Whenever you use someone else’s ideas or words, you must put in a reference. The only

exception to this rule is when the information you have read somewhere is common knowledge or 'public domain' information. For example, you would not need to include a reference if you stated in an assignment that Shakespeare wrote plays and sonnets in Elizabethan times.

You must always reference the following

(i) Direct quotations – this is when you copy another author's material word-for-word. You should show the reader that it is a direct quote by placing the material in inverted commas. Traditionally, double inverted commas have been used (") but it is now acceptable, and preferable to use single inverted commas ('). Sometimes it is difficult to avoid the direct quotation as the author's words may precisely describe the point you are trying to make. However, do try to avoid the overuse of direct quotations; try to paraphrase the author's work where possible. Please note that when you use direct quotations, you must reproduce the author's words exactly, including all spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, and errors. You may show the reader that you recognise an error and that you are correctly quoting the author by placing the term 'sic' in brackets after the error.

(ii) Paraphrasing – this is when you take another author's ideas and put them into your own words. You are still copying someone else's work, so you must reference it. You do not need to use inverted commas when you paraphrase, but you must clearly show the reader the original source of your information.

1. INTERNET RESOURCES

In the easy-come, easy-go world of the free internet, dates and addresses

are particularly important. Two dates are required: the date that the material
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was published or updated, and the date on which you actually used it. The address, or URL, of the site must be complete. This means including the access-mode identifier (e. g., http, ftp, gopher, telnet, news) as well as the path and file names. The address should also be enclosed in angle brackets <...>.

For an entire web site the bibliographic form is : Author or Creator of site. Title of Site. Date of site. . Date you used the site. The entry will look like this:

Hsu, David. Chemicol Periodic Table. 2005. . September 6, 2007.

For an article within a web site the bibliographic form is : Author of article. " Title of Article." Title of Site. Date of site. . Date you used the site. The entry will look like this:

U. S. Department of State. " Sudan." Background Notes. March, 2007. . September 10, 2007.

For online newspaper & magazine articles , the bibliographic form is Author of Article. " Title of Article." Title of Magazine or Newspaper. Complete date. . Date you used the site. The entry will look like this:

Jamieson, Alastair. " China's Toy Story Turns Nasty After New Recall." The Scotsman. September 6, 2007.

. September 12, 2007.

2. € “ REGULAR” BOOKS

A “ regular” book usually has just one author, and comes in just one volume.

The bibliographic form is Author. Title. Place: Publisher, Date. The entry will look like this:

Hammond, Jeff. Real Men Work in the Pits: A Life in NASCAR Racing. PA: Rodale, 2005.

When there are two authors, the bibliographic form is First Author (last name first), and Second Author (first name first). Title. Place: Publisher, Date. The entry will look like this:

Angeletti, Norberto, and Alberto Oliva. In Vogue: The Illustrated History of the World’s Most Famous Fashion Magazine. NY: Rizzoli, 2006.

When there are three or more authors, the bibliographic form is First Author (last name first), et al. Title. Place: Publisher, Date. The entry will look like this:

Bos, Samone, et al. Go!: The Whole World of Transportation. NY: Dorling Kindersley, 2006.

Books with an anonymous or unknown author

The University Encyclopedia (1985) London: Roydon

3. COLLECTIONS€ & EDITED BOOKS

A collection is a book (or set of books) that contains works by many different authors-like an edited book or proceeding, an encyclopedia, an Opposing

Viewpoints book, or an anthology of short stories or poems. You usually use just one or two parts of it in your paper and the bibliographic form is Author of the Part. " Title of the Part." Editor (or Compiler) of the Collection. Title of the Collection. Vol. # (if present). Place: Publisher, Date. The entry will look like this:

Cohen, Steve. " Snowboarding." World Book Encyclopedia. Vol. 17. IL: World Book, Inc., 2003.

Tatum, Becky L. " Studies Have Not Established a Link Between Rap Music and Youth Violence." Gerdes, Louise I., ed. Media Violence, Opposing Viewpoints. CA: Greenhaven Press, 2004.

If you use several different works from the same anthology, you needn't cite each separately. The bibliographic form for citing an entire collection or anthology is: Editor (or Compiler) of the Anthology. Title of the Anthology. Vol. # (if present). Place: Publisher, Date. The entry will look like this:

Nelson, Marilyn. A Wreath for Emmett Till. MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

4. € NEWSPAPER€ & MAGAZINES

When citing an article from a print copy of a newspaper or magazine, the most important thing to put down is the complete date. The bibliographic form is Author of Article. " Title of Article." Title of Magazine or Newspaper. Complete date, Edition (if present): page number(s). The entry will look like this:

Randall, Lisa. " An American Physicist in Italy." Discover. July, 2007: 56.

LeBlanc, Emma. "Refugees Tell NH Woman Their Stories." New Hampshire Union Leader. September 10, 2007, State Edition: A1.

5. JOURNALS

The conventions for listing journal articles are similar to books, but note the extra information required in the example below and apply this to all journal article listings.

Muller, V. (1994) 'Trapped in the body: Transsexualism, the law, sexual identity', The Australian Feminist Law Journal, vol. 3, August, pp. 103-107.

Journal article with both volume and issue number

Muller, V. (1994) 'Trapped in the body: Transsexualism, the law, sexual identity', The Australian Feminist Law Journal, vol. 3, no. 2, August, pp. 103-107.

5. NON-PRINT MEDIA

If the item is not print-based (like a film on DVD or VHS, an MP3 file or audio CD, or a set of slides), the bibliographic form is Producer or Director. Title.

[Format] Place: Distributor, Date. The entry will look like this:

Hampton, Henry. Eyes on the Prize II. [VHS] VA: PBS Video, 1993.

Lansing, Alfred. Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage. [MP3] OR: Blackstone Audio Books, 1991.

May, Robert, and Steve James. The War Tapes. [DVD] NY: Docurama, 2007.

Paschen, Elise, and Rebekah Presson Mosby. Poetry Speaks: Hear Great Poets Read Their Work from Tennyson to Plath. [CD] IL: Sourcebooks MediaFusion, 2001.

3. How to avoid plagiarism

Scientific Misconduct and Plagiarism:

“ Many people say that it is the intellect which makes a great scientist. They are wrong: it is character” – Albert Einstein

In centuries of reading, writing, experimenting and hypothesizing, a person's work will inevitably incorporate and overlap with that of others. However, occasional overlap is one thing; systematic, unacknowledged use of the techniques, data, words or ideas of others is another. Your work has to be carried out honestly and objectively without bias and the results should be reported truthfully. Deviations may occur from the ideal due to ignorance or, at times, they may be willful deceptions. These deviations from the ideal, willful or otherwise, constitute what is known as “ scientific misconduct”. While various types of scientific misconduct have been identified, those that comes to notice usually include fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, cyber-plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and duplicate publication. It is desired that all students should be made aware of these.

This note defines plagiarism and sets guidelines.

What is Plagiarism?

Failure to acknowledge other colleagues' scientific work-their ideas, language, or data.

Verbatim copying of passages without citing the original contributor, rewording of ideas, paraphrasing, and even total reproduction by simply changing the authors' names and trying to pass the material as one's own.

Unauthorized use of ideas or unique methods obtained by a privileged communication, such as a grant or manuscript review.

Passing off retrospective studies as prospective ones or deliberately omit references to earlier works.

How Plagiarism can be detected?

One of the important responsibilities of a reviewer is detection of plagiarized text due to his/her familiarity with published material in his/her area of interest. Technology has made it possible to carry out checks for sentences that are copied from previously published articles. There are dedicated web sites available that provide information on plagiarism ([www. plagiarism. org](http://www.plagiarism.org)) and software to detect plagiarism has made it easier for reviewers and editorial staff of journals to detect copying ([www. ithenticate. com](http://www.ithenticate.com), [www. writecheck. com](http://www.writecheck.com) and [www. turnitin. com](http://www.turnitin.com)). We have recommended to you the VIPER software.

Dos and Don'ts of Plagiarism

Some simple tips to be followed to avoid plagiarism are:

Take short notes from the source and then write back in your own words without looking back at the original source.

Attribute references to any information or idea you are using from other sources, even if you are not directly using it.

describe all sources of information

Give acknowledgments to the original source by quoting author details at the end of the statement.

Give details of the original source by providing footnotes .

Use quotation marks wherever required

If you are paraphrasing, credit the original source

For extensive quotations, obtain permission from the publisher of the original work

Obtain permission for use of published drawings or other illustrations

Do's and Don'ts of Research:

DO:

Make sure you know what question you're trying to answer.

Look at all kinds of sources before you narrow in on the ones that will be most useful.

Read and digest. Give yourself time to do this.

Think critically about what you've just read and how it directly relates to the question.

Evaluate what you've got, the holes in your research, and where you need to go from here.

Keep a running annotated bibliography going, sorting facts by source or marking your notes with a coding system so as to remember where individual facts came from.

Divide your thesis into sections before you begin researching. Make sure you devote energy and time to finding information about all the topics you want to tackle.

Remember that the beginning of a thesis presents existing knowledge on a topic, whereas towards the end of a paper, you present your own thoughts.

Use a variety of sources. Journals, books, e-books, newspaper and magazine articles, legitimate web sites, and course books can all be good sources, but which ones you use will depend on your topic.

Talk to your professor about his or her expectations and ideas for sources.

Talk to other students about their strategies for mapping out the research ahead.

DON'TS:

Stuff so much information into your head at once that you can't remember what you learned and where you learned it from. You will lose sight of the point of the research project.

Cite Wikipedia. Wikipedia is good for getting general information, but find an absolutely reliable source for your citations.

Plagiarize. Learn what constitutes plagiarism and how to use sources responsibly.

Do's and Don'ts of Internet Research

The internet provides a rich resource of information and data however; there is great risk in using this all-too accessible resource. Self-regulating resources like Wikipedia and Google- or yahoo-search readily provide us with answers to just about any question we may pose. But which is it the right answer? And, is it the right answer? The very accessibility of online information makes it risky and often questionable. You need to be more vigilant of the veracity and reliability of your sources when acquiring information from the internet.

To ensure that your information you have got is sound, one can do several things:

Use more than one source, particularly for important things; this will give you a wider range of material from which to discern accuracy and reliability.

Verify your sources and preferably cross-reference to measure out objective “truth” vs. bias.

Try to use primary sources (original) vs. secondary or tertiary sources (original cited and open to interpretation); the closer you are to the original source, the closer you are to getting the original “study”.