

# So you're writing a Literature Review...

Try these steps to get started

## Choose your research topic/ question.

- What do you want to write about?
- What **question** are you interested in answering?

## Search for articles

- Look at your research question or topic: what **keywords** will you search?
- Are there other words that mean similar things or **related terms** you could search for?

## Evaluate

Look at **all** the research you've done so far:

- What did you learn?
- What topics are coming up in multiple articles?
- What questions aren't being asked in the existing research?

## Analyze & interpret

- What does what you learned mean to you?
- How does this relate to your research?
  - **Why is this important?**

Click the circles for more information about each step in the research process!

## IMPORTANT POINT!

This process is circular!

You can go through these steps multiple times to refine your topic or find more resources!



# What goes into a Literature Review?

**SYNTHESIS:** the combination of parts or elements so as to form a whole.



**HINT:** This is what you are doing when you write a literature review

## Introduction

### Things to Work Towards:

- **A clear and specific thesis**
- Explaining why the topic and question matters to you and should matter to others.
- Setting the reader up by providing an overview of what will be covered.

### Things to Avoid:

- **Introducing the topic but not explaining why it matters** or giving the reader an overview of what will be covered.
- Not providing a clear thesis so the reader knows what you will be talking about

## Body

### Things to Work Towards:

- Guide the reader to show connections, comparisons, and other relationships among the articles you're using
- Pick a way to organize your information (by theme, topic, time, etc..) and stick to it
- **Synthesize information- talk about how articles are similar or different from each other**

### Things to Avoid:

- **Just summarizing each of the articles, one after another**, without much synthesis or focus on themes or what has been discovered.
- Dumping information from all the articles but does not explain to the reader the connections.

## Conclusion

### Things to Work Towards:

- Explaining **what readers should learn from this review** of the literature
- What questions does this leave for future research?

### Things to Avoid:

- An abrupt ending with no conclusion



More questions? [Click here](#) for additional resources or to talk to a Librarian!

