

How to do a literature review - transcript

Slide 1: So you have been asked to do a literature review and you may have an idea of what this is and just need confirmation or perhaps you have no clue, you are in the right place. You can pause, rewind and fast forward or stop at any point. In order to be active in your learning, it is recommended that you take notes during this presentation.

Slide 2: You may have been given a topic to study or you may have chosen one yourself and you have been asked to do a literature review. A literature review is a thorough examination of existing research already out there, about your topic. It allows you to use this research as evidence to support your assignment. It makes you familiar with current ideas and scientific theories and importantly, it allows you to understand where your research and studies fit in with all of this.

Slide 3: You may be thinking, what's the point, after all, you conduct research when you do an assignment anyway, why do you need to write about it, just seems like more work. Well doing a literature review allows you to be much more thorough in your research and promotes a better understanding. It allows you to compare and contrast the different theories and viewpoints out there, it enables you to group authors together according to their opinions and conclusions, it allows you to define the problem you wish to investigate but also limit this problem so your research is targeted, it ensures unnecessary duplication by researching something that has already been done and lastly it highlights any promising research methods that you could use.

Slide 4: You need to start by looking at the problem you are trying to solve, analyse your question and think about any subtopics there may be.

Slide 5: Let's look at this example, here you can see we have taken the question and thought about the possible subtopics there might be, you can do the same with your assignment.

Slide 6: It is important to be critical when conducting your literature review. If you are unsure on how to be critical, pause this presentation and head over to the one on being critical. If you have already done that, remember the following, make notes, give your opinion and keep a record.

Slide 7: So how does a literature review look? Just like an essay, the introduction needs to be clear and concise, you may have been given a specific word count for this so always check. This should provide the reader with an outline of the problem to be addressed and define any key or specialist terms. Your main body must form linkages between your own arguments and the evidence you have selected to review followed by a summary of each section. Start with the wider concepts and narrow this to those that most closely match your research, this then provides the evidence you need. It is important not to leave out viewpoints that disagree with yours as this can reduce the credibility of your work. You should always come to a conclusion based on your research, this should summarise the current state of research in this particular area, highlight any gaps where further study is needed and suggest how your research will aim to address these gaps.

Your review should be written in formal, academic style. If this is something you are unsure of, pause this presentation and head over to the presentation on being clear and correct. Lastly don't forget to reference using the correct style.

Slide 8: Here is a checklist you may wish to use when selecting the sources for your literature review. Feel free to pause here and make a note of these.

Slide 9: And another checklist for being critical and interpreting evidence. Feel free to pause at this point also to make notes. If you require further support with this, please do not hesitate to contact your Academic Skills Tutors, you will be asked what you have already attempted so do have a go first, you may surprise yourself.