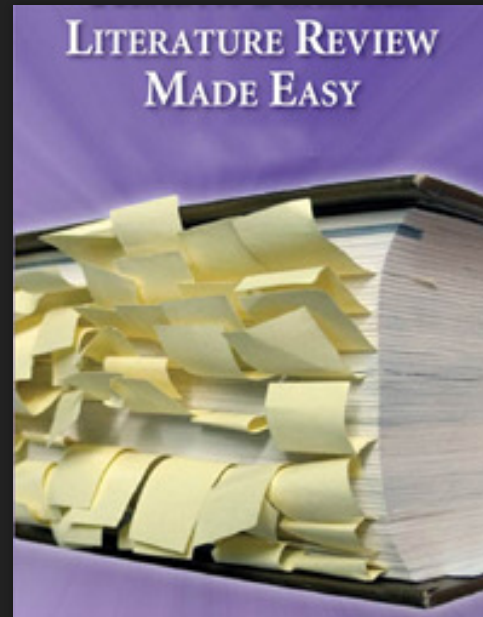


Literature Reviews

Purpose and Rationale

Previous Experience?

- What is a lit review?
- Who's done one previously?
- Why might people do them?



Overview

A good literature review can help clarify an issue – both for the reader and the writer.



Overview, Continued

- ISN'T a “pure” review
- DOES have a focus, agenda, and purpose
- Shows you are familiar with key or landmark sources
- Shows you know WHY they are important sources
- Presents material in organized, strategic ways

Overview, Completed

- **Will SURVEY and CRITIQUE the most important sources (aka “literature”) on your subject**
- In other words, it is NOT a book review
- It is NOT an annotated bibliography (although they help A LOT with lit reviews)
- It's a MEGA-larger context section!!!

Checklist

Because they are focused on the key sources relating to your topic, the best literature reviews present:

- established findings (benefits)
- conflicting evidence (drawbacks)
- gaps (need for further study)

They have, in other words, a slant!

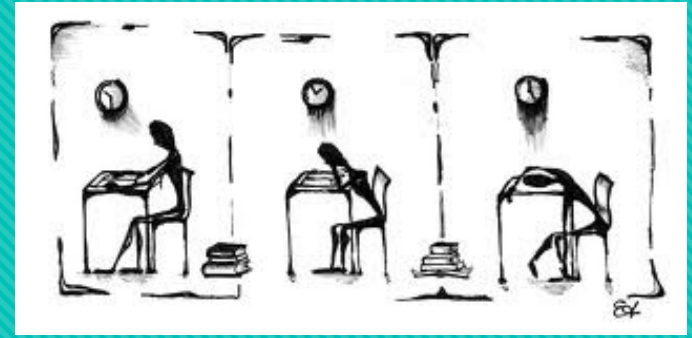
They are discursive, interrogatory, *and* summative (without propounding your own ideas)

Again, for emphasis



- A review of scholarship – with a slant!
- Discursive (placing sources in symbolic “discourse” with each other)
- Interrogatory (questioning benefits/weaknesses)
- Summative (summarizing without propounding your own ideas)
- A MEGA-Larger Context Section

Why? Oh Why?

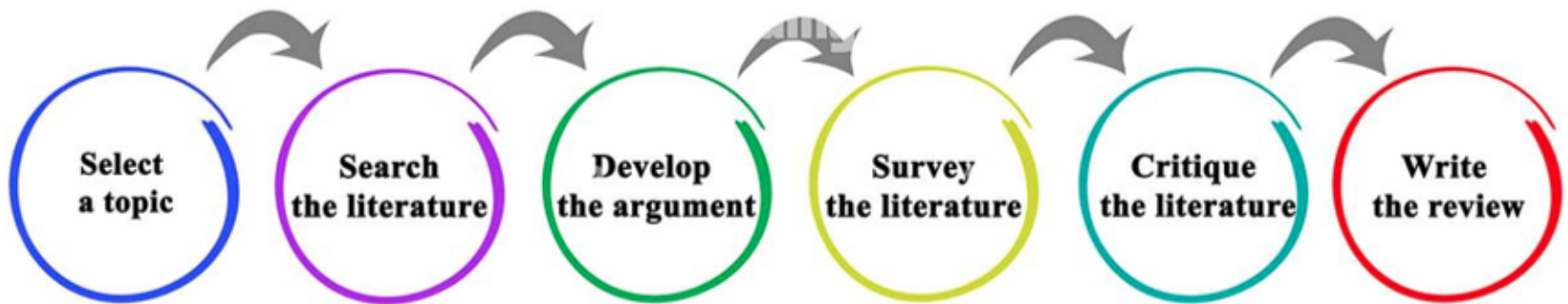


Literature reviews demonstrate you can:

1. distinguish important from irrelevant sources
2. analyze previous approaches to the subject
3. identify the contested issues in your subject
4. critique what previous scholars have discovered/concluded
5. identify important issues that remain unresolved.

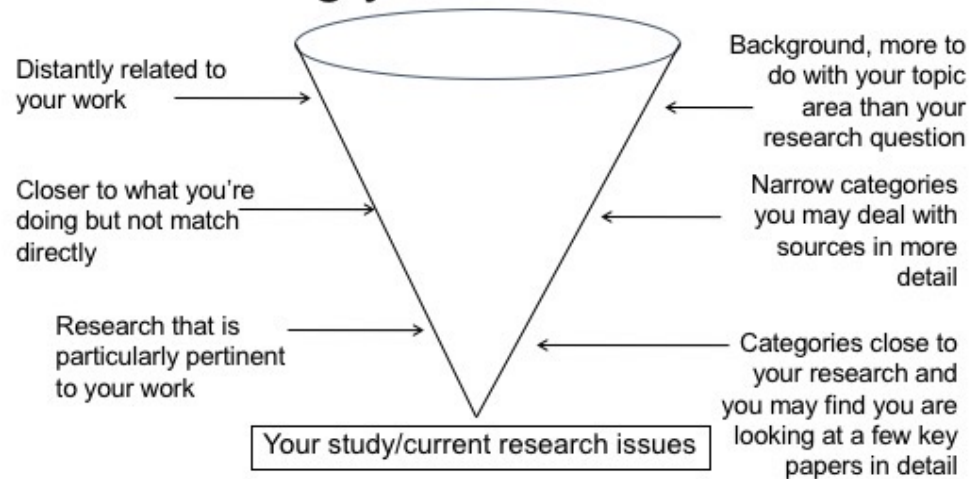
Step by Step

Steps of Literature Review



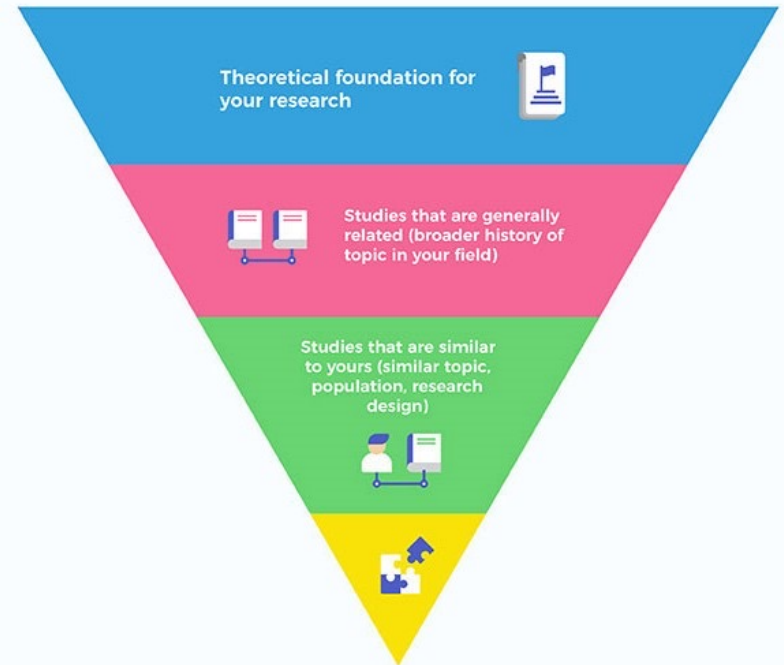
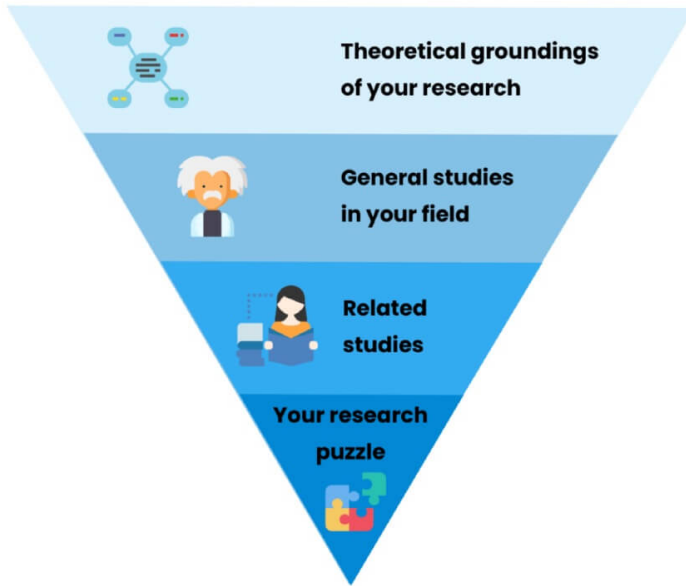
Funnel Structure

Structuring your literature review



Yay, More Funnels!

Literature Review



Your Research Gap

How Far You've Come

Previous Pyramid

1. Identify Key Terms
2. Conduct Research
3. Categorize Sources by Importance
4. Summarize & Analyze Sources
5. Organize & Write Lit Review

HNR 351 Tasks

1. Mind Map
- 2-3. New Research & Bibliography
- 4-5. Notetaking & Expanded Annotations
6. Expanded Outline
7. Lit Review

Goals

A good literature review should:

- clearly specify your focus
- identify KEY sources & points
- be current/up-to-date
- identify similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses in your sources
- discuss gaps that remain for future (ie. your) research
- clarify any relevant consequences



Comparison Categories

As you think about ways to evaluate – and group! – sources, consider comparison categories such as:

outcomes/conclusions
theoretical approaches
problems and solutions
related topics

research methods
applications
common ground
important scholars

Where does the lit review go?

- I. After your overall introduction
- II. Before any methods and/or in-depth discussion sections
- III. Perhaps incorporated into a background section (or precede or follow it)
- IV. Generally it appears:
 - a) Early
 - b) As a stand-alone section of a thesis
 - c) Of semi-significant length (approx. 15+ pgs)

Remember

Our planning and drafting documents will help structure your project and may actually determine its success:

1. mind/concept map helps visualize relationships
2. annotated bibliography differentiates key sources
3. expanded outline functions as a detailed blueprint/masterplan, clarifying key steps, methods, and contexts
4. literature review assesses other people's contributions: what's settled, what's controversial, what's unresolved. This is the tradition your ideas will seek to contribute to.
5. Remember Burke's "Parlor Conversation"

Burke's "Parlor Conversation"

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion. ...

You listen for a while, until you decide you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you [contribute]. Someone answers; you [reply]; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you ...

However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.