

# Literature review

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# What is a review of the literature?

- An account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.
- Purpose: to convey to readers what knowledge and ideas have been established on the , their strengths and weaknesses.

# A Good Literature Review

- Focused
- Logical
- Developed
- Integrative
- Current

# Structure of literature review

## **Introduction**

Gives a quick idea of the topic of the literature review, such as the central theme or organizational pattern.

## **Body**

Contains your discussion of sources.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

Discuss what you have drawn from reviewing literature so far. Where might the discussion proceed?

# How to organize studies

- Chronological
  - By publication date
  - By trend
- Thematic
  - A structure which considers different themes
- Methodological
  - Focuses on the methods of the researcher, e.g., qualitative versus quantitative approaches

# Reporting verbs

Argue

Assert

Assume

Challenge

Claim

Contend

Contradict

Describe

Dispute

Emphasize

Establish

Examine

Find

Maintain

Note

Object

Observe

Persuade

Propose

Prove

Recommend

Refute

Reject

Remark

Suggest

Support

# Verb tenses – Present

**A statement about what the thesis, chapter or section does**

Examples:

- This thesis presents a report of an investigation into .....
- This chapter thus provides a basis for the next.
- In this section, the results from the first set of experiments are reported.

**A statement of a generally accepted scientific fact**

Examples:

- There are three factors that control the concentration of aluminum in seawater.
- The finite rate coefficients have an effect on heat transfer through a horizontal porous layer.

# Verb tenses – Present

**A review of current research work, or research work of immediate relevance to your study.**

Example:

Schulze (2002) concludes that hydraulic rate has a significant effect on future performance.

**Comments, explanations and evaluative statements made by you when you are reviewing previous studies.**

Examples:

- Therefore, this sequential approach is impractical in the real world where projects are typically large and the activities from one stage may be carried out in parallel with the activities of another stage.



# Verb tenses – Past

**Report the contents, findings or conclusions of past research**

Examples:

Haberfield (1998) showed that the velocity of many enzyme reactions was slowed down if the end product had an increased paramagnetism.

Allington (1999) found that the temperatures varied significantly over time.

# Verb tenses – Present perfect

**In citations where the focus is on the research area of several authors**

Examples:

Several studies have provided support for the suggestion that the amount of phonological recoding that is carried out depends on orthographic depth (Frost, 1994; Smart et al, 1997; Katz & Feldman, 2001, 2002).

Joint roughness has been characterized by a number of authors (Renger, 1990; Feker & Rengers, 1997; Wu & Ali, 2000).

**To generalize about the extent of the previous research**

Examples:

Many studies have been conducted in this field.

Few researchers have examined this technique.

There has been extensive research into.....

# Common pitfalls

- Vagueness due to too much or inappropriate generalizations
- Limited range
- Insufficient information
- Irrelevant material
- Omission of contrasting view
- Omission of recent work