

LITERATURE REVIEW

What are Literature Reviews?

- **Critical evaluation of research already undertaken** on a specific topic.
- **Opportunity to demonstrate your ability to identify relevant information.**
- **Outline existing knowledge.**
- **Identifies the gap in the research that your work will address**
- **Produce a rationale for your own analysis.**

TOP TIP

Read widely and investigate the issue from several perspectives so that you are making an informed assessment of the various sources.

What NOT to do?

- Not an evaluation of a particular topic – they are an **evaluation of other academic treatments** of that particular topic.
- Not just article summaries – you **need to critically evaluate the material.**

Things to consider: The 5 W's

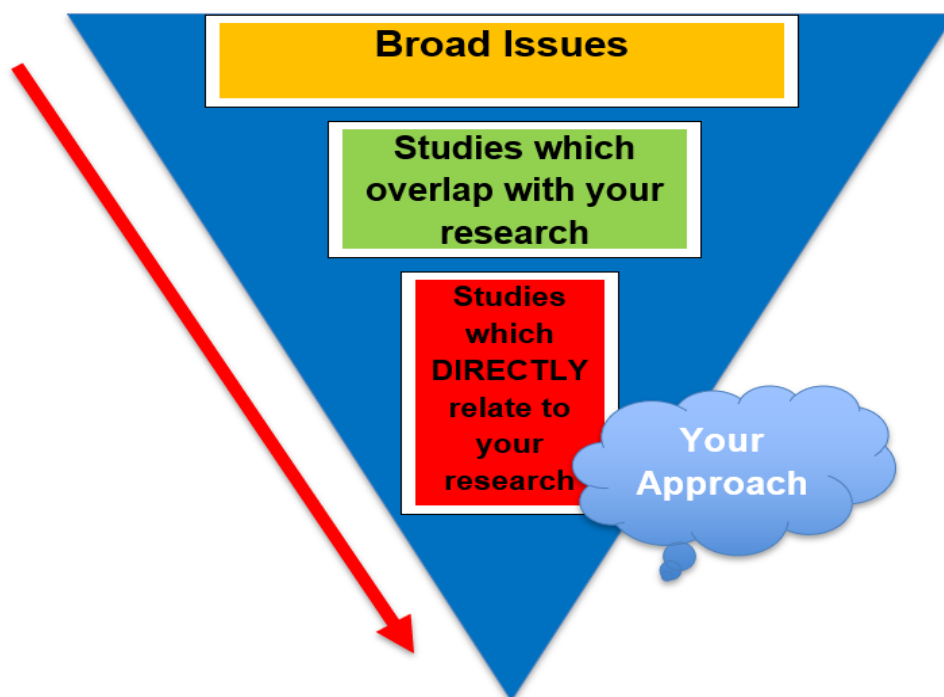
- **What** have you been asked to consider? What are the main concepts and debates around this issue?
- **Where** can I find it? Journals, Canvas, Google Scholar, Academic Databases, textbooks, etc.
- **Who** are the main experts in this field?
- **When** was each of my sources written? Am I reading the most recent research on this topic?
- **Why** does this material - and what it discusses - matter?

🔍 TOP TIP

Use a mind map to make a note of your own initial thoughts on the topic before you begin your research.

Finally . . .

Think of a literature review as a funnel - you start broad and narrow your focus as you write. Begin with broad issues and, as you explain these briefly, you are demonstrating the breadth of your knowledge around the topic generally. Then, begin to narrow your focus with those papers that relate directly to your own work. **Most of the literature review should discuss how these sources relate to your own research.** Also, bear in mind **how various concepts and theories you may be examining are currently used and how they may be applied in the future.**



🔍 TOP TIP

Consider links between the various perspectives you read and identify common themes, and don't just list authors without citing them

Useful links

- Helen Mongan-Rallis, 'Guidelines for Writing a Literature Review', Available at: <http://www.duluth.umn.edu/~hrallis/guides/researching/litreview.html>
- Deakin University: <http://www.deakin.edu.au/library/research/index.php>
- University of North Carolina, 'The Writing Centre: Literature Reviews', Available at: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-reviews/>
- University of California, 'Writing 101: Writing a Literature Review', Available at: <http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/>

Other Relevant Online PDFs

- Time Management
- Academic Writing Essentials
- How to Write an Essay
- How to Build an Academic Argument