Writing Literature Reviews
Where Research Starts

Acknowledgement: Writing Literature Reviews slides are provided by William Baer
A literature review is “the process of reading, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing scholarly materials about a specific topic.”

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A literature review will:

- Demonstrate that you understand the topic
- Add credibility
- Explain how your research relates to the field
- Shows why your research is needed
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Remember that a literature review is more than a summary and/or list of the relevant literature.

It needs to include your expertise.
Analyze the literature.
Compare and contrast the works of others.
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Topic → Research & Collect Information → Distilling the Information

Keep Track of Citations → Write Review/Paper
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Find the appropriate balance between selective and exhaustive.
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Boolean Operators

**AND**

Use between concepts to narrow the search and eliminate unwanted hits.

**OR**

Use within a concept to broaden a search to include other relevant articles.
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Research Question: What effect does violence in the media have on the home?

Possible Search String:
violence AND (media OR television OR movies) AND (home OR families)
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Where do I start looking?

If you know some seminal works on the subject, start there.

Find resources using the appropriate Research Guide obtained from the library’s webpage, starting with the PMASE Research Guide.
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Some tips on finding additional articles:

- Use bibliographies
- Revise searches based on what you learn
- Use citation searching (such as Web of Science)
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When have I found enough articles?

When you can intelligently and completely answer the research question.

When your advisor says you’re done.
Writing Literature Reviews. Compare and contrast the works of others. Use a variety of sources to support your concepts.
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Keep track of citations.

Use EndNote or other citation software.

Take notes. Don’t just highlight.

Choose how to organize your literature review.
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This is not a linear process.
You can repeat steps.