

Literature review

- What is it?
 - "summarizes and evaluates a body of writings on a specific topic" (Knopf 2006, 127)
 - **A synthesis that is structured around topics, not around individual articles or authors.**
 - In other words, it is not a series of a critical analyses of individual readings, going one after another.
- Appears in three contexts
 - a stand-alone literature review
 - in a research project proposal (before you do research)
 - in a research paper (after the research was done)

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A LitReview: How to proceed?

(Knopf 2006, 129)

1. Search for the relevant literature and read it
2. *What* does each individual study examine?
3. *What* does each individual study conclude?
4. Summarize the collective results
 - What do the readings have in common
 - What do the readings disagree about
 - What do the readings overlook or ignore
5. What is the overall quality of the body of literature?

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What to do if there is no literature exactly on my topic?

- If stand-alone LitReview - make your topic more general and start all over
 - I recommend finding at least 30 articles directly on your topic (for a standalone literature review)
- A research paper, example topic: *negotiations between Taliban and the U.S. after 8/2021*
 - Can't find literature exactly on this topic
 - → move one level up in generality and look for literature
 - look for literature on Taliban-U.S. negotiations prior to 8/2021
 - + look for literature on negotiations between extremist organizations and democratic governments and/or foreign actors
 - if still can't find anything (which I doubt), look for literature on *negotiations* between adversaries

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Examples of LitReviews:

- My example: Hobolt, S. B. and C. E. de Vries (2016). "Public Support for European Integration." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 413-432.
 - Around what concepts/ideas is it structured? In other words, what are the chapters of the paper?
 - What are the gaps in the literature?
- Find your own example in Annual Reviews in Political Science and read it carefully
 - How is it structured?
 - What are the gaps in the literature?

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Examples continued...

- Find the following BA thesis:
 - PŘEVLOCKÝ, Eduard. *Pirate Parties of Europe: Built to Last or Destined to Crumble?* [online]. Brno, 2020 [cit. 2021-09-08]. Available from: <https://is.muni.cz/th/glf7l/>. Bachelor's thesis. Masaryk University, Faculty of Social Studies. Thesis supervisor Vít HLOUŠEK.
- Compare sections 3.3 and 4.1 – what is the difference? Which of the two sections is written more in accordance with literature-review guidelines? Explain your answer.

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Researching for and writing (not just) a literature review

Practical tips

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How to avoid plagiarism

- Excellent source:
 - <https://www.niu.edu/academic-integrity/faculty/committing/examples/index.shtml>
 - Belcher W.L., 2009. Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks. New York: Princeton University Press. pp. 160-163
 - read it carefully at home
- Selected issues of you should NOT do:
 - Don't copy text without putting it in ".. " and adding a citation (citation = a reference to the original work)
 - Don't copy a text and change few words. It's still plagiarism even if you add a citation.
 - Do not copy ideas without adding a citation where they come from
 - Don't use graphs or figures without a proper citation
 -

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Searching for literature

- Google Scholar is a good searching tool (alternatively: the Web of Science)
 - <https://library.fss.muni.cz/eresources.html#header16-a6>
 - info on remote access
 - citation software
 - Utilize the citation network of a key reading
 - To begin: read review articles, book reviews, article abstracts → make a selection for in-depth reading
 - Belcher W.L., 2009. Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks. New York: Princeton University Press. pp. 144-149
- Take careful notes (careful about plagiarism)
- Don't wait too long before you write (or you will forget what you learned)

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Recommendations for successful writing

- **Write (!)**
 - 15 minutes every day (or every weekday)
 - See Belcher W.L., 2009. Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks. New York: Princeton University Press. pp 1-10 and 223-228.
- **Make writing social**
 - Start a writing group
 - Share your work. Early. Get feedback.
- Persist despite rejections
 - Applies more to academia or publishing
- Pursue your passions
- Use a “tomato timer”
 - <https://tomato-timer.com/>
 - go the the FAQ for details