What is a literature review?

- A literature review evaluates, summarises and clarifies previous research that has been carried out on a subject.

- A literature review requires you to read and critically examine specific academic research on a particular subject.
Why write a literature review?

- Lets you know what is currently known on a topic area

- Helps you in identifying any gaps in the subject area. These gaps can then be a basis for further research
3 key points of a literature review

- Examines what the research says
- Explains how the research was done (methodology)
- Identifies and discusses what is missing from current research (gaps)
What a literature review is NOT...

- It is not a general summary of articles, texts or journals
- It is not an analytical, opinion or argumentative essay
Starting a literature review

- Develop a **clear** research question
  This will give you a focus
  Generally one or two sentences
- Have a **clear** understanding of why you need to do the literature review
- Develop key search words for your topic
- Try searching with alternative spellings and synonyms for your keywords to retrieve all articles on your topic
- Search and choose the most appropriate literature for review
Starting a literature review cont…

- **Read through the literature, critically evaluating**
  
  Give your verdict as to what extent a statement or findings within a piece of research are true, or to what extent you agree or disagree with them.

- **Take notes as you read through the literature**
  
  As you are reading, develop a spreadsheet or table to note down relevant information, possibly under topic headings for cross referencing.
Literature review format

- Use **Essay** format
  - Introduction
  - Body
  - Conclusion
- Include in text references, which identify themes that reoccur about a particular field from your readings

Click here for:

[Literature Review Examples - University of Western Florida (ufs)]
Structure of literature review

Introduction

- **Introduction**
  Brief background information about your research

Include

- An introduction to the topic under discussion
- The Scope of the topic
  what your review includes/excludes
- Why you chose the literature on review

Example Introduction - RMIT
Body paragraphs

- **Body**
  
  Organise the body into sections (ideas or themes)

  In each **body paragraph** include
  
  - Your analysis and interpretation of literature you have read
  - Evidence from readings which you agree/disagree

  Use strong topic sentences for each paragraph to clearly identify your idea or theme.

  Ensure that you use a linking sentence to the next body paragraph.
Conclusion

- **Conclusion**
  A summary of major/significant studies and any gaps you have found

Include

- Summary of the major agreements and disagreements
- Summary of general conclusions that you have drawn
References


- RMIT University, Study and Learning Centre (2015). Writing a Literature review assignment. Melbourne. RMIT University.


