Literature Review (Level 1)

Remember to start each new section (or thesis chapter) on a new page when conducting a larger assignment. Also remember that paragraphs represent concepts, and concepts are usually made up of multiple ideas (sentences). This is why, generally, there are no paragraphs less than three sentences.

The literature review establishes what is known about the topic in order to build upon the wisdom of earlier works. What has already been established about a topic helps you narrow in on a specific theoretical framework. This means it is usually necessary to review the literature before choosing a specific theoretical framework.

The literature review can be divided by themes, by authors, or chronologically. The most common division is by topic as this shows a more complex understanding of the literature. Children learn to do book reports around fifth grade. A literature review by authors is a compilation of short book reports. This means that literature reviews divided by authors normally lack the global understanding provided by a topical overview and are, therefore, not considered as sophisticated as topical reviews. Chronological reviews are often most helpful when the focus of the paper is historical in nature. The choice of organization depends on the objective of the paper.

Literature Genres (Level 2)

Introduce the genres of literature that have been used to study the topic (journal articles, conferences popular press, books, television documentaries, interviews, and so on). Explain whether or not your review was time-sensitive (you only used literature within a certain timeframe, such as 2000-2020), limited by language (only sources in English, for example), and if specific key words were used in your search. Also indicate if you were limited by specific databases as determined by your university, or multiple databases (EBSCO, ProQuest, HOLLIS, and so on). If you “snowballed” the literature finds (used the references from key articles to build your source list), indicate this as well. If a large number of documents came from a specific source, mention this here. For example, if you discovered that the *Journal of Molecular Psychiatry* published a significant number of the articles in your review, mention this.

Topic 1 (or Author 1 or Date 1). (Level 3).

This section should help the reader understand the state-of-the-art information in each of the sub-thematic areas. The topics in your literature review are normally determined by your research question. Make a mind-map around your research question and identify the key terms and concepts. Consider how literature from the terms and concepts will contribute to an answer to your research question and then select the most vital topics for review. Some papers have just two or three topics, other have dozens. The number of topics in your review depends on the objective of the paper. If available, this section should use a previously constructed annotated bibliography.

**Topic 1.1 (or Author 1.1 or Date 1.1).** (Level 4). Many themes have sub-elements worth mentioning. Use a Level 5 header to set off these sub-elements, if necessary.

***Topic 1.1.1*** (Level 5). If your topic merits further sub-divisions, you can use a Level 5 header to show the hierarchy among concepts.

Topic 2 (or Author 1 or Date 1). (Level 3).

Remember to give each topic a clear name or title. That is, do *not* leave “Topic 2” as a header.

**Topic 2.1 (or Author 1.1 or Date 1.1).** (Level 4). Many themes have sub-elements worth mentioning. Use a Level 5 header to set off these sub-elements, if necessary.

Topic 3 (or Author 1 or Date 1). (Level 3).

This section should help the reader understand the state-of-the-art information in each of the sub-thematic areas. If available, this section should use a previously constructed annotated bibliography.

**Topic 3.1 (or Author 1.1 or Date 1.1).** (Level 4). Many themes have sub-elements worth mentioning. Use a Level 5 header to set off these sub-elements, if necessary.

Topic 4 (or Author 1 or Date 1). (Level 3).

This section should help the reader understand the state-of-the-art information in each of the sub-thematic areas. If available, this section should use a previously constructed annotated bibliography.

**Topic 4.1 (or Author 1.1 or Date 1.1).** (Level 4). Many themes have sub-elements worth mentioning. Use a Level 5 header to set off these sub-elements, if necessary.