
Finding Literature Reviews

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What is a literature review?

A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It addresses the issues involved in a particular question and the debates among scholars.

Literature reviews map out the intellectual terrain succinctly and give you the major landmarks in terms of key authors and significant titles.

The review should describe, summarize, and objectively evaluate prior research.

Finding Literature Review Sources

Literature reviews can be found in journals, dissertations, and annual reviews.

Finding reviews written in recent years will give you a more up-to-date perspective on issues in the field as well as a more current bibliography of publications for further reading.

The sources outlined below cover different academic fields. Choose options according to your field of study.

Annual Reviews

Annual Reviews 

Annual Reviews publish literature reviews in focused disciplines within the biomedical, physical, and social sciences. There are over 60 journals published in the series including Reviews of Anthropology, Astronomy and Astrophysics, Neuroscience and Political Science.


The reviews address researchers and cover significant developments in the different fields.

Compass Journal Titles

Wiley-Blackwell publishes journals in the Compass series devoted to literature reviews in the humanities and social sciences.

- [Geography Compass](#)
- [History Compass](#)
- [Language and Linguistics Compass](#)
- [Literature Compass](#)
- [Philosophy Compass](#)
- [Religion Compass](#)
- [Social and Personality Psychology Compass](#)
- [Sociology Compass](#)

Dissertations and Theses

Dissertations and Theses   

Doctoral students go through an exhaustive literature search when doing their research. They will often write a literature review as one of the chapters in their dissertations. They also tend to work on new questions, sometimes ones that have had very little scholarly attention.

In the database above you can find more than 1 million full-text dissertations and many additional citations to dissertations all in the social sciences and humanities. If the dissertation you need is not available full-text, try searching for it on the Web. Many universities make them available in digital repositories. A third option is to request it through [Interlibrary Loan](#).

Web of Science

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Use the multidisciplinary database, Web of Science, to look for literature reviews published in scholarly journals.

When you have searched for your topic, filter the results by the Document Type REVIEW.

You can also search for literature reviews in other databases [listed here](#). Check in with [your subject librarian](#) for further options.

Also see additional information in the tutorial, [Writing a Literature Review](#).