

## Literature Review Hints

As you write your ideas and organize your information consider the following.

1. Establish the importance of the topics you are reviewing in the first paragraphs of the literature review. This is most effectively done by citing literature that either helps to define the topic, establish statistics, or just to back up strong statements about the importance of the problem the review is addressing. These types of citations are usually multiple source citations.
2. When available, use more than one reference to backup **strong** statements. But don't overkill this by having every citation a long list of references.
3. Write in a way that moves logically from one major topic to the next. This should include transition sentences that give how these topics are tied together, or are opposite viewpoints.
4. PARAPHRASE, PARAPHRASE, PARAPHRASE.
5. Make sure that you are using literature to support arguments that are the same or parallel to what the author originally meant. Don't distort the original work to suit your needs.
6. Group articles that cover the same topics and discuss them together. Weave a pattern of research for the topic. This may be done chronologically or simply by showing opposite viewpoints on details of the topic.
7. Keep your personal conclusions for the discussion section. This does not mean that you cannot critique, **carefully**, the research as you write about it. The literature review can be a place to mention problems with studies, overwhelming research on one side of the issue, lack of research, age of research, or discrepancies in similar studies. These can then be the focus point of your discussion section and the reader is already prepared. Just don't spend a great deal of time with these in the lit. review.
8. Identify vague terms, define vocabulary, report specific statistics (not vague amounts).

As you revise your drafts keep the following in mind.

1. Recheck Headings and Subheadings, not just for proper format but for proper wording.
2. Make sure that your writing is straight forward and unbiased. Have you written things in the literature review that are best kept for the discussion?
3. Don't just guess, open the APA manual and check your citations. Are they done correctly, both paraphrased and quoted? Have you used too many in a paragraph or too

few? Is it clear when one author, or groups, ideas end and another begins? Have you mixed up the in text and parenthetical methods so that the paper is easier to read?

4. Is every source cited in your paper listed in the reference section? Is everything in the reference section actually cited in the paper? This means as paraphrased information or as a direct quote.

5. Have someone totally out of the loop read your paper. You may even have them read it out loud to you.

Some information adapted from

Pang, M. L. (2003). *Preparing Literature Reviews: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Los Angeles: Pyrczak.