

[All Collections](#) > [Study types & research methods](#) > [Literature Review](#)

# Literature Review



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[Table of contents](#)

A literature review is a summary of what researchers already know about a topic. It looks at different studies, books, and articles to explain the current knowledge, find gaps in the research, and help guide future studies. Literature reviews are often used in academic projects, like essays, research papers, or theses, to show what has already been learned and what still needs to be studied.



## What is a Literature Review?

A literature review collects and organizes information from different sources to give an overview of the topic. It helps researchers understand what's already been studied, find areas that need more research, and avoid repeating work that has already been done.

## Advantages of literature review

**Comprehensive understanding:** Literature reviews provide a complete summary of current research, helping readers and researchers understand the full scope of knowledge on a topic.

**Identification of gaps:** By analyzing existing studies, a literature review identifies areas that need further exploration, guiding future research efforts.

## Limitations of literature review

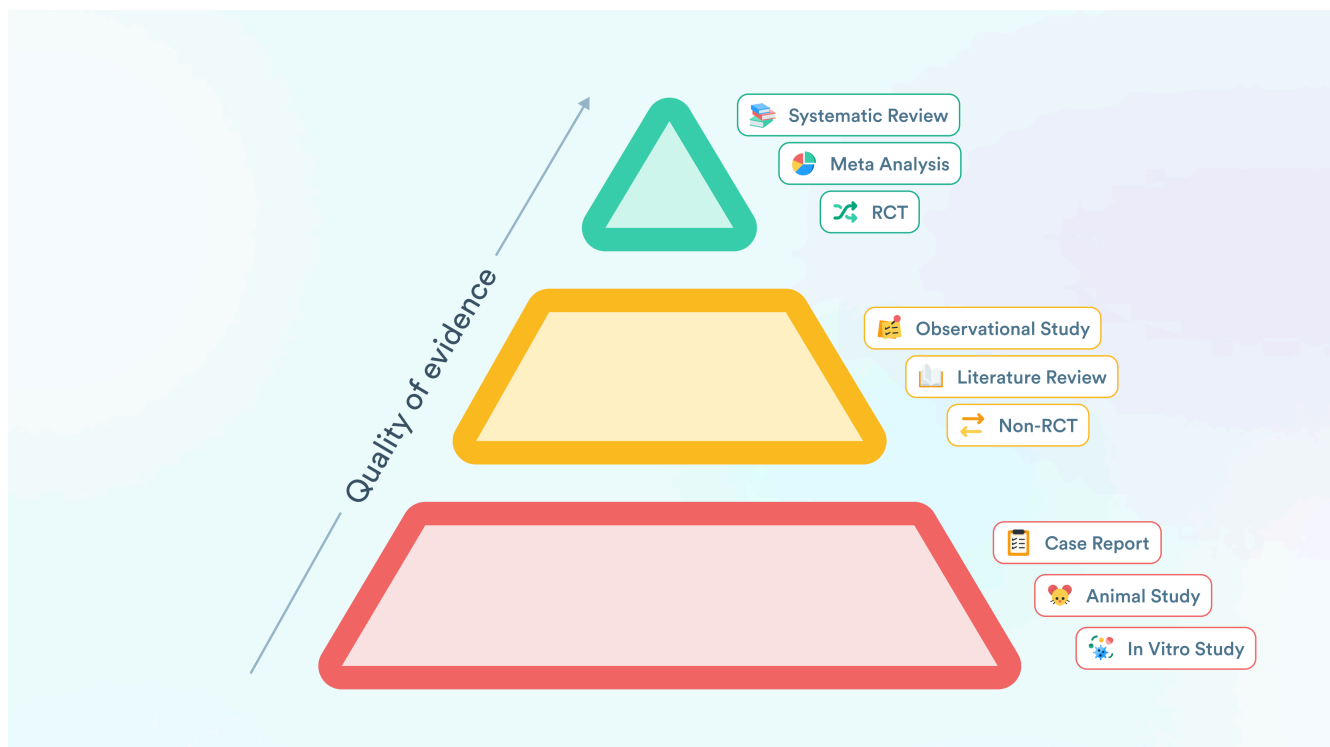
**Potential bias:** Without explicit inclusion criteria, literature reviews may inadvertently favor certain studies or perspectives, limiting objectivity.

**Time-consuming:** Conducting a thorough and comprehensive review can require significant time and effort, particularly for broad or complex topics.

🔍 [See what Consensus says about literature reviews](#)

## The Hierarchy of Evidence

How does literature review fit in with other types of evidence? Read more about the [hierarchy of evidence here](#).



## Key Components of Literature Review

**Clearly defined research question:** Begin with a focused and specific research question or objective to guide the review and maintain relevance throughout the process.

**Comprehensive and systematic search:** Conduct a thorough search across multiple sources, such as academic journals, books, and conference papers, using explicit criteria to include only relevant and high-quality studies.

**Critical evaluation of studies:** Assess the validity, reliability, and relevance of each study to ensure that the findings included in the review are credible and meaningful.

**Synthesis of findings:** Combine data from various studies to identify patterns, themes, and gaps, creating a cohesive understanding of the research topic.

**Identification of knowledge gaps:** Highlight areas where information is missing or incomplete to provide direction for future research and innovation.

**Clear reporting and interpretation:** Present the findings in a structured and transparent manner, interpreting their implications and how they address the research question.

## Steps in Conducting a Literature Review

1. **Define the scope:** Start by clearly defining the scope of your literature review. This involves identifying the research question or topic you are interested in exploring. A well-defined scope helps in focusing your search and analysis.
2. **Conduct a comprehensive search:** Use various databases and search engines to find relevant literature. This step involves gathering a wide range of sources, including books, journal articles, and other academic publications related to your topic.
3. **Organize sources:** Once you have collected the literature, organize your sources systematically. This can be done by categorizing them based on themes, methodologies, or findings. Proper organization helps in managing the information effectively.
4. **Read and analyze:** Carefully read and analyze the collected literature. Look for key themes, arguments, and findings. This step is crucial for understanding the current state of research in your area of interest.
5. **Identify key themes and arguments:** As you analyze the literature, identify the main themes and arguments presented by different authors. This will help you understand the commonalities and differences in the research findings.
6. **Develop a logical structure:** Create a logical structure for your literature review. This involves organizing the identified themes and arguments in a coherent manner, which will form the backbone of your review.
7. **Write clearly and critically:** Begin writing your literature review by presenting the information clearly and critically. Ensure that your writing is concise and that you

critically evaluate the literature rather than just summarizing it.

8. **Provide coherence and synthesis:** Synthesize the information by connecting different studies and showing how they relate to each other. This step involves integrating the findings to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.
9. **Revise and refine:** After writing the initial draft, revise and refine your literature review. Check for coherence, clarity, and logical flow. Make necessary adjustments to improve the quality of your review.
10. **Seek feedback:** Finally, seek feedback from peers or mentors. This can provide valuable insights and help you improve your literature review before finalizing it.

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