

How to Write an Abstract for a Literature Review

You've done the research and now you're ready to put your findings down on paper. When preparing to write your review, first consider how will you organize your review.

The actual review generally has 5 components:

Abstract - An abstract is a summary of your literature review. It is made up of the following parts:

- A contextual sentence about your motivation behind your research topic
- Your thesis statement
- A descriptive statement about the types of literature used in the review
- Summarize your findings
- Conclusion(s) based upon your findings

Introduction: Like a typical research paper introduction, provide the reader with a quick idea of the topic of the literature review:

- Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern. This provides the reader with context for reviewing the literature.
- Identify related trends in what has already been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
- Establish your reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature; explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence); and, when necessary, state why certain literature is or is not included (scope) -

Body: The body of a literature review contains your discussion of sources and can be organized in 3 ways-

- **Chronological**- *by publication or by trend*
- **Thematic**- *organized around a topic or issue, rather than the progression of time*
- **Methodical**- *the focusing factor usually does not have to do with the content of the material. Instead, it focuses on the "methods" of the literature's researcher or writer that you are reviewing*

You may also want to include a section on "questions for further research" and discuss what questions the review has sparked about the topic/field or offer suggestions for future studies/examinations that build on your current findings.

Conclusion: In the conclusion, you should:

- Conclude your paper by providing your reader with some perspective on the relationship between your literature review's specific topic and how it's related to it's parent discipline, scientific endeavor, or profession.

Bibliography: Since a literature review is composed of pieces of research, it is very important that you correctly cite the literature you are reviewing, both in the review body as well as in a bibliography/works cited. To learn more about different citation styles, visit the "**Citing Your Sources**" tab.