Writing your literature review
7 steps to producing a literature review

1. Identify your question
2. Review discipline styles
3. Search the literature
4. Manage your references
5. Critically analyse and evaluate
6. Synthesise
7. Write the review

Librarians blog for Social Sciences.
The University of Sheffield. The University Library
Good Practice

- Always relate to your research question
- Two stages to writing: writing to understand and then writing to be understood
  - Keep records
- Don’t be fazed – you may find:
  - Themes and topics that overlap with your research
  - Gaps in the literature, and shortcomings of research
  - Agreement and disagreement on topics
- Introduction, main body, conclusion (like an essay!)
Tell the story: it’s not a list

- Evaluate what you find
- Be critical
  - what is the ‘argument’?
  - what evidence is used to support the ‘argument’?
- Appraise the methodology
  - Consider the validity of the research method
  - You may need more in-depth appraisal for papers closest to your topic
- Connect
  - Compare/contrast different ideas
When to do a literature review

- Before you start your own primary research - this can inform how you do your research
- Should be a continual process throughout as new literature may be published
- This will demonstrate your grasp of current debate
Possible Structure/Organisation

- Distant > Close
- Chronological
- Methodological
- Thematic

- Can usually use headings
FIGURE 6.2 Organisational patterns for the literature review

Source: Wellington et al., 2005: 82

Taken from:
Literature Map

Paragraph structure

- Use WEED model (Godwin, 2014, p. 38)
  - **What** - topic sentence
  - **Evidence/Example 1**
  - **Evidence/Example 2**
  - **Do** - sum up – what does this mean for your research topic?
By its very nature, motivation requires a degree of individual satisfaction or narcissism. Robbins et al. (1998) suggest that motivation has as its basis the need to focus on, and please the self. This is supported by Shaw, Shapard and Waugaman (2000) who contend that this narcissistic drive is based upon the human effort to find personal significance in life. It can be argued that the desire to improve one’s status is a highly motivational force, and is central to the idea of narcissistic motivation. The narcissistic motivational strategies put forward by Shaw et al. (2000) are concerned with motivation for life in general, but may also have applications in the context of work. These strategies, with their focus on personal needs, demonstrate that narcissism is an essential component of motivation.
Exercise

Improving a paragraph

- Read the paragraph in the hand-out and add ideas about how it could be improved
How could it be improved?

- Some more up to date literature
- Sexual harassment has many consequences: what are they? Don’t just say there is a list of them
- Give detail on results, not methodology
- Value judgements e.g. ‘excellent book’
- Don’t need to give the title of book
- Less description of the literature, more analysis
Research from the 1980s found that sexual harassment in universities led to a range of consequences to the victims from lowered self-esteem and loss of self-confidence to withdrawal from social interaction, changed career goals, and depression (Benson and Thomson, 1982; Adams et al., 1983; Dziech and Weiner, 1990). Therefore this study will consider whether 21st century students still share these experiences.

Help with writing

University of Manchester (2016)
Academic Phrasebank

http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk

- A bank of phrases appropriate for use in academic writing. It contains two pages particular helpful for literature reviews:

1. Referring to Literature:
   http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/referring-to-sources/

2. Being Critical (of literature):
   http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/