

TIPS FOR WRITING THE LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Review *at least* three articles (reports) that are directly related to your research topic, and preferably to your research question. The closer the article is to your research topic or question, the better a candidate it is for being included in the literature review. The literature review should be at least 3 pages long, double spaced with an 11 point font (please pick a nice font...), with a separate page containing the bibliographic citations for each article.
2. Be sure that you accurately describe the findings of an article (or report). Make a concerted effort to use your own words when describing the research conducted and the findings reported, rather than simply paraphrasing or quoting the author of the article.
3. For each article reviewed, give a concise description of the research question addressed and what the key findings are. There is no need to describe the methodology or results in great detail. However, it is desirable to describe the articles' shortcomings: Did the article address the question or issue it was supposed to? Was the analysis or data used in some way flawed? Were the conclusions compellingly supported by the analysis?
4. In discussing the articles, it is very desirable to explain how the articles are related to each other, e.g., whether one article builds on another, or is very similar to another or reaches similar conclusions, or corrects a weakness in another. The literature review should contain some synthesis and assessment of the articles reviewed; it should not just be a series of summaries, one for each article. If the existing literature doesn't address issues that are closely related to your research topic, be sure to point this out. Of the proseminar papers we discussed, Adam Finkelstein's has an excellent literature review. Be sure to look it over before writing yours.