

WRITING A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE



Checklist for Students or Novice Authors

WILEY

DETERMINE THE PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Course assignment to provide evidence of topic mastery (longer all-inclusive review).

Research or other report for submission to a journal (brief review of most important current knowledge and possibly seminal knowledge).

Introduce the topic and note the purpose of the review in your paper.

ACQUIRE THE LITERATURE

Review assignment or journal guidelines for writing and submission.

Search scholarly databases (e.g., MEDLINE, CINAHL) appropriate to the discipline and similar disciplines using various keywords until articles begin to repeat (saturation).

Search for primary sources (published by authors who did the research).

Track search dates, terms, databases, and number of results.

Describe the search methods in your paper.

SUMMARIZE THE LITERATURE

Review each research report individually:

Track important information and a full citation in an evidence table or spreadsheet.

Identify strengths and weaknesses for each study - a research critique guideline can be a helpful tool, such as the CASP Checklists (CASP, 2020).

SYNTHESIZE THE LITERATURE

Critically appraise the list of studies as a whole:

Note similarities (e.g., topic, question(s), methods, findings).

Note differences.

Group information about studies by similarities and differences, and by strengths and weaknesses.

Search for gaps in the literature.

Describe the state of the science by discussing the studies from this comprehensive perspective, avoiding discussion of each individual study unless it provides unique information.

Conclude this section by noting any gaps.

DISCUSS YOUR CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Include original ideas that contribute new information to the literature.

Note any limitations of the review.

Strengthen your paper by including specific implications for practice and/or research based on your review.

Conclude your paper with a brief reiteration of the importance of the topic.

FINAL CHECK

Review the criteria in Checklist #1 for general scholarly papers.

CITATION: Owens, J.K., Cowell, J.M., Kennedy, S.M., Newland, J.A., & Pierson, C.A. (2020). Mentoring the novice writer to publication: 12 checklists for students, faculty, and other reviewers. *Nurse Author & Editor*, 30(3), 5.