

How To Conduct A PhD Literature Review

A PhD literature review is a critical assessment of the literature in your field and related to your specific research topic. By the end, the reader should understand the case for your research.

The job of a PhD thesis literature review is to explain:



It involves nine steps:

- 1**
Pick a broad topic
- 2**
Find the way in
- 3**
Understand who is saying what and when
- 4**
Make notes; lots of notes
- 5**
Narrow down the field
- 6**
Filter your list of references
- 7**
Snowball
- 8**
Think about questions that haven't been answered
- 9**
Write early, write quickly, and write relevantly

Tips to elevate your review:

Be critical

Don't just list authors.
Critically engage with each text.

Structure the review thematically

Connect the dots between the literature.
Tease out themes that emerge.

Know when to stop

If something doesn't make sense now,
it might do when you start fieldwork.

Get feedback

The more people who read your review
the better.