

Doing a literature review for a dissertation or thesis

To produce a literature review for a dissertation or thesis we have to work through the following steps:

Literature reviews for dissertations and theses – the steps

<p>1 Generating your own ideas</p> <p><i>The question must come first before your conclusions: it must be provisional, a thesis that could go both ways that you genuinely test in your research.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2 Finding a research question</p> <p><i>The best research questions are hardly ever found; rather, they are worked on carefully and designed to give clear direction to your work.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3 Searching the literature</p> <p><i>Be clear about what you're looking for: don't get bogged down, diverted into irrelevant areas, or confuse the search with the review.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4 Processing the ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyse the concepts and arguments to reveal their implications</i> • <i>Critically evaluate the consistency of the arguments, their use of evidence and the language used to develop the ideas</i> • <i>Synthesise the ideas to create new ways of approaching the problem</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5 Planning your review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstrate your understanding of the debates that dominate your field and the background of your research</i> • <i>Use sources that bear directly on the specific issues raised by your research</i> <p><i>Your review should build naturally to the specific questions at the heart of your project.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>6 Writing the first draft</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Begin your first draft early, when your ideas are most familiar and vivid</i> • <i>Allow yourself to write freely as you develop and synthesise your ideas. This will allow your voice to shine through, and is key to presenting ideas and developing arguments clearly, simply and economically</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>7 Editing</p> <p><i>Remember:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The first draft of your literature review is for you: you are writing as you think, clarifying and developing your ideas</i> • <i>The second and subsequent drafts are for your reader: you work to make sure your ideas come through so clearly that someone who knows nothing</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>



about your project can understand it and feel the impact of your ideas as you do

For more information, see *How to Write Your Literature Review*, Chapter 3.