

Faculty of Community Services

Academic Support & Resource Centre

Writing Literature Reviews

STEP 1: Understand your assignment

- ✓ Review rubric and weight of expected grading
- ✓ Identify possible headings to outline ideas for your paper

STEP 2: Select your working topic

- ✓ Look at your specific area of study
- ✓ Select a *broad* topic that interests you

STEP 3: Conduct relevant literature review on the general topic

- ✓ Search RULA Database <http://library.ryerson.ca/>. Use at least two databases relevant to your course. For in-depth, one-on-one research help, ask a librarian <http://library.ryerson.ca/guides/>

Tip - Always check the reference list of recent articles you are reviewing for other potential literature options!

Remember - Always double check the total number of required scholarly references and research restrictions. Often times, professors will provide an outline of specific criteria to which you should adhere when searching for literary works (for example, date restrictions, specific journals, “only Canadian articles”!)

STEP 4: Narrow your topic

- ✓ Focus on one *specific* area of interest
- ✓ Brainstorm ideas (by using free-writing, mind-mapping, outlining, etc.)
- ✓ Select literature that reflects your topic – narrow down your search

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STEP 5: Evaluate articles

- ✓ Identify research findings and conclusions drawn
- ✓ What assumptions do some/most researchers appear to be making?
- ✓ Investigate methodologies, testing procedures, subjects used
- ✓ Note conflicting theories, results, methodologies
- ✓ Watch for popularity of specific theories, researchers, methods

STEP 6: Create a working thesis

- ✓ Create a one or two sentence statement asserting the central claim of your paper

STEP 7: Outline structure of your paper

- ✓ Create headings and subheadings to organize your paper

Tip - For *APA6* guidelines visit <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

STEP 8: Write your first draft

- ✓ Focus on analysis (*the “why”*) rather than on description (*the “what”*)
 - Connect common themes*
 - Identify misconceptions*
 - Compare findings in literature*

STEP 9: Revise and rewrite

- ✓ Read your work out-loud to identify run-on sentences and *listen* for punctuation and grammatical errors
- ✓ Sentences and ideas should flow smoothly and in a logical order (headings will help organize your thoughts)
- ✓ Review APA citations and references properly to avoid plagiarism