**UNIT II**

**Literature Review**

The phrase ‘review of literature’ consists of two words: Review and Literature. The word ‘literature’ has conveyed different meaning from the traditional meaning. It is used with reference to the languages e.g. Hindi literature, English literature, Sanskrit literature. It includes subject content: prose, poetry, dramas, novels, stories etc.

Here in research methodology the term literature refers to the knowledge of a particular area of investigation of any discipline which includes theoretical, practical and its research studies.

The term ‘review’ means to organize the knowledge of the specific area of research to evolve an edifice of knowledge to show that his study would be an addition to this field. The task of review of literature is highly creative and tedious because researcher has to synthesize the available knowledge of the field in a unique way to provide the rationale for his study.

The very words ‘review’ and ‘literature’ have quite different meanings in the historical approach. In historical research, the researcher does much more than review already published material; he seeks to discover and to integrate new information which has never been reported and never considered. The concept and process implied in the term ‘review of literature’ have such different meanings in historical as compared with survey and experimental research.

**What is a literature review?**

The literature review is a critical discussion and summary of statistical literature that is of `general' and `specialized' relevance to the particular area and topic of the research problem.

It is an evaluative report of studies found in the literature related to your selected area.

The review should describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify this literature. It should give a theoretical basis for the research and help you determine the nature of your own research.

Select a limited number of works that are central to your area rather than trying to collect a large number of works that are not as closely connected to your topic area.

A literature review goes beyond the search for information and includes the identification and articulation of relationships between the literature and your field of research.

**Why do I have to have a literature review?**

This is an important question to ask yourself. As well as helping you to write a good literature review, fully understanding the need for such work is what allows you to know you're on-track, why what you're doing is worthwhile, and that you do have a contribution to make. In other words, the literature review is integral to the whole thesis; it is not just a routine step taken to fulfill formal requirements.

You need a good literature review because it:

**NEED OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The review of literature is essential due to the following reasons:

1. One of the early steps in planning a research work is to review research done previously in the particular area of interest and relevant area quantitative and qualitative analysis of this research usually gives the researcher an indication of the direction.
2. It is very essential for every investigator to be up-to-date in his information about the literature, related to his own problem already done by others. It is considered the most important prerequisite to actual planning and conducting the study.
3. It avoids the replication of the study of findings to take an advantage from similar or related literature as regards, to methodology, techniques of data collection, procedure adopted and conclusions drawn. He can justify his own endeavour in the field.
4. It demonstrates that you know the field. This means more than reporting what you've read and understood. Instead, you need to read it critically and to write in such a way that shows you have a feel for the area; you know what the most important issues are and their relevance to your work, you know the controversies, you know what's neglected, you have the anticipation of where it's being taken. All this would allow you to map the field and position your research within the context.
5. It justifies the reason for your research. It is the knowledge of your field which allows you to identify the gap which your research could fill.
6. It allows you to establish your theoretical framework and methodological focus. Even if you are proposing a new theory or a new method, you are doing so in relation to what has been done.
7. It provides as source of problem of study, an analogy may be drawn for identifying and selecting his own problem of research. The researcher formulates his hypothesis on the basis of review of literature. It also provides the rationale for the study. The results and findings of the study can also be discussed at length.

The review of literature indicates the clear picture of the problem to be solved. The scholarship in the field can be developed by reviewing the literature of the field.

**Purpose of the Literature Review**

While the form of the literature review may vary with different types of studies, the basic purposes remain constant:

•Provide a context for the research

•Justify the research

•Ensure the research hasn't been done before (or that it is not just a "replication study")

•Show where the research fits into the existing body of knowledge

•Enable the researcher to learn from previous theory on the subject

•Illustrate how the subject has been studied previously

•Highlight flaws in previous research

•Outline gaps in previous research

•Show that the work is adding to the understanding and knowledge of the field

•Help refine, refocus or even change the topic

**THE NATURE OF THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Through a process of integration of post research and thinking with current research and thinking, we move knowledge forward. For this process to function successfully, each researcher must know the past so that he can design research to build on what is already known and study what is not. There are times when researchers lack this knowledge. We see researches are being done on matters which have been demonstrated sufficiently so as not to need further replication. When this is done the research becomes an academic exercise of little interest in consequence to the discipline involved. We also see research into the unknown which does not build on the known. In a sense this is the greater professional loss. Needless repetition is only a waste of the researcher’s time, money and energy, but new research which is unconnected to previous thinking and research is a lost opportunity to move knowledge forward. When new research is not based on a thorough review of the literature, it becomes an isolated entity bearing at best accidental relevance to what has gone before. When it is based on the literature, we can hope for cohesive and integrated approaches to our problems and for resolution and solution of them through research.

Reviewing the literature has two phases. The first phase involves identifying all the relevant published material in the problem area and reading that part of it with which we are not thoroughly familiar. As we read what others have done and/or thought about the problem area, we gradually develop the foundation of ideas and results on which our own study will be built. The second phase of the review of the literature Involves writing this foundation of ideas into a section of the research report.

A distinction must be made between the literature that is reviewed, that is, read by the researcher, and that which is discussed in the study itself, that is, referred to in the section or chapter headed “Review of the Literature.” The amount that anyone researcher needs to spend on anyone problem is determined by the unique combination of the problem which delimits the total amount of knowledge needed and how familiar the researcher may be with none, some or even all of that knowledge. The section in the research report discussing the literature is different matter. For the researcher, it establishes the framework or background in the field and thus, provides the setting in which he reports the new study. For the reader, the section provides a summary of the thinking and research necessary for him to understand the study. It also gives the reader a good estimate of the researcher’s scholarliness. One basis for this estimate is the researcher’s ability to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant. How important this stage will be in the development of the researcher’s thinking, depends, of course, on the richness of the literature. There are problem areas in education, psychology, and sociology, and in all branches of knowledge in both the social and physical sciences in which there is little literature. The researcher’s obligation is to search the literature, find what exists, and review it. ‘He is not responsible for previous generations’ disinterest or neglect of a problem area, and so if his search yields little, he is entitled to say this. In this case, the written section will simply be a brief statement, identifying the extent of the search, naming the sources consulted, and reporting how little was found. But let us assume that there is a literature in the problem area. Then the amount of time devoted to this stage of the research depends upon how well the researcher knows the problem area and literature. If he knows the area well and keeps his knowledge current, then he will need only a onceover- lightly review to be certain that he is aware of the latest research and thinking. In all other instances, where a researcher has less than complete current knowledge, a thorough review of the literature is needed ranging to the deep and extensive review needed by the researcher working in a problem area new to him.

**SOURCES OF REVIEW OF LITERATURE (SOURCES OF INFORMATION)**

You will need to consult a wide range of information sources.

There are various sources of literature which may be used for this purpose. These sources can be broadly classified into **Informal sources and the formal sources**. **Informal sources** include contact with peers, colleagues, other researchers, your Liaison Librarian, and your supervisor. F**ormal sources**, including:

**1. Books and Text books Material**

The most useful list of books published in the English language is the Cumulative Book Index and Book Review Index, Books Review Digest, Subject Guide to Books indicates that books are in print or press or forthcoming books. National Union Catalogue is also useful for this purpose. There are a number of publications that locate specific references that cover particular area of knowledge. The Cumulative Book Index is published monthly to provide the references, all books published in the English Language.

Sources of Information in the social sciences ‘organized’ by subject area and indexed by author and title, this work contains comprehensive list of reference books and monographs.

**2. Periodicals**

A periodical is defined as a publication issued in successive parts, usually at regular intervals, and as a rule, intended to be continued indefinitely. These include Yearbook, Documents, Almanacs, The Cumulative Book Index, International Abstracts, Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, International Index to Periodicals.

Periodicals are generally placed in open shelves in the Periodical room. Their effective use is predicted on the use of an index to identify the articles on subject matter under the study.

**3. Abstracts**

Another type of reference guide is the abstract, review, or digest. In addition to provide a systematized list of reference sources, it includes a summary of the contents. Usually the brief summaries of research studies are given in the form of abstract Educational abstracts, International abstracts in humanities.

**4. Encyclopaedias**

Encyclopaedias provide concise information on a number of subjects written by specialists. They provide a convenient source of information, and often include illustrations and bibliographies. Only specialized encyclopaedias deal with restricted areas of knowledge.

**5. Almanacs, Handbooks, Yearbooks and Guides**

This general category of references includes those publications that present rather detailed up-to-date information on a variety of subjects, organized around a given theme. They are the types of references that one consults to find specific information, often of a statistical nature. Generalized sources are listed first, followed by those with a more specialized emphasis.

**6. References on International Education**

This type of publications deals with education outside the United States.

**7. Specialized Dictionaries**

There are specialized dictionaries of education which includes terms, words and their meanings. ‘Dictionary of Education,’ New York: This educational dictionary covers technical and professional terms. Foreign educational terms used in comparative education writings are also included. Government of India has also prepared a ‘Dictionary of Education’ which includes technical and professional terms from English to Hindi.

**8. ERIC (Educational Research Information Centre)**

The current knowledge explosion makes selective data retrieval the key to the research enterprise as well as to effective educational practice. The major developments in this regard as they relate to the educational literature are ERIC (Educational Research Information Centre) and SRIS (School Research Information Service). ERIC is an attempt to facilitate information exchange and to increase the value of research to the educational community by simply making its results readily available in usable form. A related service in SRIS initiated to provide and ERIC type coverage of educational materials. In our country NCERT has established a separate ERIC cell to facilitate educational research community.

**9. Microfiche**

The development of the microfiche has been one of the most significant contributions of library services by providing economy and convenience of storing and displaying of scholarly material.

A microfiche is a sheet of film containing micro-images of printed material. A copy of film 4*"* × 6*"* card countries the material of one hundred printed pages of 9*"* × 11*"* size. There are many document reproduction services that supply microfiche to libraries upon special order.

Super-and Ultra Microfiche is the recent development in the field of micro-printing. It has transformed the process of storage of published material in libraries of the future. A super microfiche has been developed that contains upto two pages of printed material on a single 4*"* × 6*"* transparent card, the equivalent of two or more books. An even more spectacular development is the ultra- microfiche that contains upto 3200 micro-dots on a single card of 4*"* × 6*"*. When projected each dot contains the equivalent of several pages. Thus, seven to ten volumes can be included on a single 4*"* × 6*"* transparent card. Reader printers make hard copy points out of any page in few seconds.

**10. Dissertations and Theses**

The theses and dissertations which embody the bulk of presenting educational research, are usually housed by the institutions and universities that award the authors their advanced degrees. Sometimes these studies are published in whole or in part in educational journals. The related dissertations and theses are the main sources of review of literature. the entry ‘dissertations and theses’ issue of the bibliographic index in the most comprehensive listing of sources to these research in progress.

**11. Newspaper**

The current newspapers provide upto-data information and speeches, reports, conferences. New developments in field of education. The current events and educational news are also reported in newspapers. It is also one of the important sources of review of literature.

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| **Books** |
| **Journals –****scholarly/popular** |
| **Research papers** |
| **Theses/ Dissertations** |
| **Conference proceedings** |
| **Web sites (URLs)** |
| **Government documents** |
| **Legislation** |
| **Standards** |
| **Statistics** |
| **Bibliographies** |
| **Encyclopaedias/ Dictionaries** |
| **Newspapers** |

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**Assessment of quality of journals and articles**

# Assessing Journal quality

# Journal Rankings

Librarians are frequently asked to provide rankings of journals in particular disciplines. Though there are many supposedly authoritative lists that rank journals, it might be wise to heed the motto caveat lector. The problem is who is the “authority" behind the “authoritative"? And how is he/she/they qualified to be authoritative? Some rankings are essentially based on people’s opinions, e.g. faculty is asked to rank journals in their fields. A common problem with such surveys is that the resultant lists often ignore journals focusing on more out of the way disciplinary areas; frequently they disproportionately represent American journals; and they often do not give appropriate attention to newer journals. Even when journal ranking lists utilize bibliometrics one should bear in mind that no single metric, each having a specific focus and bias, can address all relevant variables. Moreover, while a particular metric might be useful for one subject area, it might be quite inappropriate for another. An interesting discussion of three major journal ranking lists and the criticism leveled at all three is available in a 2010 article “The Controversial Policies of Journal Rankings: Evaluating Social Sciences and Humanities."

# Quality of Specific Journals

Sometimes, the question asked of librarians is “How can I tell if this journal is of good scholarly worth". To provide a definitive answer is usually difficult without first agreeing on a set of quite precise evaluative criteria. Obviously, when such criteria change, the answer often changes.

# Some Criteria for Evaluating Journals:

## a) Impact Factor

A journal’s Impact Factor (IF) is often used to judge the quality of a journal. One may use the database [Journal Citation Reports](http://proxy.bc.edu/login?url=http://isiknowledge.com/jcr) (JCR) to assess the IF of roughly 11,000 Institute of Scientific Information (ISI) journals. The IF is the frequency with which articles from a journal published in the past two years have been cited in a particular year. ISI’s IF is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations by the total number of articles published in the two previous years. An IF of 2.0 signifies that, on average, the articles published one or two years ago have been cited twice.

There are numerous question marks associated with IFs. Only a small number of journals have IFs, i.e. only those journals indexed by JCR (over 8,000 journals in Science and 2,700 in the Social Sciences). Humanities journals are not represented. There is a heavy emphasis on North American titles. With the exception of British and Dutch titles, journals from other countries are not well represented. Moreover, English language journals predominate. Journals that publish longer articles with more citations tend to have higher IFs. Journals that publish survey or review articles are often more heavily cited than journals that do not include such documents. In like manner, journals which have editorials, correspondence, reports of meetings, all of which may be cited, can often have much higher IFs than journals that do not. There is no correction for self citations which are often numerous. Citations in books are not included. Most journals tend to have articles which end up with a wide range of citations. Some may be heavily cited, some a little, some not at all. Thus, it may be quite misleading to judge an article based on the IF of the journal in which it is published. In addition, whatever value IFs have, they can only be used to compare journals within the same discipline. Comparing IFs of journals in different subject areas may be valueless. For example, according to Journal Citation Reports, the medical journal with the highest IF for 2010 is New Journal of Medicine (IF 53.486). However, the journal with the highest IF for journals in veterinary studies, Veterinary Research, only has an IF of 3.765. Clearly it can be meaningless to compare the IFs for journals in different fields.

Another problem is using a journal’s IF to assess the scholarly worth of an author who has published in it. One cannot adequately assess an author’s work based on a single metric. As David Tempest, Associate Director of Research and Academic Relations for Elsevier, [stated](http://community.thomsonreuters.com/t5/Citation-Impact-Center/Thomson-Reuters-Speaks-with-David-Tempest-Elsevier/ba-p/718) “The papers that an individual published could be zero-cited in a journal with an Impact Factor of 50. Taking the journal’s position as a proxy for individual quality can be misleading." Proper assessment of an author’s scholarship should be based on a thorough examination of his/her scholarship by experts in that subject area and not by some metric judging the media where he/she has published.

A portal that complements the metrics of Journal Citation Reports and that may be useful for ranking both journals and assessing a journal’s quality is [SCImago Journal & Country Rank](http://www.scimagojr.com/aboutus.php). This platform shows the visibility of the journals contained in the [Scopus®](http://www.scopus.com/home.url) database from 1996 (BC Libraries presently do not provide access to Scopus).

## b) Google Scholar Metrics

Another tool, the recently introduced [Google Scholar Metrics](http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/metrics.html) (GSM), offers potentially strong competition to ISI’s Journal Citation Report’s Impact Factor. Utilizing GSM’s citation metrics one may gauge the visibility and influence of recent articles in scholarly journals. Particularly interesting is GSM’s listing of the [top 100 publications in several languages](http://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues), ordered by their five-year h-index and h-median metrics. Information about GSM’s “h" indices and other bibliometrics employed is available [here](http://scholar.google.com/intl/en/scholar/metrics.html).

## c) Eigen factor Score and Article Influence Score

Like the Impact Factor, the Eigen factor score and Article Influence score use citation data to evaluate the influence of a journal in relation to other journals. Eigen factor uses data gathered for five years to calculate how often articles from the journal have been cited. It takes account of which journals have cited the journal in question so that highly cited journals will influence the network more than lesser cited journals. There is a check on journal self citation, e.g. references from one article to another article in the same journal are removed. “The Article Influence determines the average influence of a journal's articles over the first five years after publication. It is calculated by dividing a journal’s Eigenfactor Score by the number of articles in the journal, normalized as a fraction of all articles in all publications. This measure is roughly analogous to the 5-Year Journal Impact Factor in that it is a ratio of a journal’s citation influence to the size of the journal’s article contribution over a period of five years. The mean Article Influence Score is 1.00. A score greater than 1.00 indicates that each article in the journal has above-average influence. A score less than 1.00 indicates that each article in the journal has below-average influence." The database JCR provides the Eigenfactor and Article Influence scores for its journals.

## d) Who’s the publisher?

A hint about journal quality may be provided by the society, association, organization publishing it. Prestigious organizations like the American Psychological Association, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, American Medical Association, and so on publish a number of journals that tend to be very well respected. Still, smaller, less well known scholarly bodies may publish highly regarded journals and though they may be read far less often than some of the better known journals this does not, of course, necessarily detract from their scholarly value.

## e) Editorial Board

The scholarly reputation of the members of the editorial board may provide tips about the quality of the journal. However, though useful, this strategy is clearly open to strong elements of subjectivity.

## f) Where Indexed

Where a journal is indexed may give a clue as to its quality. The database [UlrichsWeb Global Serials Directory](http://proxy.bc.edu/login?url=http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/) provides detailed indexing information on over 300,000 journals, both academic and popular. Of course, it isn’t necessarily the case that if a journal is widely indexed its value is higher.

## g) Journal Acceptance/Rejection Rates

Methods for determining acceptance/rejection rates may differ from journal to journal. Journal X may calculate the acceptance rate based on the number of articles accepted out of all articles submitted. Journal Y may calculate the rate from the number of articles accepted out of the articles sent out for peer review. In the latter case Journal Y will have a higher acceptance rate. Another factor is the disciplinary area. A subject area for which few scholars write articles may have a higher acceptance rate than other more popular subject areas. There are strategies for locating acceptance/rejection rates. Sometimes they may be located by looking at the information for authors or submission guidelines found on a journal’s website. Another strategy useful for some subject areas is to access the Library database [Cabell’s Directories of Publishing Opportunities](http://proxy.bc.edu/login?url=http://www.cabells.com/members.aspx): Business Directories (Accounting, Economics & Finance, Management, Marketing); Educational Directories (Educational Curriculum & Methods, Educational Psychology & Administration, Educational Technology & Library Science). These Cabell directories frequently include journal acceptance/rejection rates.

## h) Peer-Reviewed

A traditional criterion for evaluating the quality of a journal is to ascertain whether it is peer reviewed (refereed) or not. However, the challenge here is that often there is a very wide range of quality in peer reviewed journals. A journal declaring itself to be peer reviewed does not necessarily indicate that it possesses high scholarly quality and prestige. One may consult the database [UlrichsWeb Global Serials Directory](http://proxy.bc.edu/login?url=http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/) to determine if a journal is peer-reviewed.

## i) Are publication fees required?

Many open access journals require authors to pay publication fees. This is not necessarily a red flag. Numerous quality OA journals, some very prestigious, have a system of “author pays". However, there’s the swiftly growing problem of sham journals whose sole rationale is to make a profit. Such journals, often with very credible scholarly names, will charge authors high publication fees and will publish most articles submitted. They are clearly fake journals and it’s likely that more and more serious academics are being caught in the trap. A useful resource for determining some of these spurious journals is Jeffrey Beall's [List of Predatory, Open-Access Publishers](http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/).

There are other strategies and metrics by means of which journals might be ranked and/or evaluated. However, in common with those discussed above they invariably tend to contain an element, often strong, of subjectivity and arbitrariness. Feel free to talk to librarians for further details about these issues.

**Reasons to Assess Scholarly Journals**

1. Libraries can’t afford to subscribe to all journals and need to be able to determine which journals are most essential, appropriate and important to researchers. This is particularly true when the library is trying to assess/cut journals.

2. Scholars need to know which journals are best suited to their research when they are deciding which journals to submit articles to.

3. University faculty who are trying to make promotion and tenure decisions can use this information when evaluating and measuring the quality and impact of other faculty member’s research and publications.

**Citation Analysis**

A high number of citations generally indicates a high level of quality. Cited reference searching enables you to find articles from journals that have cited a book, a patent or another article. Through a cited reference search, you can discover how a known idea or innovation has been confirmed, applied, improved, extended or corrected. Article citations also may be the best way to assess the merits of a particular author or article.

[Web of Science](http://www.lib.auburn.edu/SCI)

* Today the ISI database covers over 16,000 international journals, books and proceedings in the sciences, social sciences and arts and humanities.

**Impact Factor**

Impact factor is based on the number of times that articles in a journal are cited in the two years following the year of publication. The impact factor of a journal is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations to the source items published in that journal during the previous two years. The

[**Journal Citation Reports**](http://www.lib.auburn.edu/JCR) (JCR) can provide Impact Factors and Times Cited for journals for more than 8,400 of the world's most highly cited, peer reviewed journals in approximately 200 disciplines. High impact factor or highly cited journals are considered more prestigious and important.

* [JCR Fact Sheet](http://science.thomsonreuters.com/now/elqNow/elqRedir.htm?ref=http://wokinfo.com/media/pdf/jcrwebfs.pdf) (PDF)
* [Impact Factor Debate](http://www.elsevier.com/framework_editors/pdfs/Perspectives1.pdf) (PDF)

[**Harzing's Publish or Perish (PoP)**](http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm) is another resource that provides statistics and metrics for academic citations. PoP is a free software that draws its data from Google Scholar. It is recommended for assessing impact in the social sciences, arts and humanities, and engineering.

**Prestige & Reputation of the Journal**

The prestige and reputation of the association, society, or organization publishing a journal can be a determining factor. Theoretically, the most prestigious scholarly associations such as APA, IEEE, etc. publish the best, most important, research in the field and therefore their journals have more prestige and weight than others. There are a handful of scholarly journals that are known by reputation throughout the world, such as *JAMA*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, *Science* and *Nature*. These scholarly journals are known and read by both people within the scholarly discipline and people outside the scholarly discipline.

**In-depth Knowledge of the Field and Journals in the Field**

This method holds the most weight and is the most difficult criteria to obtain. Few people have knowledge of, and familiarity with all scholarly journals in a discipline since there are thousands of journals for any given discipline. However, among sub-disciplines, it becomes more possible to possess in-depth familiarity with the journals. If someone does truly possess this knowledge, their opinion, of which are the “best” journals in a discipline is worth a great deal in assessment.

**Acceptance/Rejection Rate of the Journal**

The acceptance and rejection rates of journals can be a determining factor. Low acceptance rate, high rejection rate journals are considered the best and most prestigious journals. These acceptance and rejection rates can be found in directories of periodicals in certain disciplines. Many journals and societies have web pages that give publication data and style requirements and often includes acceptance/rejection rates. The paper copy of the journal occasionally includes this data and will always provide current contact information.

* [**Periodical Guide**](http://www.lib.auburn.edu/socsci/docs/rejecrates.htm)

**Indexing Services Covering the Journal**

Whether a journal is indexed in the major indexing/abstracting service in the field is another criteria that can be used to assess the worth and quality of a journal.

**Total Circulation of the Journal**

This is another method which could be used to assess the quality of a journal. High readership and circulation could be markers of a journal's quality and/or popularity. Circulation numbers can be often be found at the journal publisher's website.

# How to Evaluate Journal Articles

To evaluate a journal article look for:

* **Purpose of Article:** Why was the article written? To:
	+ Persuade the reader to do something?

For example: vote a certain way, purchase an item, attend an event

* + Inform the reader?

For example: results of a study/experiment, what happened at an event

* + Prove something?

For example: that a behavior is bad/good, a method works/doesn't work

* **Type of Journal:** For college-level term papers, information should be obtained mostly from **scholarly** journals.
	+ Scholarly Journals contain articles describing high quality research that has been reviewed by experts in the field prior to publication.
	+ Trade magazines may be useful for topics in business or where economic data is needed. There are also good for learning what the current "hot topics" are in an area.
	+ Popular magazines, such as Time and Newsweek, should be used sparingly, or not at all.
* **Organization and Content:** Is the material organized and focused? Is the argument or presentation understandable? Is this original research, a review of previous research, or an informative piece?
* **Bias** (of the publisher): Some publications have an inherent bias that will impact articles printed in them. Is the journal:
	+ left/liberal?
	+ right/conservative?
	+ center?
	+ an alternative press?
	+ published by a political action (PAC) group?

[Magazines for Libraries](http://lib.colostate.edu/howto/keyjrl.html) (Z6941 .M23 17th 2008 INFO DESK) identifies ideological slants for 6076 periodicals. This is a small percentage of all periodicals available, but the book is still very useful because it describes journals that are likely to be in libraries. It also is a good place to identify journals in a particular subject area.

* **Date of Article:** Some topics, such as those in the health sciences, require current information. Other subjects, such as geology, value older material as well as current. Know the time needs of your topic and examine the timeliness of the article; is it:
	+ up-to-date,
	+ out-of-date, or
	+ timeless?
* **Bibliography:** Scholarly works always contain a bibliography of the resources that were consulted. The references in this list should be in sufficient quantity and be appropriate for the content. Look for:
	+ if a bibliography exists,
	+ if the bibliography is short or long,
	+ if the bibliography is selective or comprehensive,
	+ if the references are primary sources (ex. journal articles) or only secondary sources (ex. encyclopedias),
	+ if the references are contemporary to the article or much older, and
	+ if the citation style is clear and consistent.
* **Usefulness**: Is the article relevant to the current research project? A well-researched, well-written, etc. article is not going to be helpful if it does not address the topic at hand. Ask, "is this article useful to me?" If it is a useful article, does it:
	+ support an argument
	+ refute an argument
	+ give examples (survey results, primary research findings, case studies, incidents)
	+ provide "wrong" information that can be challenged or disagreed with productively
* **Authority:** Is the author an expert in this field? Where is the author employed? What else has he/she written? Has he/she won awards or honors?
* **Coverage:** Does the article cover the topic comprehensively, partially, or is it an overview?
* **Audience:** For what type of reader is the author writing? This ties in with the type of journal, as popular magazine are geared to the general reader, while trade magazines are for the specialist and scholarly journals are directed at researchers, scholars or experts in the field. Is the article for:
	+ general readers,
	+ students (high school, college, graduate),
	+ specialists or professionals,
	+ researchers or scholars?
* **Illustrations:** Are charts, graphs, maps, photographs, etc. used to illustrate concepts? Are the illustrations relevant? Are they clear and professional-looking?

# Literature Review Guidelines

## General Considerations

* A good review should summarize the state of knowledge on a well-defined topic in the psychology of men and masculinity in concise and clear ways. This means that the review is written with exceptional clarity, cohesiveness, conciseness, and comprehensiveness.
* A good review should describe in detail the systematic process or method that was used in doing the literature review. There are articulated ways to do "narrative reviews" just as there are ways of doing experiments or meta-analyses (Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Bem, 1995).

## Essential Elements for a Review

* Focus on an important, relevant, and operationally defined topic in the psychology of men and masculinity, and make a strong case for why a literature review of this topic is important.
* Include a critical and inclusive review of previous theory related to the relevant topic. "Critical" means that the literature review reveals problems, contradictions, controversies, strengths, next steps, and potentials in the theories. "Inclusive" means that there is an active evaluation of all of the theory relevant to the topic.
* Include a critical and inclusive review of previous empirical research related to the relevant topic.
* Critically analyze the distinction between authors' interpretation of their data and the actual empirical evidence presented. A good review critically analyses how accurately previous authors have reported their findings and whether they have refrained from asserting conclusions not supported by data
* Discuss the methodological diversity of studies reported in the literature review and the implications of this diversity for new knowledge or future research
* Raise provocative and innovative questions on the topic not discussed before in the literature.
* Write the review so that theoretical knowledge and empirical research is significantly advanced in the psychology of men and masculinity, and that there is an overall contribution to the field's theory, research, and clinical practice.
* Include many "take home messages" (Sternberg, 1991) that generate new theories and empirical research.

## Sections That Might Be Included in a Review

* Provide a historical account or background of the development of the theory or research program reviewed.
* Include persuasive arguments and articulated points of view on the topic from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.
* Propose novel conceptualizations or theories based on reviews of previous theories and empirical research.
* Propose new research paradigms or testable hypotheses that advance future research.
* Propose new therapeutic paradigms or testable hypotheses that advance clinical practice/psychoeducational programming with men.
* Address the frequent gap between reporting theory/research and interpreting the meaning of the theory and research.

It is not expected that reviews will be able to meet all of the above-listed criteria but authors should meet many of them.

# Recording of Research review

# Learn how to write a review of literature.

##

## What is a review of literature?

The format of a review of literature may vary from discipline to discipline and from assignment to assignment.

A review may be a self-contained unit -- an end in itself -- or a preface to and rationale for engaging in primary research. A review is a required part of grant and research proposals and often a chapter in theses and dissertations.

Generally, the purpose of a review is to analyze critically a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles.

##

## Writing the introduction

In the introduction, you should:

* Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature.
* Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
* Establish the writer's reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature; explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence); and, when necessary, state why certain literature is or is not included (scope).

## Writing the body

In the body, you should:

* Group research studies and other types of literature (reviews, theoretical articles, case studies, etc.) according to common denominators such as qualitative versus quantitative approaches, conclusions of authors, specific purpose or objective, chronology, etc.
* Summarize individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space (length) denotes significance.
* Provide the reader with strong "umbrella" sentences at beginnings of paragraphs, "signposts" throughout, and brief "so what" summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding comparisons and analyses.

## Writing the conclusion

In the conclusion, you should:

* Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction.
* Evaluate the current "state of the art" for the body of knowledge reviewed, pointing out major methodological flaws or gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory and findings, and areas or issues pertinent to future study.
* Conclude by providing some insight into the relationship between the central topic of the literature review and a larger area of study such as a discipline, a scientific endeavor, or a profession.