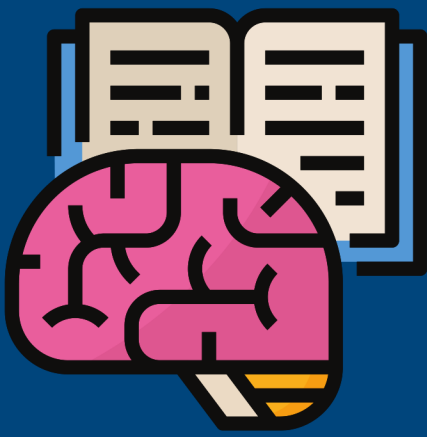


A Quick Guide to LITERATURE REVIEWS

A LIT REVIEW'S PURPOSE



It **summarizes, analyzes, and synthesizes** a topic's main findings from prior research.

It explains your assessments for what is **strong, weak, inconclusive,** and/or **missing** from the existing literature.

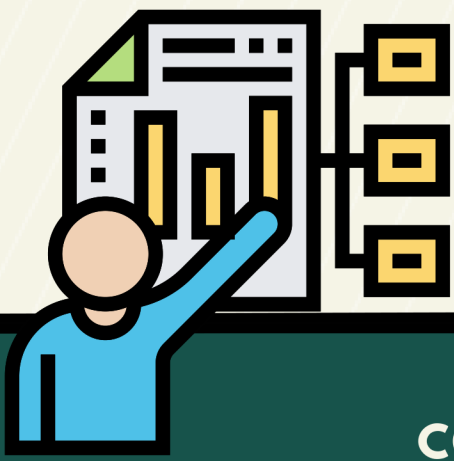
DO THESE FOUR TASKS

IDENTIFY WHAT SIMILAR STUDIES EXAMINED

What did the studies ask?

What did they use?

- Theories, variables, cases, data



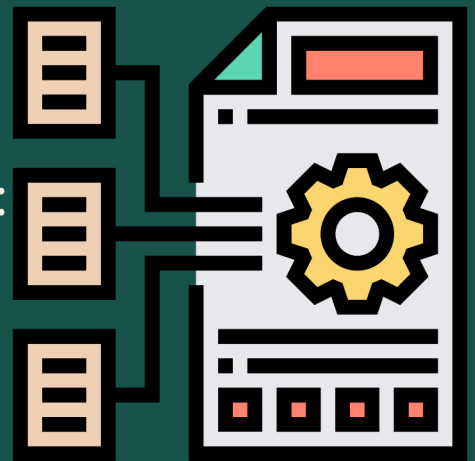
IDENTIFY WHAT EACH STUDY CONCLUDED

What did the researchers find?

SYNTHESIZE THE COLLECTIVE RESULTS

Sort the works into three categories:

- What they agree about
- What they disagree about
- What they overlook



CRITIQUE THE QUALITY & QUANTITY OF THE ACCUMULATED RESEARCH

What are the valid key findings?

Where is more work needed?

- New variables, cases, or theories

ORGANIZE BY THEME OR THEORY

✗ Don't simply summarize each source and its main findings, paragraph by paragraph.

✓ Explain how sources relate to each other.

✓ Synthesize how they inform your research question and planned exploration.



Adapted from Knopf, Jeffery W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics*. 39 (1) (Jan): 127-132.

More Resources [How to critique a text \(Strategic Reading II\)](#)
[GWC Literature Reviews Page](#)
[GWC Literature Reviews Recorded Workshop](#)

