Literature Review Template

Definition: *A literature review is an objective, critical summary of published research literature relevant to a topic under consideration for research. Its purpose is to create familiarity with current thinking and research on a particular topic, and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area.*

1. Introduction:

   • A concise definition of a topic under consideration (this may be a descriptive or argumentative thesis, or proposal), as well as the scope of the related literature being investigated. (Example: If the topic under consideration is 'women's wartime diaries', the scope of the review may be limited to published or unpublished works, works in English, works from a particular location, time period, or conflict, etc.)
   • The introduction should also note intentional exclusions. (Example: "This review will not explore the diaries of adolescent girls.")
   • Another purpose of the introduction is to state the general findings of the review (what do most of the sources conclude), and comment on the availability of sources in the subject area.

2. Main Body:

   • There are many ways to organize the evaluation of the sources. Chronological and thematic approaches are each useful examples.
   • Each work should be critically summarized and evaluated for its premise, methodology, and conclusion. It is as important to address inconsistencies, omissions, and errors, as it is to identify accuracy, depth, and relevance.
   • Use logical connections and transitions to connect sources.

3. Conclusion

   • The conclusion summarizes the key findings of the review in general terms. Notable commonalities between works, whether favorable or not, may be included here.
   • This section is the reviewer's opportunity to justify a research proposal. Therefore, the idea should be clearly re-stated and supported according to the findings of the review.

4. References

   • As well as accurate in-text citations, a literature review must contain complete and correct citations for every source.