

# Literature Reviews: Putting Evidence in Conversation



# Introductions!



Moira (she/hers): sophomore, (undeclared) MAC major

Grace (she/hers): senior, CSLC major, art history minor

Codey (he/him): junior, politics major, classics/philosophy minor

# Outline

Slides 4–6

**Introduction to Literature Reviews**  
What are they and why are they important?

Slides 7–14

**Developing a Critical Lens:**  
Assessing Prior Scholarship and Positioning Your Own Argument

Slides 15–19

**Contextualizing Evidence:**  
Putting Evidence and Its Authors in Conversation

Slides 20–26

**Using Citations:**  
Recognizing How Citations Reflect Understanding of Your Topic

# What is a Literature Review?



A literature review ought to evaluate existing research and position the student's argument/thesis into the literature.

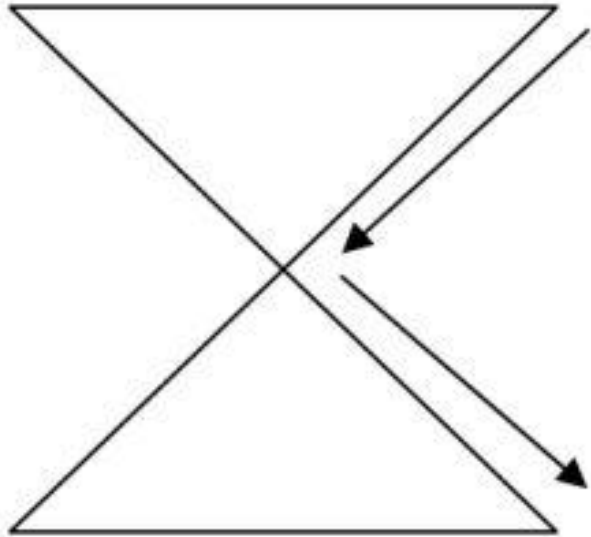
A literature review *should not* merely present and summarize the existing ideas in the field of study the student is researching.

A literature review *should* survey and synthesize the scholarship in relation to the student's claims.

## Academic Importance of Literature Reviews

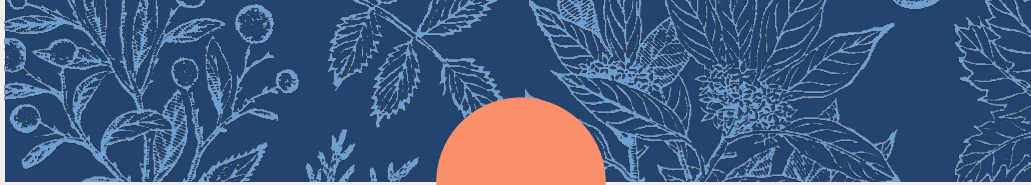
“A literature review establishes familiarity with and understanding of current research in a particular field **before carrying out a new investigation**. Conducting a literature review should enable you to find out what research has already been done and identify what is unknown within your topic.”  
(University of Edinburgh).

## Organizational Pattern of a Literature Review



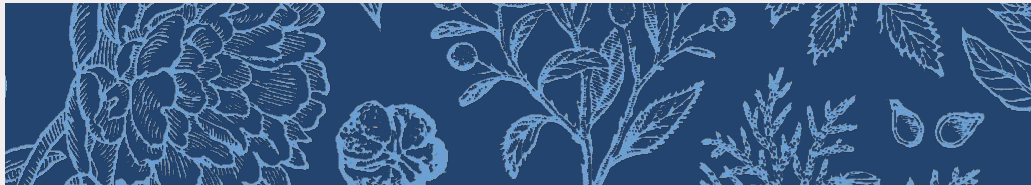
**Literature Review:** Starts broad and narrows to show how past research relates to your project.

**Discussion:** Starts specific by explaining what your results show in relation to your project, then widens out to say what this may mean for the field of research as a whole.



# Developing a Critical Lens

Assessing prior scholarship and positioning your own argument within it.



# What to identify in a Literature Review



- ★ Trends and patterns of particular academic approaches/methods over time
- ★ Concepts/subjects/arguments that are **continually present** across the literature
- ★ **Disagreements and contradictions** in the different sources' theories, methods, and results
- ★ Any influential scholarship that **altered the direction** or understanding of the research being conducted



Topic of  
Research

## Example: Cyber Bullying and Victim Characteristics

While not many studies look at the gender of the victims many studies do research things such as the characteristics of the victims. Faucher et al. (2014) found that there were numerous reasons that people felt they were the victims of cyberbullying such as their personal appearance, interpersonal problems, as well as simply having discrepancies about their views. Davis, Randall, Ambrose, and Orand (2015) also conducted a study about victims and their demographics, which looked at the reasons people, were cyberbullied. Some of the results in the Davis et al. (2015) study addressed other reasons for being bullied in which they found that 14 percent of victims had been bullied because of factors such as their sexual orientation.

Trends in  
Research  
Subject

# Positioning Your Argument



## What are the gaps?

- ★ Subject matter
- ★ Methodology
- ★ Inconsistencies in the literature
- ★ Theoretical disputes

## How does your thesis fit in?

- ★ Assess the gaps in the literature
- ★ Incorporate your thesis at the end of the review
- ★ Acknowledge the future direction of scholarship

# Example: Addressing Gaps and the Future of Research

## The History of Critical Thinking in the American Education System

Clearly additional research is needed. Generally emphasis should shift from the philosophy of critical thinking to the evaluation of critical thinking and critical thinking programs. Detailed comparison between IQ test results and the Critical Thinking instruments is needed in order to ascertain if they are actually measuring different phenomena. Ways of studying critical thinking dispositions or thoughtfulness need to be

# Using Critical Language

## Disagreements about Parts and Wholes

- Source argues that \_\_\_\_\_ is a part of \_\_\_\_\_, but it's not.
- Source argues that one part of \_\_\_\_\_ relates to another in a certain way, but it doesn't.
- Source argues that every \_\_\_\_\_ has \_\_\_\_\_ as one of its parts, but it doesn't.

# Using Critical Language

## Disagreements about History or Development

- Source argues that \_\_\_\_\_ is changing or developing in some way, but it's not.
- Source argues that \_\_\_\_\_ originated in \_\_\_\_\_, but it didn't.

Source argues that grade inflation is increasing, but it isn't.

# Example: Using Critical Language

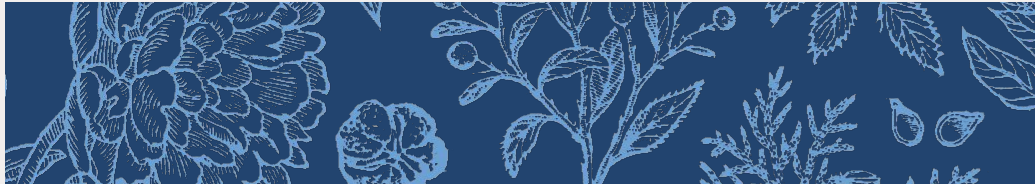
## Media Piracy and its Economic Consequences

musician which inspires them to make legal purchases of their work in the future (Grossman). Even the film industry sees a similar effect. After a recent popular, highly-anticipated movie was leaked on the Internet weeks before its theatrical release, a poll among those who saw the pirated version showed that over 40 percent were still planning on seeing the theatrical version of the film, a figure that would not prove to be economically damaging (Wortham). Other journalists, however, are not so quick to approve of piracy. Warren Kinsella of Canada's *National Post* staunchly disapproves of the act, saying that counterfeiters “cost our economy billions” (Kinsella). Lawrence Lessig of the *Wall Street Journal* attempts to find some sort of middle ground, even proposing ways to prevent music piracy or even legalize it to the point where artists would still be compensated for their work (Lessig). Overall, journalists present a wide variety of opinions on music piracy, fitting for such a controversial issue.



# Contextualizing Evidence

Putting evidence and authors in conversation



# Putting Sources into Conversation:

Useful questions for getting started



- What is the **scope** of the topic?
- What is the **purpose** of the research?
- Who is the **intended** audience?
- What is the **time period**?
- What is the **geographical** coverage?
- What are the **relevant/related disciplines**?



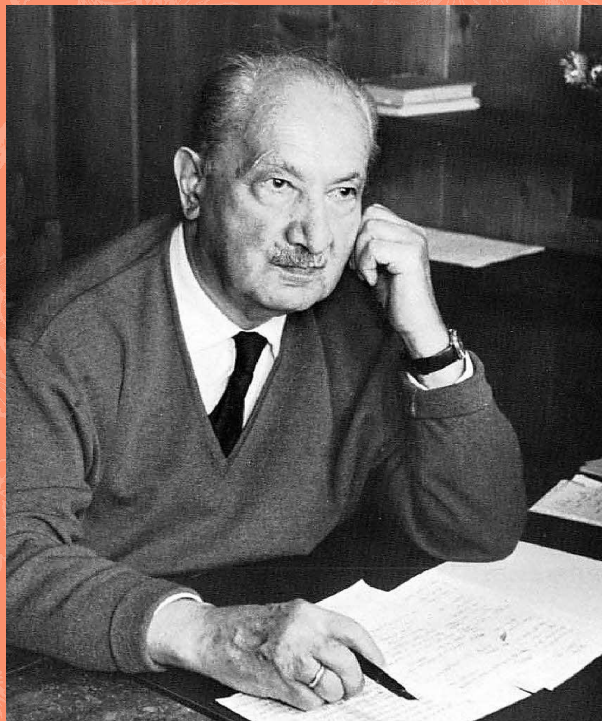
In Voltaire's *Candide*, the title character is a young, naïve man who knows little about the world, and who is thrust into dangerous situations that gradually undoes his perception of his world being "the best of all possible worlds," taught to him by the philosopher and teacher Pangloss (*Candide*, p. 2). Candide starts out sheltered and then gains a greater understanding of the world around him, mostly because of an array of minor characters who teach him something along the way. One of these characters is Pangloss, who represents Voltaire's distaste for overly optimistic and abstract philosophers. Despite Pangloss' perspective, Candide learns the harsh realities of life and learns to be more practical. Candide shows the changing of a naïve, sheltered character into a stronger, more cynical person, in direct opposition to Pangloss' naivete brought upon by privilege - Voltaire uses Pangloss as a way to tear down unrealistic and abstract philosophers of the early 18th century.



**Why is context  
important?**

# Importance of Annotation and Research:

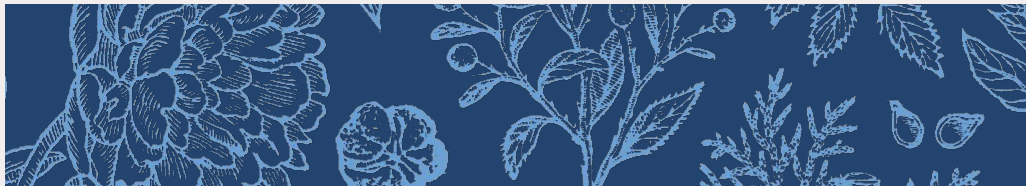
## Giacomo Puccini and Martin Heidegger:





# Using Citations

Recognizing how citations reflect your confidence and understanding of the topic at hand



## A Good Lit Review

- Begins with a solid understanding of your topic
- This base will serve as a foundation for the writer to take the argument further in the research paper.
- Because lit reviews are based upon the work of other authors, footnotes and citations hold significant weight. Using them properly is crucial in writing a lit review.

# A Note On Citations



Citations must always be coupled with synthesis and analysis.

- Synthesis: summary
- Analysis: adds to the greater discourse of your topic (which is ultimately, what you should aim for in every paper you write)

# What role do citations play in demonstrating the writer's understanding of and positioning within the topic?



Recognize the efforts of those who came before you (Ravetz, 1971).

Establish an intellectual network of others in your field (White, 2001).

Gives the reader confidence that you are familiar with the topic at hand (Gilbert, 1977)

Create a list of sources for your reader in order in hopes of preparing new spaces for research (Swales, 1990).

Show a solid recognition of relevant resources in the topic (Bavelas, 1978)

# Citing in Your Lit Review

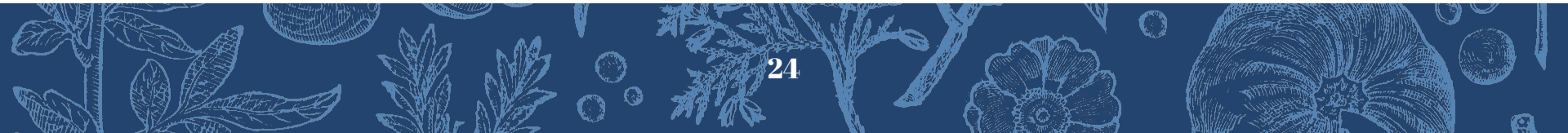


Integral: when you aim to focus the attention on the *researcher*, as opposed to the *research* (Feak and Swales 45) *most often used in humanities—a field that values theorists*

Muehlbach and Walsh (1995) examined the effects of caffeine administered during a night-shift and its effects on subsequent daytime sleep.

Non-integral: when you aim to focus the attention on the *research* (Feak and Swales 45) *most often used in sciences—a field that values findings*

Research indicates that near to 50 percent of night-shift workers extend their normal hours of wakefulness from the average 16 to 24h on the first night-shift of their schedule (Akerstedt, 1995).





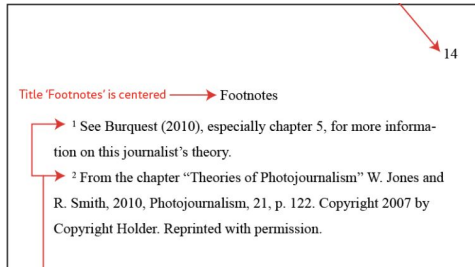
# Footnotes



Purpose:

to cite a source or further explain a topic –USC LibGuides

DIFFERENT from endnotes, which go at the VERY END of a paper and is essentially a list of all the footnotes used in the paper



Journalists examined –over several years<sup>1</sup>— the ancient tools used in photojournalism.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See Burquest (2010), especially chapter 5, for more information on this journalist's theory.

<sup>2</sup> From the chapter "Theories of Photojournalism" W. Jones and R. Smith, 2010, Photojournalism, 21, p. 122. Copyright 2007 by Copyright Holder. Reprinted with permission.

# Footnotes



- can help more interested readers gain more knowledge about your topic (a space where you can put further explanation)
- can point readers to resources that can tell them more

## Works Cited

Duval, Mark. "Music Piracy." *University of Massachusetts Amherst, Research Toolbox, Composing a Literature Review*, 2002. [https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/researchtoolbox/literature\\_review.html](https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/researchtoolbox/literature_review.html)

Maxwell, Tyler. "Cyberbullying: How Physical Intimidation Influences the Way People Are Bullied" *University of West Florida, Sample Literature Review*, n.d. <https://library.famu.edu/c.php?g=577356&p=3982818>

McCombes, Shona. *The Literature Review | A Complete Step-by-Step Guide*. Scribbr, 2019, <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/literature-review/>

"Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: PURPOSE OF GUIDE." *Research Guides*, libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/purpose.

Reece, Gwendolyn. "Critical Thinking and Transferability." *University of Massachusetts Amherst, Research Toolbox, Composing a Literature Review*, 2002. [https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/researchtoolbox/literature\\_review.html](https://people.umass.edu/curtis/academics/researchtoolbox/literature_review.html)

Swales, John Malcolm, and Christine B. Feak. *English in Today's Research World*. University of Michigan Press, 2009.

Turabian, K.L., et al. "Ch. 5 Engaging Sources." *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 5th ed., University of Chicago Press, 2019, pp. 66–72.

# THANK YOU FOR COMING!

visit [bit.ly/oxywc](https://bit.ly/oxywc) for more resources or to schedule an appointment with us.

Follow [@oxywritingcenter!](https://twitter.com/oxywritingcenter)