

The background features a series of thin, black, intersecting lines that form various geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, creating a complex, abstract pattern.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

A COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY  
OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON A  
TOPIC

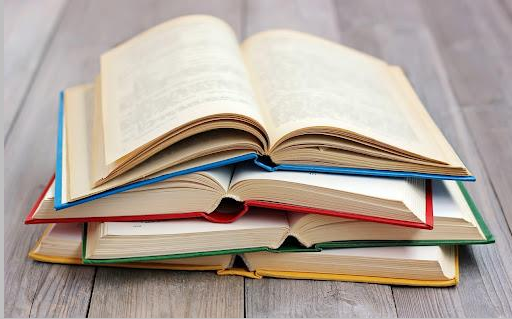
LIZ LAZARUS  
JENNIFER T. RUIZ  
AMANDA SEPULVEDA

# 5 SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITE A LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Search for relevant literature on the topic you wish to discuss.
2. Evaluate and select sources
3. Identify themes, debates, and gaps.
4. Outline the structure of your lit review
5. Write it!



# STEP ONE: SEARCH FOR RELEVANT LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC YOU WISH TO DISCUSS.



## SCHOLARLY DATABASES:

PUBMED

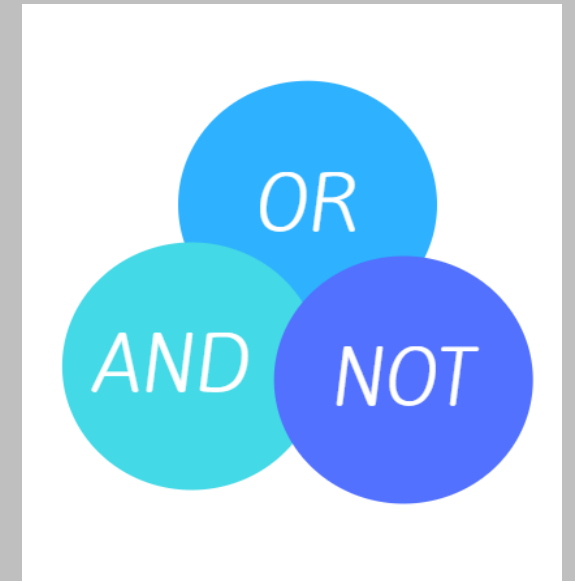
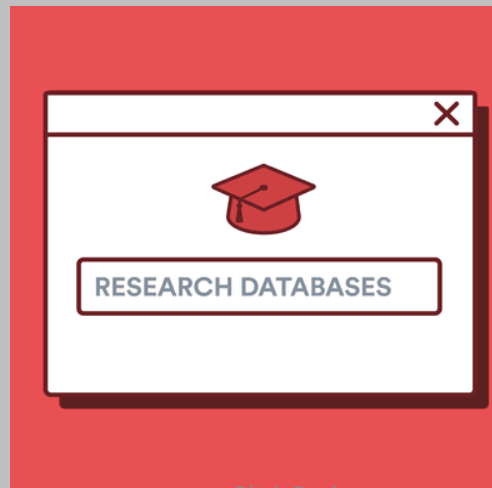
JSTOR

SCIENCE DIRECT

GOOGLE SCHOLAR

ONESEARCH THROUGH THE  
HUNTER COLLEGE LIBRARY  
WEBSITE

LITERATURE = ANY  
TYPE OF ACADEMIC  
SOURCES LIKE  
BOOKS OR JOURNAL  
ARTICLES ABOUT  
YOUR TOPIC



BOOLEAN OPERATORS  
=AND, OR, NOT OR  
AND NOT

## STEP TWO: EVALUATE AND SELECT SOURCES

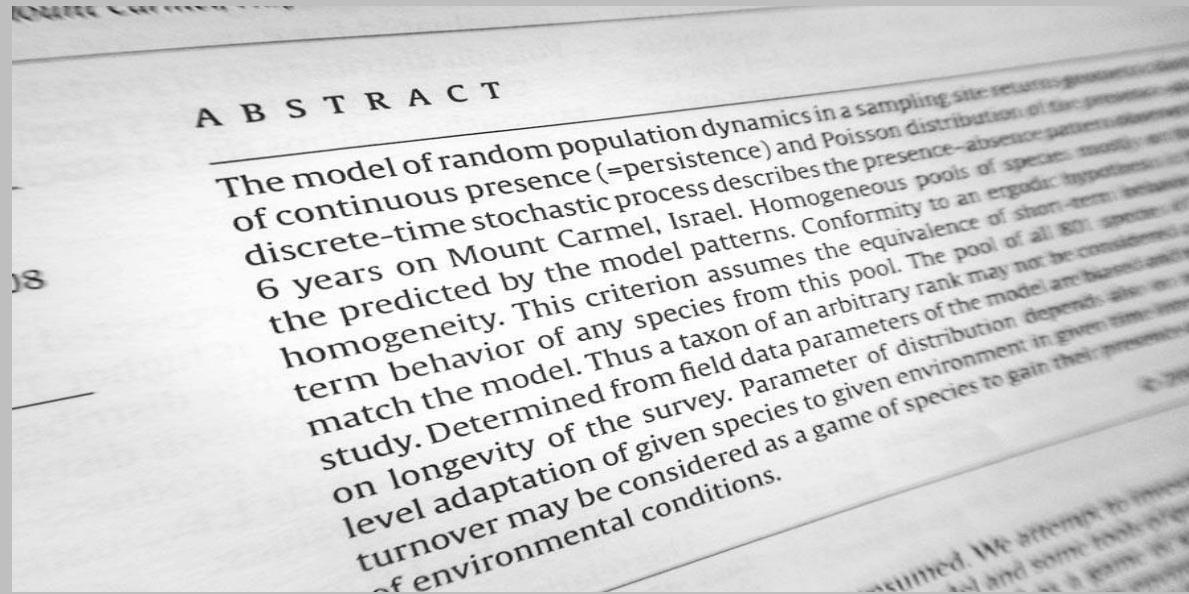
1. Reading through  
the abstract

2. Scanning the  
bibliography

3. Looking at the  
citation count



# 1. READING THROUGH THE ABSTRACT



## 2. SCANNING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY



### 3. LOOKING AT THE CITATION COUNT

The logo for Google Scholar Citations is centered on a white rectangular background. The word "Google" is in its signature multi-colored font (blue, red, yellow, green, blue, red). "Scholar" is in a grey sans-serif font. "Citations" is in a blue sans-serif font, with the "i" and "t" in red and the "a" in blue.

Google Scholar  
Citations

## STEP THREE: IDENTIFY THEMES, DEBATES, AND GAPS.

Important things to look for:

- Trends
- Patterns
- Theories
- Methods
- Results
- Themes
- Debates or contradictions
- Influential studies
- And Gaps





# STEP FOUR: OUTLINE THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR LIT REVIEW

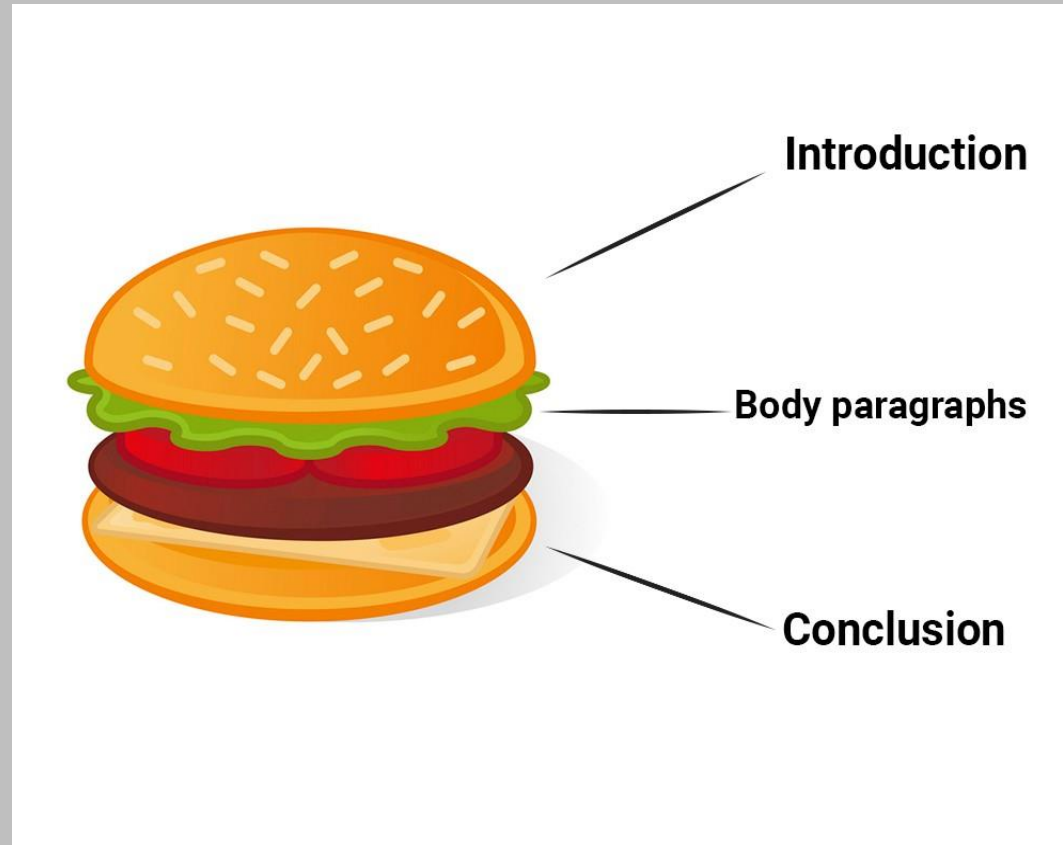
4 common approaches in structuring the literature review

1. Chronological
  - from older to more recent publications
2. Thematic
  - organized around several key themes
3. Methodological
  - You can compare the different research methods being used across studies
4. Theoretical
  - It's used to discuss opposing theories or models

add text



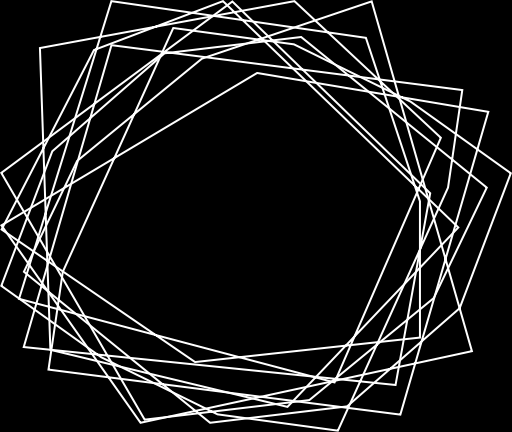
# STEP FIVE: WRITE IT!



A series of thin, black, intersecting lines forming a complex, abstract geometric pattern. The lines are scattered across the upper and middle portions of the page, creating a sense of movement and structure. Some lines are parallel, while others cross at various angles, creating a network of small, irregular shapes.

**TEN SIMPLE RULES FOR  
WRITING A LITERATURE  
REVIEW**

Marco Pautasso, 2013



THERE IS A LOT OF RESEARCH OUT THERE!

MALARIA

THE NUMBER  
OF PUBLICATIONS  
FROM 1991-2008  
INCREASED 3 TIMES  
WHAT ALREADY  
EXISTED!

OBESITY

THE NUMBER  
OF PUBLICATIONS  
FROM 1991-2008  
INCREASED 8 TIMES  
WHAT ALREADY  
EXISTED!

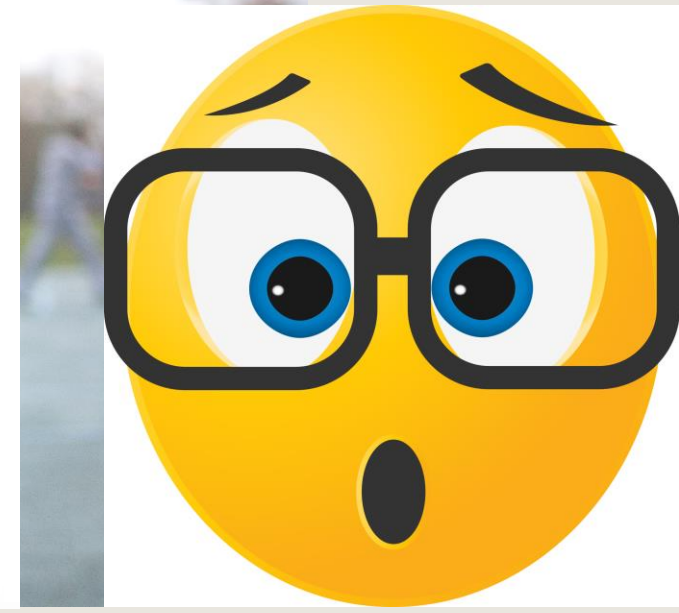
BIO  
DIVERSITY

THE NUMBER  
OF PUBLICATIONS  
FROM 1991-2008  
INCREASED 40 TIMES  
WHAT ALREADY  
EXISTED!



That's a lot of  
research  
and information!

# WHAT ABOUT RESEARCH PUBLISHED BETWEEN 2008-2021?!



# GENERAL LITERATURE REVIEW RULE: **USE RESEARCH WITHIN THE PAST 20(?) YEARS**

**2001**

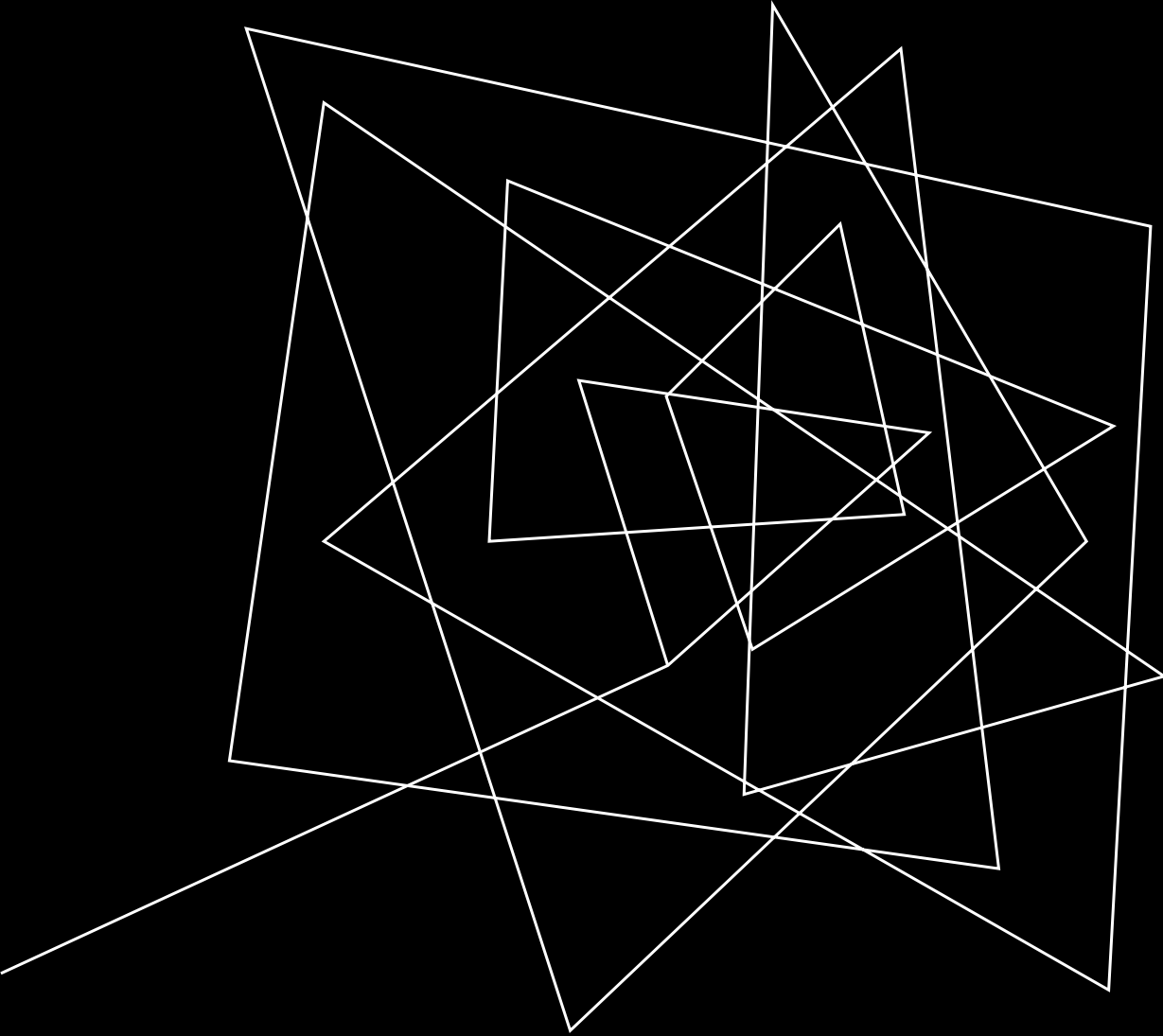
Jan. Feb. March April May June July August Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.

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**2021**

Jan. Feb. March April May June July August Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec.

**(Advice from Jonathan Prince, professor at Silberman School of Social Work)**



A LITERATURE  
REVIEW  
SUMMARIZES  
PREVIOUS  
RESEARCH ON A  
CERTAIN TOPIC

A series of thin, black, intersecting lines forming a complex, abstract geometric pattern that frames the text on the left side of the slide.

**IF IT'S DONE WELL,  
IT'S VERY USEFUL!**

A solid black circle containing white text, positioned on the right side of the slide.

**How?!**

How to make it high-quality?!



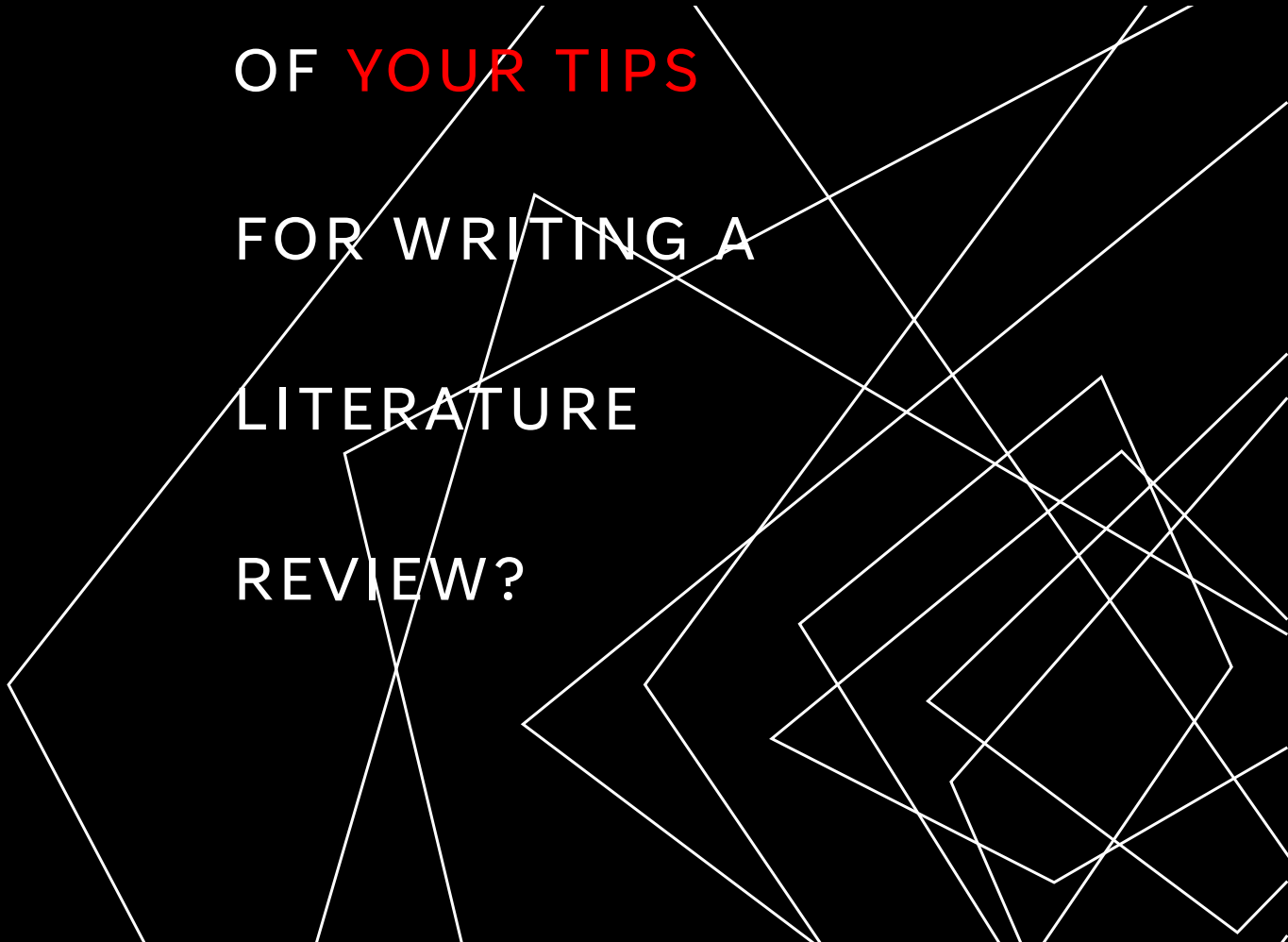
WHAT ARE SOME

OF **YOUR TIPS**

FOR WRITING A

LITERATURE

REVIEW?



# RULE #1

## Define a Topic and Audience

- Is it interesting to you?
- Is it important to the field?
- Is it well-defined?

**Clarity is important.**

# RULE #2

## Search and Re-Search

- Keep track of searches.
- Keep a list of papers you cannot access immediately.
- Use a paper management system.
- Define early in the process some criteria for excluding irrelevant papers.
- Look for previous literature reviews.



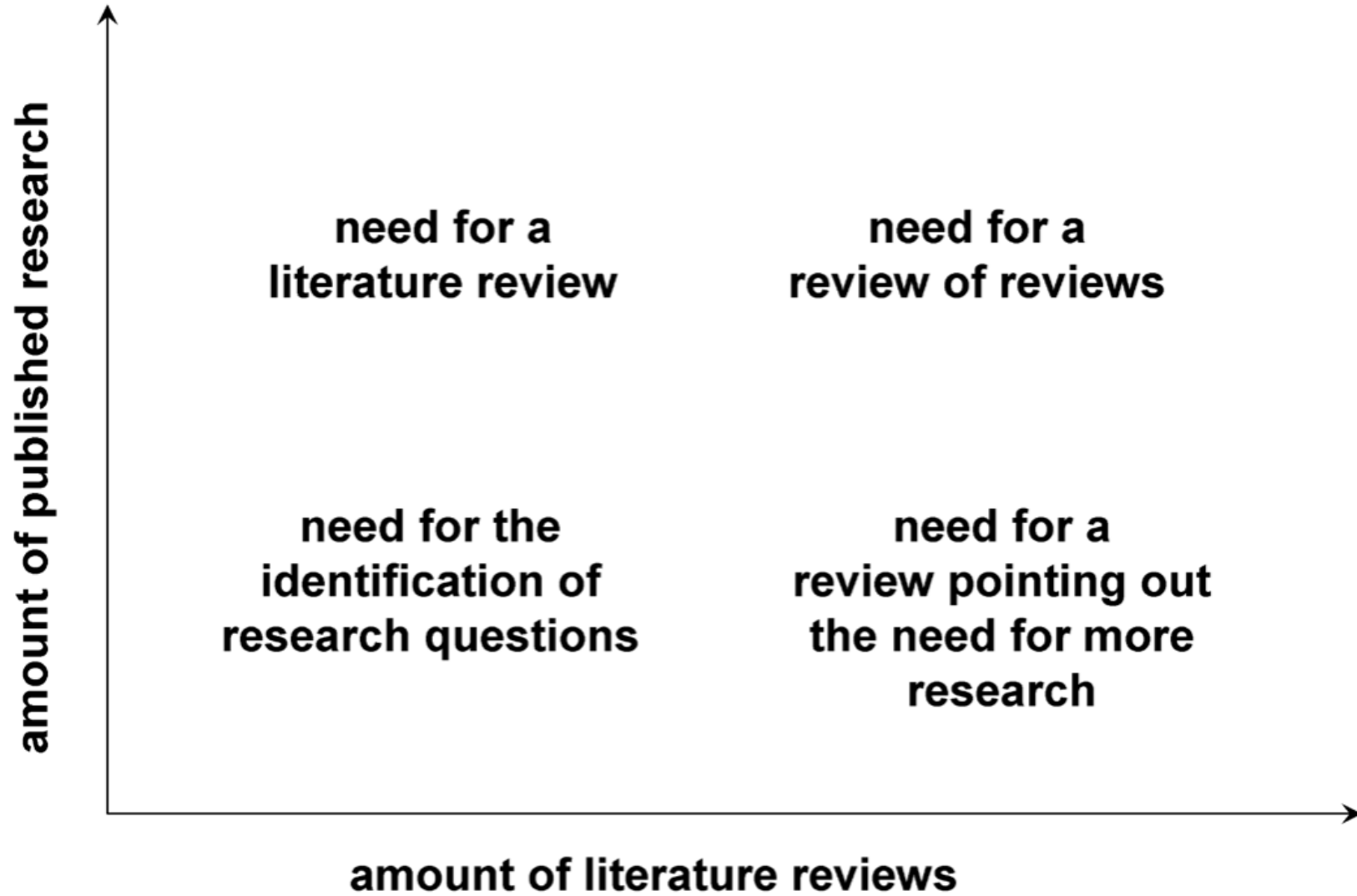
“Don’t believe everything you read on the Internet just because there’s a picture with a quote next to it.”

—Abraham Lincoln

**Stay Organized!**

DID YOU FIND MANY RESEARCH STUDIES?  
DID YOU FIND ANY PREVIOUS LITERATURE REVIEWS?

**WHAT YOU FIND INFORMS YOUR DIRECTION**



# GATHERING LITERATURE FOR YOUR REVIEW:

BE THOROUGH

USE DIFFERENT KEYWORDS AND DATABASE SOURCES  
(E.G., DBLP, GOOGLE SCHOLAR, ISI PROCEEDINGS,  
JSTOR SEARCH, MEDLINE, SCOPUS, WEB OF SCIENCE)

LOOK AT WHO HAS CITED PAST RELEVANT PAPERS AND  
BOOK CHAPTERS

(LOOK FOR PRIMARY SOURCES IN REFERENCE LISTS)



## TIPS FOR REVIEWING PREVIOUS LITERATURE REVIEWS

DISCUSS IN YOUR REVIEW THE APPROACHES, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS OF PAST REVIEWS

TRY TO FIND A NEW ANGLE THAT HAS NOT BEEN COVERED ADEQUATELY IN PREVIOUS REVIEWS

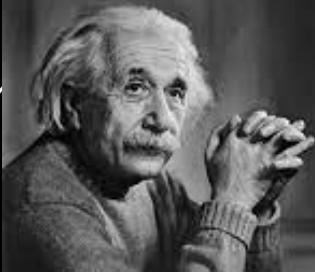
INCORPORATING NEW MATERIAL THAT HAS INEVITABLY ACCUMULATED SINCE THEIR APPEARANCE.

# RULE #3

## Take Notes While Reading!

If you can't explain it **simply**, you  
don't understand it well enough.

– Albert Einstein



# RULE #4

## CHOOSE TYPE OF REVIEW

"When systematic reviews analyze quantitative results in a quantitative way, they become meta-analyses."

MINI

FULL

Mini reviews are shorter and limited to recent research

Full reviews are longer and more detailed

DESCRIPTIVE

INTEGRATIVE

Descriptive reviews describe methodology, findings and interpretation of each reviewed study

Integrative reviews find common ideas and concepts from reviewed studies

NARRATIVE

SYSTEMATIC

Narrative Reviews are qualitative.

Systematic Reviews test a hypothesis based on published evidence.



# RULE #5

## Stay Focused!

- Make sure what you're including is relevant. If it doesn't need to be included, leave it out.
- Remember your audience.
- Make sure to keep it broad enough to include all that you can within relevant boundaries.

## STEP SIX: BE CRITICAL AND CONSISTENT

### What exactly makes a good review?

- Discusses the content critically
- Identifies methodological problems
- Points out gaps in the research

### What should you look out for?

- Major achievements in reviewed field
- Main areas of debate
- Outstanding research questions

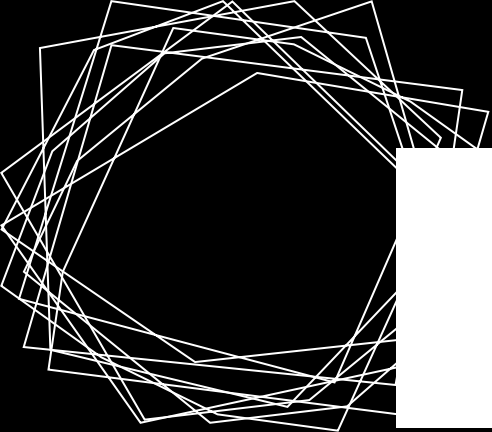
## STEP SIX: BE CRITICAL AND

### What to look out for when looking at authors work?

- They have done excellent mapping of what has been achieved
- Good at identifying dark clouds on the horizon
- Knack for predicting where the solutions are coming from.

### Pro Tip:

- Remember a literature review needs to have consistency.
- This means that the voice and tense is the same throughout the piece.



## STEP SEVEN: FIND A LOGICAL STRUCTURE

### IMPORTANT FEATURES

- Worth the reader's time
  - Timely
  - Systematic
- Well written; Good Structure
  - Focused
  - Critical

### COMPONENTS

- General introduction with context
- Towards the end main points will be covered and take home messages given
  - Systematic Reviews:
  - Include information about how literature was searched (databases, keywords, time limits).

### ORGANIZE FLOW

- Draw conceptual scheme of the review (mind mapping techniques like diagrams)

## STEP EIGHT: MAKE USE OF FEEDBACK

- Incorporating feedback from reviewers greatly helps improve a review draft.

Having read the review with a fresh mind, reviewers may spot inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and ambiguities not noticed by the writers due to rereading the typescript too many times.

- Re-read the draft one more time before submission for any last minute grammatical errors and sentence structure that can hinder how the reader understands the information you are trying to present.

Feedback should be sought from colleagues. Doing this helps with having a diverse view on the topic as well as shows varying meanings of the issue you are writing on.

## STEP NINE: INCLUDE YOUR OWN RELEVANT RESEARCH, BUT BE OBJECTIVE

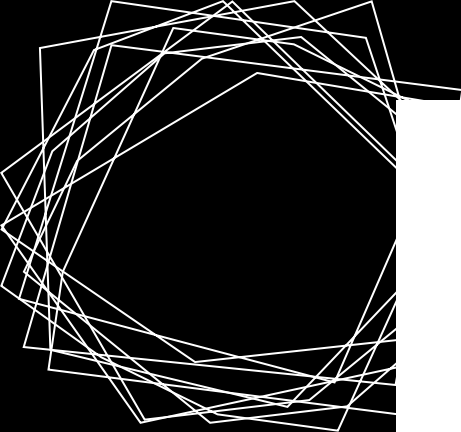
- Reviewers of the literature will have published studies relevant to the review they are writing.
  - This could create a conflict of interest so...
- How can reviewers report objectively on their own work?

For example:

- A writer can be overly enthusiastic about the work they are doing and therefore heighten the importance of the work they have done.
- This would be a bias for the importance of their work.
- The same can go when a writer undermines their own research. It can give the reader the perspective that this work is not important to further. There has to be balance!

- The reviewer needs to be objective in reviewing one's own relevant findings.

- In reviews written by multiple authors, this may be achieved by assigning the review of the results of a coauthor to different coauthors.



## STEP TEN: BE UP-TO-DATE, BUT DO NOT FORGET OLDER STUDIES

1

It is important to be aware of the totality of research when looking into sources for a particular topic. You should not look at just of the overall direction and achievements of a field of inquiry, but also of the latest studies, so as not to become out-of-date before they have been published.

2

A Literature review should not identify a major gap that has been previously addressed in other research.

What should happen is to be aware of online resources and their respective “noticings” on the same topic.

3

Assessing the contribution of papers that have just appeared is particularly challenging, because there is little perspective with which to gauge their significance and impact on further research and society.