

**Research Proposal Series (Milestone 1)**

**Literature Review: Reading and Writing**

Writing can aid with clarifying your thoughts, so the purpose of this worksheet is to encourage you to start thinking and writing about your research and at the same time reflect on what you have learned in the corresponding GRASP workshop.

**Part 1. Review**

1. **What is a ‘literature review’?** Why are they important, and what do they let researchers do?
2. **Reading for the literature review:** How might a researcher go about deciding which literature makes it into their review? Which topics could they use to decide the appropriateness of certain literature? E.g. a researcher might look at the **timeliness** of the materials they are reviewing—materials outside of a certain period might not be accepted. Can you think of some other ways researchers might frame their lit reviews or decide the appropriateness of the materials they source?
3. **Writing the literature review—voice:** For Efron and Ravid, “Choosing the voice you will use [in writing your literature review] is not a mere technique or writing method; your choice mirrors how you orient yourself as a writer toward knowledge and toward the literature you review” (p. 209). How might researchers construct their scholarly voice in a literature review, and what will doing so allow a researcher to do?
4. **Writing the literature review—synthesis:** What is “synthesis”, why is it important, and what does it mean to synthesise and interpret your literature?

**Part 2. Practice**

1. **Reading for the literature review:** Find a promising source you have skimmed/read for your literature review. Reread the work and use Sonja Rewhorn’s (2016) prompts (adapted from Kneale, 2012) to summarise the work:
	1. Copy the reference in full:
	2. Summarise in two sentences what the article is about:
	3. Summarise the conclusion in one sentence:
	4. Identify the strong points in the article:
	5. Is this an argument/case you agree with?:
	6. How does this information fit in with your current knowledge?:
	7. What do you need to know/read next to advance your understanding?:
2. **Writing the literature review—voice:** “Writer voice,” Efron and Ravid say, “is the form or style through which the literature review story is told; it is ‘the writer’s presence on the page’ (Romano, 2004, p. 5)” (p. 208). In writing the literature review it will be important to control the “story” you are telling by:
	1. alternating your use of active and passive voice (e.g. active: “**I divided my** discussion…” v “**The discussion was divided** into…”)
	2. indicating relationships/continuity of thought or disagreement among sources (e.g. using connecting words like “similarly” or “whereas” to connect sources and their ideas)
	3. Differentiating between your ideas and your sources’ ideas (i.e. what do **they** think and what do **you** think?)
	4. Writing a summary at the end of the section or chapter

(Adapted from Efron and Ravid, 2018, pp. 210-218)

Write or copy-and-paste an excerpt of your literature review below where you believe that your “scholarly voice” is an issue. Try to locate where you have used the techniques listed above, or note where and how they might be incorporated to develop your work.

For more information and resources please [visit the GRASP webpage](https://researchtoolkit.library.curtin.edu.au/grasp/about-grasp/). Send questions to the Library’s Research Services team at LibraryResearchSupport@Curtin.edu.au.

**References**

Efron, S. A. & Ravid, R. (2018). *Writing the Literature Review: A Practical Guide.* Guilford.

Rewhorn, S. (2016). Writing your successful literature review. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 42(1), pp. 143-147.