

## A review of the literature about a topic

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All papers are required to have an abstract. This short paragraph should explain why this development constitutes a piece of research – note that reports of development work will not be accepted for publication unless they represent a new method, a novel application or some other important principle that is relevant to other academics or support staff. The application should be described briefly, the methods for testing should be explained and any important findings noted.

### **Introduction**

This short section should explain what the paper is for. Typically, reviews will be undertaken in order to summarise research done to date, to illustrate different ideas about a research topic, etc.

### **Background**

The background section in a review paper would be brief, or else could be omitted entirely. Normally, background sections use published literature to set the research in context. It might be adequate simply to state that the purpose of the work is to draw together an up-to-date summary of work (in which case an introduction alone would be fine). However, if the review has been motivated by something – a piece of policy, or a research study, for example – a brief summary of this would be useful to include.

### **Methodology**

The methodology section should outline how the search for literature was undertaken. It would be relevant to mention (briefly) the citation databases, research stores or journals searched for relevant material along with the terms used for the search. Criteria for including or excluding published work would also be useful to note. If research publications have been grouped for presentation (e.g. by identifying sub-themes), the process of doing this should be described.

### **Results**

This section might open with a brief overview, but would focus on a series of sub-themes (each with its own sub-heading) which summarised the review within each area.

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## Discussion

Not all review papers will have discussion sections; however, if the review was prompted by a piece of policy or research, it might be appropriate to revisit it in light of the review to analyse how the inspiration for the work and the results of the search relate.

## Conclusions

The conclusion of a literature should include a brief summary of the main points identified in the review. In addition, points of weakness (in the review and in the research that was identified) should be pointed out and the implications of the study for other pieces of work should be made clear.

## References

These should be listed in the standard format:

Author, A. & Author, B. (Date) Title of article, *Title of journal*, Volume, page start – page end.

Author, A. (Date) *Title of book* (Place of publication, Publishing company).

Author, A. (Date) Title of chapter, in A. Editor A. (Ed) *Title of book* (Place of publication, Publishing company).

Author, A. (Date) *Title of technical report or other document* (Place of publication, Institution or other producing organisation).

Where references include online elements, cite them in the following format:

Organisation (n.d. – short for No Date) Available online: www.URL, last accessed date.

Author, A. (Date) *Title of technical report or other document* (Place of publication, Institution or other producing organisation). Available online: www.URL, last accessed date.