

# What Is Review of Related Literature in Research Paper

## Quick Answer:

A review of related literature (RRL) in a research paper is a structured analysis of existing studies, theories, and findings relevant to your topic.

It helps you understand what has already been researched, identify gaps, and position your study within the academic conversation.

The RRL is not just a summary — it critically evaluates sources and connects them logically to your research question.

It usually appears after the introduction and before methodology.

A strong literature review strengthens credibility, supports your argument, and avoids duplication.

If you struggle structuring or writing it, you can [request expert academic assistance here](#).

## Quick SERP Analysis (What Competitors Cover)

Most top-ranking articles follow a similar structure and intent. They typically include:

- Definition of review of related literature
- Purpose and importance in research
- Steps to write a literature review
- Types of literature reviews
- Examples and structure breakdown

**Content format:** Primarily educational guides with step-by-step instructions and examples.

**Common questions answered:**

- What is RRL?
- Why is it important?
- How to write it?
- What sources to include?

**What is often missing:**

- Deep explanation of how literature review actually works in research logic
- Clear prioritization of sources
- Real mistakes students make
- Practical frameworks for structuring arguments

## SEO Structure & Keyword Clustering

## Primary Keyword

what is review of related literature in research paper

## Secondary Keywords

- literature review in research
- RRL meaning
- how to write literature review
- importance of literature review
- research paper structure

## Content Hierarchy

- H1: What Is Review of Related Literature in Research Paper
- H2: Definition and Purpose
- H2: Why Literature Review Matters
- H2: How Literature Review Works (EAT Section)
- H2: Types of Literature Review
- H2: Step-by-Step Writing Guide
- H2: Common Mistakes
- H2: What Others Don't Tell You
- H2: Practical Tips
- H2: FAQ

## Introduction

Understanding what a review of related literature (RRL) is can make or break your research paper. Many students underestimate this section, thinking it's just a summary of sources. In reality, it's one of the most critical parts of academic writing. It sets the foundation for your entire study, shows your expertise, and demonstrates that your research is necessary.

Whether you're writing a thesis, dissertation, or academic paper, the literature review is where you prove you understand the field. It connects your topic to existing knowledge and shows how your research contributes something new. Without it, your work lacks context and academic credibility.

But here's the challenge: writing a strong literature review requires more than collecting sources. You need to analyze, compare, and synthesize information in a way that builds a clear narrative. This is where most students struggle — not because the concept is hard, but because the process isn't explained well.

This guide breaks everything down in simple terms, with practical examples and strategies you can actually use. If you want a

shortcut or professional help refining your literature review, you can always

[get expert assistance here](#)

## Definition and Purpose of Literature Review

A review of related literature is a structured overview of existing research relevant to your topic. It includes books, journal articles, reports, and credible academic sources.

The main purpose is to:

- Understand the current state of research
- Identify gaps or unanswered questions
- Support your research problem
- Avoid duplicating existing studies
- Build theoretical and conceptual frameworks

Think of it as a map. It shows where research has already been and where your study fits in.

## Why Literature Review Matters

The literature review is not optional — it's essential. Without it, your research lacks direction.

Here's why it matters:

- **Context:** It explains the background of your topic
- **Credibility:** Shows you understand academic sources
- **Justification:** Proves your research is needed
- **Framework:** Helps define your methodology

A weak literature review often leads to a weak research paper.

## How Literature Review Actually Works (EAT CORE SECTION)

This is the part most guides don't explain properly.

### 1. It's Not a Summary — It's a System

A literature review works like a structured argument. You are not listing studies — you are connecting them.

Each source should answer:

- What did the researcher find?
- How does it relate to other studies?
- What is missing?

### 2. Prioritization Matters More Than Quantity

Students often think more sources = better review. That's wrong.

What matters:

- Relevance to your research question
- Recency (latest studies)
- Credibility of sources

### 3. The Core Goal: Identify the Gap

Your literature review must lead to one key outcome:

**“Here's what we know — and here's what we don't know.”**

That gap becomes your research problem.

## 4. Decision Factors in Structuring RRL

- Chronological vs thematic organization
- Depth vs breadth of analysis
- Balance between theory and data

## 5. What Actually Matters (Priority Order)

1. Clarity of argument
2. Logical flow
3. Critical thinking
4. Relevance of sources
5. Proper citations

## Types of Literature Review

- **Narrative:** General overview
- **Systematic:** Highly structured and methodical
- **Theoretical:** Focus on theories and models
- **Empirical:** Based on research findings

## Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Literature Review

### Step 1: Define Your Research Scope

Know exactly what you are researching.

### Step 2: Collect Sources

Use academic databases and journals.

### Step 3: Evaluate Sources

Check credibility, relevance, and date.

### Step 4: Organize Information

Group sources by theme or topic.

### Step 5: Write and Synthesize

Connect ideas, don't just summarize.

### Step 6: Cite Properly

Use APA, MLA, or required format.

## Common Mistakes

- Listing sources without analysis
- Using outdated references
- Lack of structure
- Ignoring contradictory studies
- No clear research gap

## What Others Don't Tell You

Most guides won't mention this:

- You don't need dozens of sources — you need the right ones
- Clarity beats complexity
- Review is about thinking, not collecting PDFs
- Weak literature review = weak thesis

## Practical Tips

- Start early — don't leave it last
- Use citation tools
- Take notes while reading
- Focus on patterns, not individual studies

If you want a professionally structured literature review tailored to your topic, you can

[request help from academic experts here](#)

## FAQ

### 1. What is the main purpose of a literature review?

The main purpose of a literature review is to analyze existing research related to your topic and identify gaps that your study can address. It provides context, supports your research question, and demonstrates your understanding of the field. Instead of simply summarizing sources, it connects them logically to show trends, contradictions, and missing elements in the research. A strong literature review helps justify why your study is necessary and how it contributes to existing knowledge.

### 2. How long should a literature review be?

The length of a literature review depends on the type of research paper. For standard academic papers, it can be 20–30% of the total length. For theses and dissertations, it may be much longer. What matters more than length is depth and quality. A shorter, well-structured review is better than a long, unfocused one. Focus on relevant sources and clear analysis rather than trying to include everything.

### 3. What sources should be included?

You should include peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, and credible reports. Avoid unreliable sources like blogs or unverified websites. Prioritize recent studies unless older ones are foundational theories. The key is relevance and credibility. Each source should contribute directly to your research topic and help build your argument.

#### **4. Can I use older studies in my literature review?**

Yes, but selectively. Older studies are important if they are foundational or widely cited. However, you should balance them with recent research to show current developments. Using only outdated sources can weaken your paper, as it may not reflect the latest knowledge in the field. Always aim for a mix of classic and modern studies.

#### **5. How do I structure a literature review?**

You can structure it chronologically, thematically, or methodologically. Thematic structure is the most common, where you group studies by topics or concepts. Each section should have a clear focus and logical flow. Start with general ideas and move toward more specific ones related to your research question. End with a summary that highlights the research gap.

#### **6. What is the difference between summary and literature review?**

A summary simply describes what a source says, while a literature review analyzes and connects multiple sources. In a literature review, you compare studies, identify patterns, and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. It's more analytical and critical, not just descriptive. This is what makes it valuable in research.

#### **7. What if I don't understand my sources?**

This is common, especially with complex academic texts. Break the material into smaller parts, look up unfamiliar terms, and focus on key findings. You don't need to understand every detail — focus on what is relevant to your research. If you still struggle, seeking expert guidance can save time and improve quality.