Components of a literature review

Look out for some of these features the next time you read a literature review. Note the details in the examples column so that you can return to them when writing your own review.

You won’t see all of these features in every review and you are not expected to include every component in your own review. You might also spot some features that haven’t been included in this list. Use the bottom rows to add any other components you find when reading.

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| **Component** | **Definition** | **Your example** |
| Seminal literature | A work of great importance in the field which has influenced subsequent work |  |
| Methodology | A discussion or evaluation of the methods used in conducting a piece of research |  |
| Summaries of individual pieces of literature | A short discussion of the main ideas of a source |  |
| Gaps in the literature | The identification of areas that haven’t been researched through discussion of what has |  |
| Themes | Identifying and discussing shared themes within the literature |  |
| Topic sentences | Clear indicators of the content of a paragraph or section |  |
| Strengths | Analysis of the positive attributes of a piece of research |  |
| Weaknesses | Analysis of the negative attributes of a piece of research |  |
| Conflict | Discussion of disagreement in the field |  |
| Agreement | Highlighting ideas on which different researchers agree |  |
| Comparison | Pointing out the similarities and/or difference of two or more sources |  |
| Scope of the review | Statement of what will be included in the review (and what won’t be included) |  |
| Context for the review | Statement of why the review is being conducted |  |
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