

Organising and Synthesising Literature for an Assignment

Purpose

Organise and synthesise literature to prepare for writing

- assignments (e.g., essays and reports)
- the literature review section of a research proposal
- scoping reviews

Steps to organising and synthesising literature for an assignment

1. Use reliable academic resources (e.g., [library databases](#)) to **find credible literature** on your assignment topic.
2. Read each source carefully and **clarify concepts** you do not understand.
3. **Note the main points** that are relevant to your assignment and record full reference details.
4. **Identify limitations** of each source (e.g., small sample size, bias, narrow scope).
5. **Organise main points into themes or categories** using a template or filing system (e.g., the template below or the template in the [Literature Reviews](#) study guide, adding sources and themes as needed).
6. For each theme, **compare and contrast how the sources relate to each other**:
 - a. Are there patterns or connections in the findings, such as repeated themes, ideas, or conclusions?
 - b. Do the sources agree, disagree, or introduce new information?
7. **Note how the sources differ** in type of source, type of research, and research methodology.
8. **Consider the impact of these differences** on results, conclusions, or viewpoints in the literature.
9. **Create a chart or diagram** of the themes to visually summarise your literature.
10. Use a numbering system, chart, or diagram **to plan your assignment** so there is a logical flow of ideas throughout your writing.

	Source 1 (citation)	Source 2 (citation)	Source 3 (citation)	Source 4 (citation)
Theme 1				
Theme 2				
Theme 3				
Limitations of the source				
Patterns and connections				
Source differences				

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