



# Working with Literature

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What should I be reading and  
what do I do with it all?



# The Importance of Working with Literature

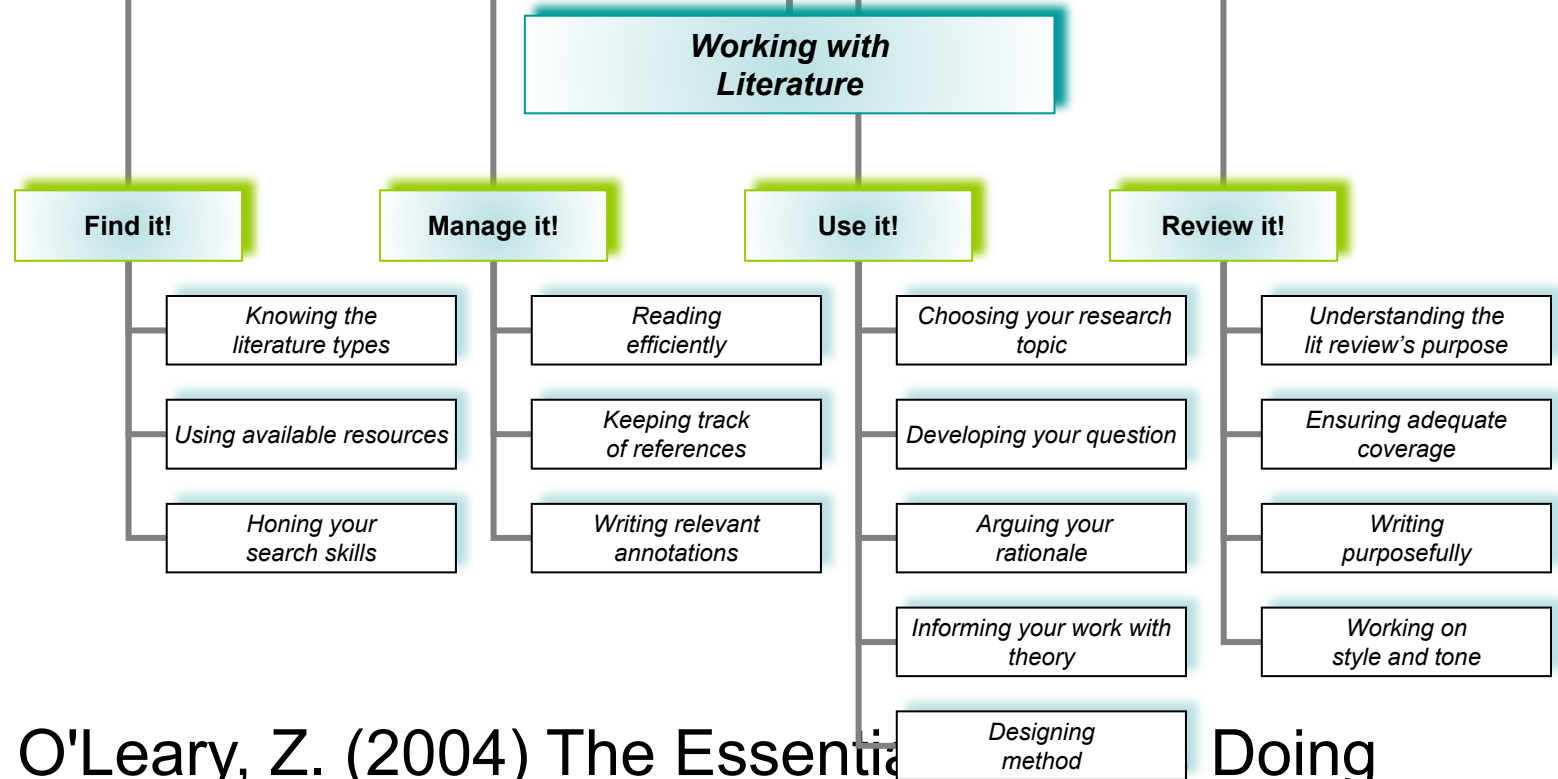
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Working with literature is an essential part of the research process that:

- generates ideas
- helps form significant questions
- is instrumental in the process of research design

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# Working with literature



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# Finding literature

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Finding relevant literature can be made easier if you are able to readily access and draw on a wide variety of resources such as:

- reference materials
- books
- journals
- grey literature
- official publications

○ archives  
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# Finding literature

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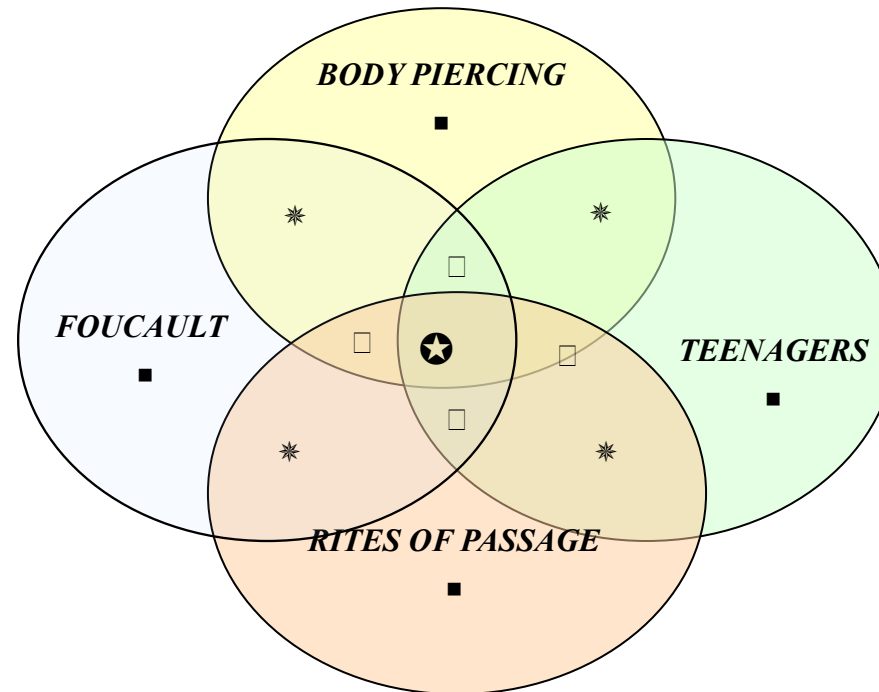
## **Don't go it alone!!**

When looking for literature be sure to call on the experts such as:

- librarians
- supervisors
- other researchers
- practitioners

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# Intersecting Areas of Literature



■ *background literature*

\* *moderate relevance*

□ *high relevance*

★ *highest relevance*

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# Managing the literature

It also pays to be organized and diligent when it comes to keeping references.

- Keep and file copies of relevant books, articles, etc.
- Avoid lending out your 'only copies'
- Find out about the recommended referencing style and use it from the start
- Consider using bibliographic file management software such as *Procite*, *Endnote*, or *Reference Manager*

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# Annotating Sources

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Annotating your sources provides you with a record of relevant literature. It should include:

- the citation
- articulation of the author and audience
- a short summary
- critical commentary
- notes on relevance that remind you of the significance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited

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# Using the Literature

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Literature is used for disparate purposes throughout the research process. Whether it be:

- focusing interests
- defining questions
- arguing a rationale
- theoretically informing your study
- developing appropriate design, or writing a formal literature review

every stage of the research process demands literary engagement.

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# The Formal Literature Review

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Most find the writing of a literature review a difficult task that takes patience, practice, drafts, and redrafts

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# The Formal Literature Review

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The formal literature review is a very specific piece of writing designed to:

- inform your readers of your topic
- establish your credibility as a researcher
- argue the need for, and relevance of, your work

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# Reviewing the Literature vs. 'The Literature Review'

**TABLE 6.1** REVIEWING THE LITERATURE VS 'THE LITERATURE REVIEW'

Reasons for reviewing the literature	Purposes of the 'literature review'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Informing yourself of what is happening in the field</li><li>• Gaining a level of topical and methodological knowledge and expertise</li><li>• Finding potential gaps in the literature that may point to potential research questions</li><li>• Critically evaluating common/ typical methods</li><li>• Facilitating the development of your own methodological approaches</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>☑ Informing your audience of what is happening in the field</li><li>☑ Establishing your credibility as a knowledgeable and capable researcher</li><li>☑ Arguing the relevance and the significance of your research question(s)</li><li>☑ Providing the context for your own methodological approach</li><li>☑ Arguing the relevance and appropriateness of your approach</li></ul>



# Writing your Literature Review

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A good literature review is an *argument* that is more purposeful than a simple review of relevant literature

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# Writing your Literature Review

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Writing a good review requires you to:

- read a few good reviews
- write critical annotations
- develop a structure
- write purposefully
- use the literature to back up your arguments
- review and write throughout the research process
- get feedback
- and be prepared to redraft

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# Writing your Literature Review

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## Style and Tone...

- Writing a good literature review can be likened to holding a good dinner party conversation
- They both require individuals who can engage, learn, debate, argue, contribute, and evolve their own ideas, without being

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