

# How to Write a Paper (Literature Review) for a Social Science Course

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## **Step 1. Start Early**

A good review paper takes thought, time and effort.

Inter-library loans take about two weeks to deliver.

It may take time to locate important relevant journal articles.

A relevant book may be in use by someone else and it takes time to get it back and check it out to you.

## **Step 2. Select a topic relevant to the course.**

Read an overview of the topic you choose in a text or professional book. Such an overview will give you a general feeling for the relevant variables and issues important to your topic. Your paper should be more specific, more narrow and deeper than such an overview.

Narrow the topic so you can write in-depth within the required space limitations

Get the instructor's approval of the topic.

## **Step 3. Find relevant professional journal articles and books based on empirical findings.**

Avoid popular magazines, e.g. *Time*, *News Week*, *U. S. News and World Report*, *Psychology Today*, *Family Circle*, *Readers Digest*.

Use an on-line search database such as PsycINFO or MedLine

The library reference section personnel can be of help.

Use the card catalogue or on-line catalogue to search for appropriate books.

Use indexes found in the reference section of the library.

Look at the indexes for specific journals. Often the last issue of each year has an index for that year.

When you find one relevant article, get the article: from a journal held by the library, through an interlibrary loan (photocopy of the article), or download the article from a Web site.

Look at the references in the article(s) you've found. The complete reference is at the end of the article.

Web site references may not exceed 49% of the references used in your paper.

Ten references are not too many for a paper that is five to seven pages in length. Longer papers should have more references.

#### **Step 4. Select the most appropriate articles for inclusion in the paper.**

Read each article carefully.

Underline important points and statements you want to quote in your paper.

#### **Step 5. Organize the paper you are going to write.**

Develop a thesis statement. Provide the reader with an overview paragraph so the reader knows where the paper is going and what the goal of the paper is.

Use subheadings to make the paper more readable. Here's a possible example:

Overview. State the purpose or goal of the paper. This section should tell the reader where you plan to go with the paper. A clear and concise thesis statement is very helpful.

Definitions. Define the major terms used in the paper.

Body of the paper. In the body of the paper review the relevant material you have gathered in a well organized manner.

Critique. Critique the material either in the body of the paper or in a separate section. When you critique, you include the strengths and weakness of the material gathered, and include your own ideas.

If you have made your own observations or gathered your own data, include them in an appropriate place in the body of the paper. When you gather data, be sure to describe the sample from which you gathered the data, your method or how you gathered the data, and what measures you used. Describe how you analyzed the data and what the results were.

Make sure the body of the paper flows in a logical way.

Summarize. At the end of the paper, synopsize the major points you have made.

#### **Step 6. Write the paper.**

Use the outline developed above.

Use the APA reference style discussed at the end of this outline.

Write a draft of the paper, let some time pass and then review and improve the draft.

Have the paper reviewed by someone else. The Writing Center at KU will do this for you. You can visit the Writing Center Monday – Friday from 10 AM to 2 PM in 4017 Wescoe Hall. Also see their website: <http://www.writing.ku.edu>.

Title your paper.

Number the pages.

Write in 10 or 12 point type.

Use at least one inch margins.

Double space the paper.

Include a cover sheet with your name and student number, the name of the course, the date, the name of the project you are submitting and the title of the project.

Use spelling and grammar checks available in most word processing programs. Proof read your paper after the spelling and grammar check. If a word is not the correct word but is a real word, the spelling and grammar check may not catch the error.

Hand the paper in on time.

### **Consider: Style for Course Papers**

Use of the APA Publication Manual (2001, Fifth Edition) for more detailed information. It is available at the reference desk in the library.

You must follow a consistent referencing style in your paper as follows. If you get some of your information from a specific book or article, you cite the book or article in the paper in one of two ways:

1. Smith and Jones (1991) report that the divorce rate has leveled off . . . .
2. Some studies report that the divorce rate has leveled off (Smith and Jones, 1991).

Then at the end of the paper you have a reference section which lists the full reference for each of the works cited.

### **References**

Example of a journal article reference:

Smith, J. and Jones, E. L. (1991). Declining divorce in America. Journal of Divorce, 11(3), 287-296.

The general form for a journal article is:

Author(s) (last name, first initial, middle initial if appropriate); year (in parentheses followed by a period); title of article (First letter of first word capitalized, followed by a period); name of journal source (underlined, first letter of each word capitalized and followed by a period); journal volume (underlined); issue (in parentheses, followed by a comma); page numbers (followed by a period).

Example of a book reference:

Davis, B. F. (1988). Modern marriage. New York: Phantom Press.

The general form for a book is:

Author(s) (last name, first initial, middle initial if appropriate); year (in parentheses followed by a period); title of book (underlined followed by a period); place published (followed by a colon); publisher (followed by a period).

References are listed alphabetically according to the author's last name, then first initial, middle initial if necessary, then year.

### **Citing Specific Documents Found on a Web Site**

Web documents share many of the same elements found in a print document (e.g., authors, titles, dates). Therefore, the citation for a Web document often follows a format similar to that for print, with some information omitted and some added. Here are some examples of how to cite documents posted on American Psychological Association's own Web site, [apa.org](http://www.apastyle.org/electgeneral.html) (2003).  
Electronic references. Retrieved July 11, 2006, from <http://www.apastyle.org/electgeneral.html>

“Electronic sources include aggregated databases, online journals, Web sites or Web pages, newsgroups, Web- or e-mail-based discussion groups, and Web- or e-mail-based newsletters.

#### **Online periodical:**

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (2000).

Title of article. *Title of Periodical*, xx, xxxxxx.

Retrieved month day, year, from source.

#### **Online document:**

Author, A. A. (2000). *Title of work*.

Retrieved month day, year, from source.

## Periodicals

### 71. Internet articles based on a print source

At present, the majority of the articles retrieved from online publications in psychology and the behavioral sciences are exact duplicates of those in their print versions and are unlikely to have additional analyses and data attached. This is likely to change in the future. In the meantime, the same basic primary journal reference (see Examples 15) can be used, but if you have viewed the article only in its electronic form, you should add in brackets after the article title "Electronic version" as in the following fictitious example:

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates [Electronic version]. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117-123.

If you are referencing an online article that you have reason to believe has been changed (e.g., the format differs from the print version or page numbers are not indicated) or that includes additional data or commentaries, you will need to add the date you retrieved the document and the URL.

VandenBos, G., Knapp, S., & Doe, J. (2001). Role of reference elements in the selection of resources by psychology undergraduates. *Journal of Bibliographic Research*, 5, 117-123. Retrieved October 13, 2001, from <http://jbr.org/articles.html>

### 72. Article in an Internet-only journal

Fredrickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. *Prevention & Treatment*, 3, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000, from <http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html>

### 74. Article in an Internet-only newsletter

Glueckauf, R. L., Whitton, J., Baxter, J., Kain, J., Vogelgesang, S., Hudson, M., et al. (1998, July). Videocounseling for families of rural teens with epilepsy -- Project update. *Telehealth News*, 2(2). Retrieved from <http://www.telehealth.net/subscribe/newslettr4a.html>

- Use the complete publication date given on the article.
- Note that there are no page numbers.
- In an Internet periodical, volume and issue numbers often are not relevant. If they are not used, the name of the periodical is all that can be provided in the reference.
- Whenever possible, the URL should link directly to the article.

- Break a URL that goes to another line after a slash or before a period. Do not insert (or allow your word-processing program to insert) a hyphen at the break.

### **Nonperiodical documents on the Internet**

77. Stand-alone document, no author identified, no date

*GVU's 8th WWW user survey.* (n.d.). Retrieved August 8, 2000, from <http://www.cc.gatech.edu/gvu/usersurveys/survey1997-10/>

- If the author of a document is not identified, begin the reference with the title of the document.

78. Document available on university program or department Web site

Chou, L., McClintock, R., Moretti, F., Nix, D. H. (1993). *Technology and education: New wine in new bottles: Choosing pasts and imagining educational futures.* Retrieved August 24, 2000, from Columbia University, Institute for Learning Technologies Web site: <http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/papers/newwine1.html>

- If a document is contained within a large and complex Web site (such as that for a university or a government agency), identify the host organization and the relevant program or department before giving the URL for the document itself. Precede the URL with a colon.

### **Other Electronic Sources**

88. Electronic copy of a journal article, three to five authors, retrieved from database

Borman, W. C., Hanson, M. A., Oppler, S. H., Pulakos, E. D., & White, L. A. (1993). Role of early supervisory experience in supervisor performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*, 443-449. Retrieved October 23, 2000, from PsycARTICLES database.

- When referencing material obtained by searching an aggregated database, follow the format appropriate to the work retrieved and add a retrieval statement that gives the date of retrieval and the proper name of the database.”