

**Guidelines for Writing a Literature Review:** Steps 7-9: Citing and Writing

**Note:** The following guidelines are modeled after the similarly titled [guidelines by Dr. Helen Mongan-Rallis](#). Both forms are based on [Galvan's \(2006\) text](#), and **sections of this guide have been quoted directly or with only minor revision from both sources.**

**Step 7: Review APA Guidelines.**

Read through the links provided below to become familiar with the common core elements of how to write in APA style. Be sure to check which edition you are writing in, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>. Guidelines/help for both are included below. In particular, pay attention to general document guidelines (e.g. font, margins, and spacing), title page, abstract, body, text and References citations, and quotations:

1. [Purdue OWL \(Online Writing Lab\)](#): User-friendly 5<sup>th</sup> edition APA style guide.
2. APA Tutorial ([the basics](#)): The basics of APA Style (6<sup>th</sup> edition)
3. APA Tutorial ([what's new](#)): What's new in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition

**Step 8: Write the Review (Galvan, 2006, pp. 81-90).**

1. Identify the broad problem area, but avoid global statements.
2. Early in the review, indicate why the topic being reviewed is important.
3. Distinguish between research findings and other sources of information.
4. Indicate why certain studies are important.
5. If commenting on the timeliness of a topic, be specific in describing the time frame.
6. If citing a classic or landmark study or one that was replicated, identify it as such.
7. Justify comments such as, "no studies were found."
8. Avoid long lists of nonspecific references.
9. If the results of previous studies are inconsistent or widely varying, cite them separately.
10. Cite all relevant references in text and in the References page.

**Step 9: Develop a Coherent Essay (Galvan, 2006, pp. 91-96).**

1. Provide an overview near the beginning of the review.
2. Near the beginning of a review, state explicitly what will and will not be covered.
3. Specify your research question and purpose/significance in the introduction.
4. Aim for a clear and cohesive essay that integrates the key details of the literature and communicates your point of view. A literature is not a series of annotated articles.
5. Use subheadings and transitions to improve the flow of your paper.
6. Consider reviewing studies from different disciplines separately.
7. Write a conclusion for the end of the review. Since this review will be written to stand alone, the conclusion needs to make clear how the material in the body of the review has supported the research topic stated in the introduction.
8. Check the flow of your argument for coherence.

**Final Note:** For detailed treatment of any of these steps, I highly recommend you pick up [Galvan's \(2006\)](#) text. I have not found it invaluable for teaching, but also as a personal reference guide. It is a very approachable step-by-step guide with useful checklists and literature review samples.