

Literature Review Savvy Researcher

Andiswa Mfengu
Elizabeth Moll-Willard



Outcomes

- What is a literature review?
- Purpose of lit review

Basics



- Select a topic
- Search the literature
- Develop the argument
- Survey the literature
- Critique the literature
- Write the review

Steps



- Boolean operators

Searching effectively



The Basics





What is a literature review?

A literature review is a **critical evaluation, summary** and **explanation** of the **complete and current state of knowledge** on a **limited topic**.



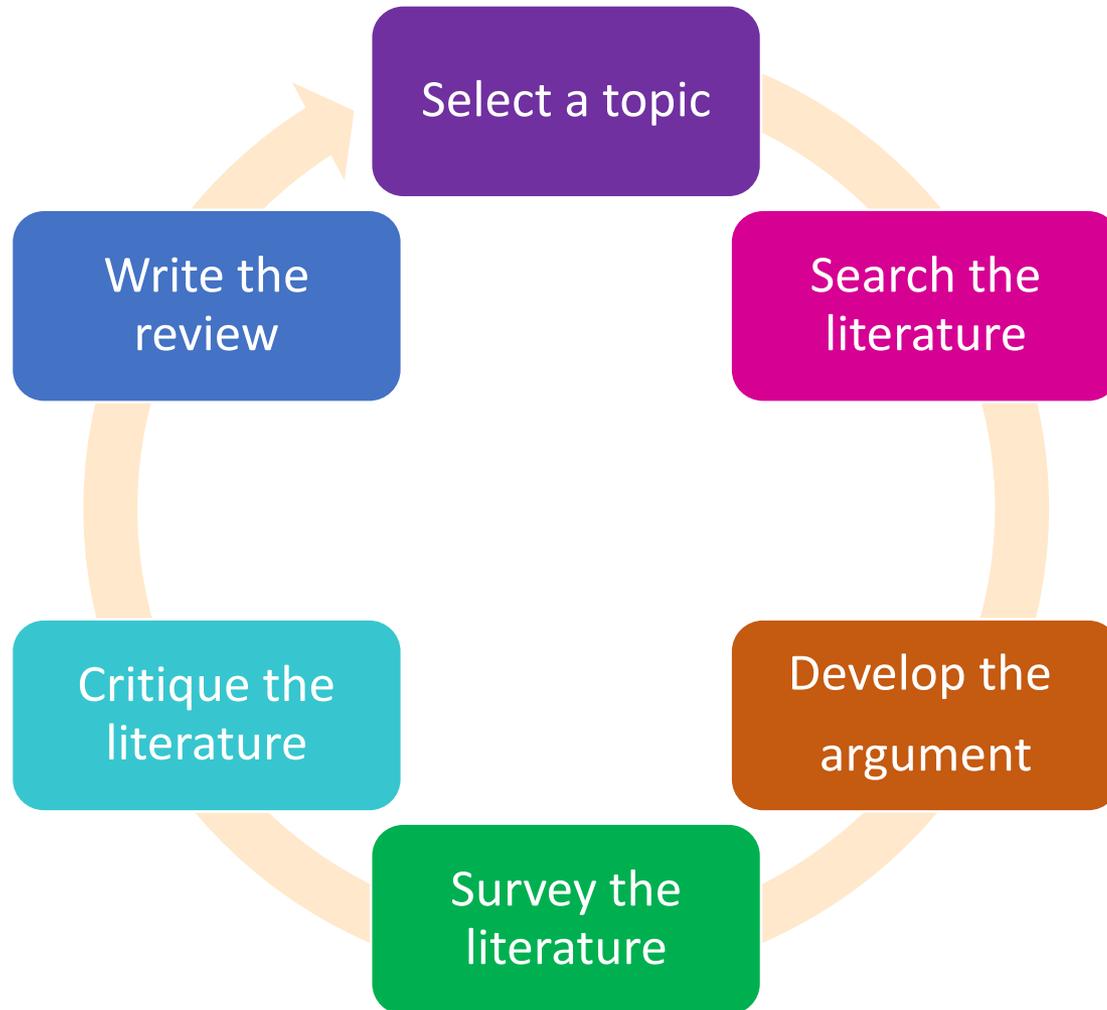
Why do a literature review?

- **Identifies** gaps
- **Avoids** reinventing the wheel
- **Building on** a foundation of existing knowledge
- **Finds** other people working in the same field.
- **Demonstrates** the depth of your knowledge
- Identifies the **important works** in your area



How-to literature review

Steps of a literature review



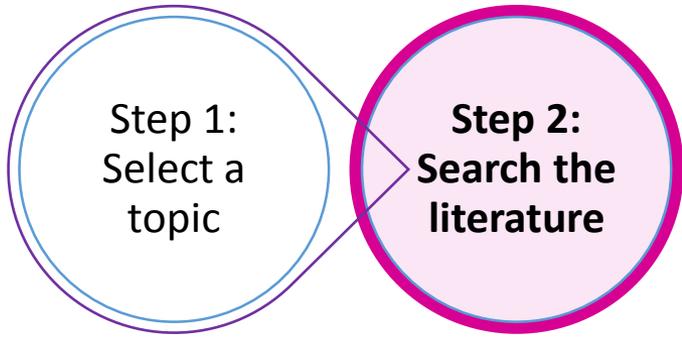


**Step 1:
Select a
topic**



1. Select a topic

- All research begins with curiosity
- Work with your supervisor / lecturer to help define your topic if you are not assigned one



2. Search the literature

- i. Finding the literature
 - Search strategies
- ii. Manage your literature
 - Inclusion / exclusion criteria
 - Reference Managers
 - Skimming
- iii. Evaluating the literature
 - Reading in depth
 - Map your materials



i. Finding the literature

The mental and physical effect of homelessness on women

Keywords:

Effect / impact

Homeless / homelessness

Women

Mental / psychological

...



Search strategies

- Creating search strategies combines your keywords with using advanced search options or operators that speak directly to the database
- To get tips on how to create search strategies:
 - Use the 'search help' on the database
 - Use the specific advanced searches on the database
 - OR consult a librarian on how to use Boolean operators

Where to search?

- Primo – discovery tool for all resources like articles, books, eBooks, newspapers, theses & dissertation, etc.
- EBSCOhost – multidisciplinary database for articles, newspapers, eBooks etc.
- SA Media - newspapers
- OpenUCT – institutional repository

What will you be collecting?



Books,
monographs
and reference
works



Journals &
periodicals



Popular and
trade
magazines



Newspapers

Years

Months

Weeks

Days

ii. Manage your literature

- Collect and select the data
 - Use the inclusion / exclusion table to help manage your literature
- Reference managers
 - Collate your literature and make referencing easy
- Skimming
 - Learn to skim read your literature

Inclusion / exclusion criteria

AUTHOR (S) (YEAR) TITLE	PURPOSOF THE STUDY	METHOD	SAMPLE	FINDINGS	THEMES	SIMILARITIES	UNIQUENESS	DATA QUALITY
Cohen, C. I., Ramirez, M., Teresi, J., Gallagher, M. & Sokolovsky, J. (1997) Predictors of becoming redomiciled among older homeless women	Test a model to predict likelihood of older women leaving homelessness based on (1) individual factors; (2) acculturation process in which some women more readily adjust to homelessness; (3) structural/syste mic factors	Quantitative questionnaire s designed around variables in 10 broad predictor categories which made up the proposed model	201 women in New York City; Mean age=59, AA=25%, White=17%, Hispanic= 5% Other = 2% Psychotic=40 % Separated or divorced=53 %	Those who were housed at the end of the 2 years (47%) had greater income, more support, perceived support people as more available, higher density social support, more contact with community and institutional facilities. They were less likely to exhibit psychotic symptoms but no difference in rates of depression.				

The literature review synthesis table

Reference management tools

Programs that assist you in storing your citations, managing your citations and then inserting citations in a specific citation style while you write your assignment

There are a number of different programs that can be used – the Library currently supports the following:

Programs
downloadable
from ICTS
Website

EndNote X8



ProQuest
RefWorks

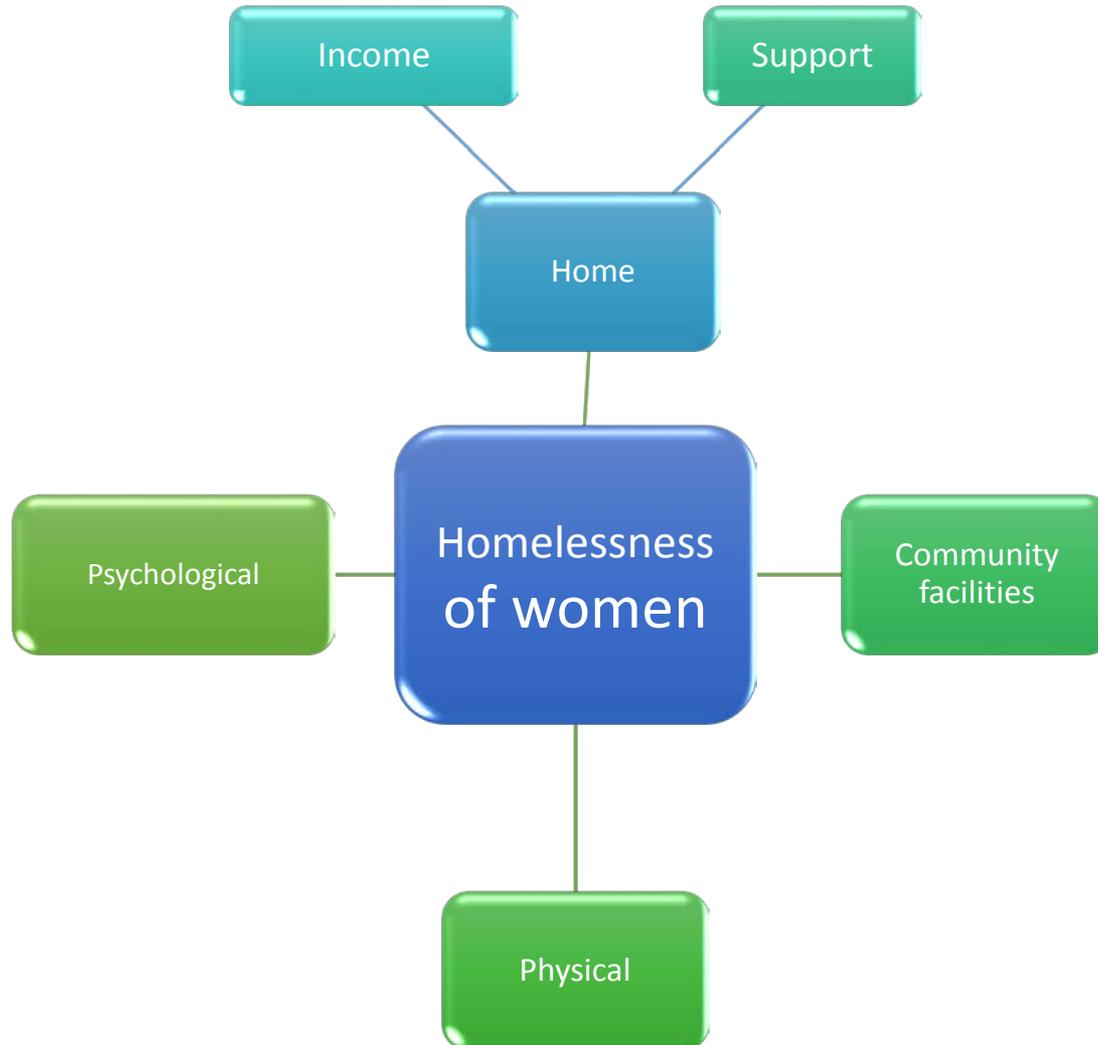
How to skim read



iii. Evaluating the Literature

- Read in depth
 - Take note of inclusion / exclusion criteria
 - If you find gaps or omissions – scan and skim the literature again
- Mapping the literature
 - Core idea map – subject knowledge
 - Map your literature using key descriptors as central themes
 - Map you data by each theme

Mapping core ideas



Step 1:
Select a
topic

The diagram consists of three circles arranged horizontally. The first circle is purple and contains the text 'Step 1: Select a topic'. The second circle is pink and contains the text 'Step 2: Search the literature'. The third circle is brown and contains the text 'Step 3: Develop the argument'. The circles are connected by lines: a line from the right side of the first circle to the left side of the second, and a line from the right side of the second circle to the left side of the third. The third circle is shaded light brown.

Step 2:
Search the
literature

**Step 3:
Develop
the
argument**



3. Develop the argument

- Build a case
- Provide arguments
- Evaluate the argument



a. Build a case

- **Compile** and **arrange** a set of facts in a logical fashion
- **Prove** the thesis you have made about the research topic



Example

Deciding what to wear to campus tomorrow?

- a. Check outside – clouds are gathering
- b. Check weather forecast
- c. On the available data you will decide what to wear
- d. If rain is likely
- e. Decide to wear a raincoat and umbrella



b. Argument

- **Argument** – logical presentation of evidence that leads to and justifies the conclusion
- **Argument of discovery** – discusses and explains what is known about the subject
- **Argument of advocacy** – analyses and critiques the knowledge gained from the synthesis of the data
- Argument is not meant to overpower but rather to **convince**
- Logical set of claims are backed with reasons

An argument = reason_a + reason_b + reason_n

➡ conclusion



c. Evaluating the argument

Claim

declarations of a proposed truth

- drives the argument

Evidence

data that supports and defines the claim

- validity of the claim depends on the evidence

Warrant

is the *because* statement

- Holds the claim and evidence together



c. Evaluating the argument

Claim:

You should not cross the street

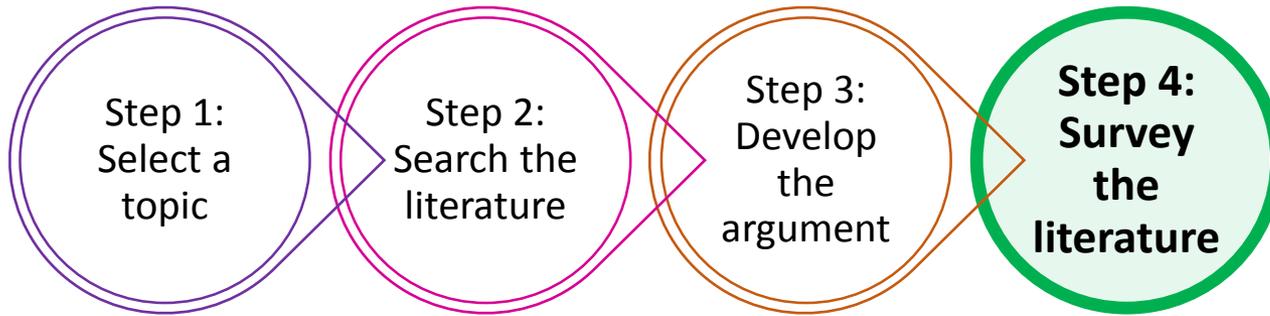
Evidence:

The traffic light is red

Warrant:

Unstated rule implies that the red light means stop

Argument propels the claim



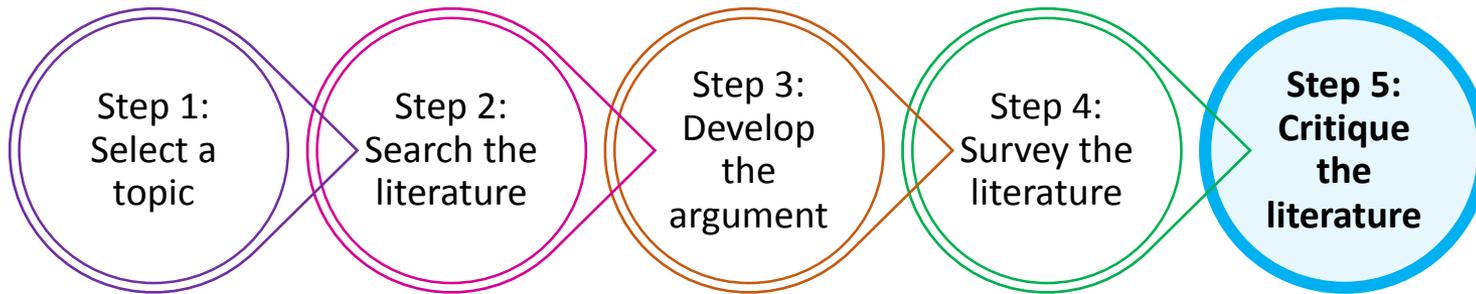


4. Survey the literature

- Assemble the data collected
 - You have done this in Step 2
- Synthesize the information
 - Complete your table
- Analyse the patterns of the data

Inclusion / exclusion criteria

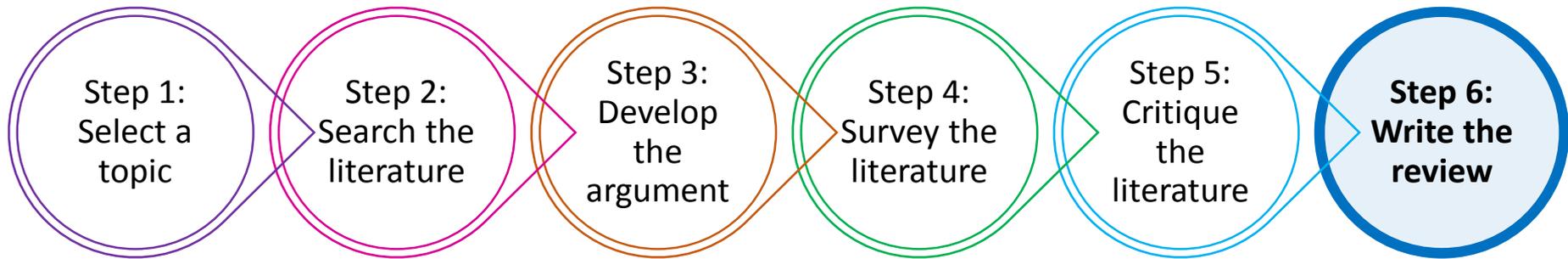
AUTHOR (S) (YEAR) TITLE	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	METHOD	SAMPLE	FINDINGS	THEMES	SIMILARITIES	UNIQUENESS	DATA QUALITY
Cohen, C. I., Ramirez, M., Teresi, J., Gallagher, M. & Sokolovsky, J. (1997) Predictors of becoming redomiciled among older homeless women	Test a model to predict likelihood of older women leaving homelessness based on (1) individual factors; (2) acculturation process in which some women more readily adjust to homelessness ; (3) structural/sys temic factors	Quantitati ve questionn aires designed around variables in 10 broad predictor categor ies which made up the proposed model	201 women in New York City; Mean age=59, AA=25%, White=17 %, Hispanic= 5% Other = 2% Psychotic= 40% Separated or divorced= 53%	Those who were housed at the end of the 2 years (47%) had greater income, more support, perceived support people as more available, higher density social support, more contact with community and institutiona l facilities. They were less likely to exhibit	Housing	Mental illness contributed to homelessness (Butler, Washington). Fractured family systems (Washington). Similar to Cohen individual risk factors.	Lack of housing options for older homeless women. Those with psychoses or chronic histories of homelessness experience greater difficulty in securing housing.	Data was triangulated through variables. Bias was countered through pre- testing. All results reported (no leaving out of results).





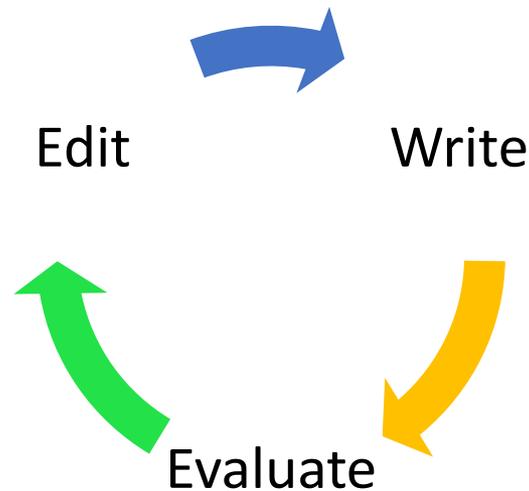
5. Critique the literature

- Two steps:
 - Interpret the current understanding about the topic of research and
 - Determine how this knowledge answers your research topic
- What is the answer to the research question that you have posed given what you know about the subject?
 - If the answer is clear - thesis
 - The literature review has met its purpose
- What about the gaps or omissions?
 - Advocate for your study! It will fill the gap!



6. Write the review

- Write to understand
 - Act of learning and owning the subject matter
- Write to be understood



6. Write the Review

Write early and write often

- the more you write, the easier it becomes and it becomes a habit

Don't get it right, get it written

- drafting helps you to clarify your thoughts, start by writing the parts you are clear on, this identifies the bits that need more work

Main points to remember when writing:

- A 'golden thread'
 - an overall line of argument - running through the paper, holding it together
- 'Sign-posts'
 - crisp titles, sub-titles and headings that identify the direction being followed
- 'Authority'
 - good engagement with existing literature and a comprehensive bibliography - the bibliography is the window to the paper and its author

Things to avoid

- Avoid long quotations
 - rather paraphrase or break up the quote with your own commentary
- Avoid sloppy and inaccurate presentation and ensure that your references are correct



©<https://www.jewellerymonthly.com/a-diamond-in-the-rough/>



Outline - Introduction

- Explains the focus
- Establishes the importance of the subject
- What kind of work has been done on the topic
 - identifies any controversies within the field
 - any recent research which has raised questions about earlier assumptions
- Background or history
- A purpose or thesis statement.



Outline - Body

- Headings or subheadings
- Summarises and evaluates
- Major themes or topics
- Most important trends
- Any findings about which researchers agree or disagree.

Paragraph structure

Topic Sentence

- Summarises argument
- Indicates approach

Elaboration

- May provide additional information or restate the topic sentence in a more extended way.

Evidence

- Maybe be quantitative or qualitative data, or analysis of data.

Link

- This makes the connection to the next paragraph explicit.



Outline - Conclusion

- Summarizes all the evidence
- Shows its significance
- Highlights gaps
- Indicates how previous research leads to your own research project

The funnel approach



Go from the general
to the specific

Searching
effectively



Research Steps

Identify Possible Keywords



Construct Search Strategy



Identify Databases



Perform Your Search

Building Search Strategies

Identifying Keywords

- Broader vs narrow terms

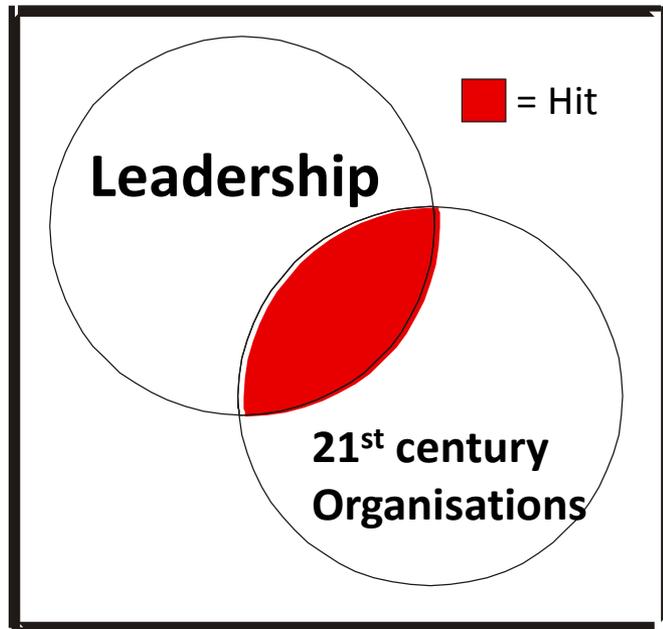


- Synonyms
 - University vs College
- British vs US terminology and spelling
 - Labor vs Labour

Using Boolean Operators

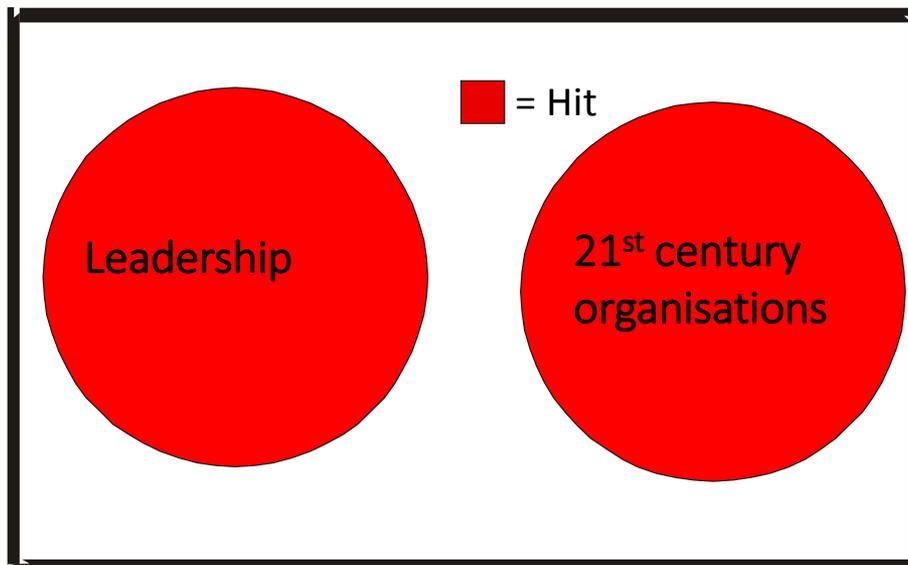
- Boolean Operators are used to **connect and define** the relationship between your search terms.
- When searching electronic databases, you can use the Boolean operators to either **narrow or broaden** your record sets.
- The three Boolean operators are **AND, OR and NOT**.

The Boolean Operator “AND” (narrows search)



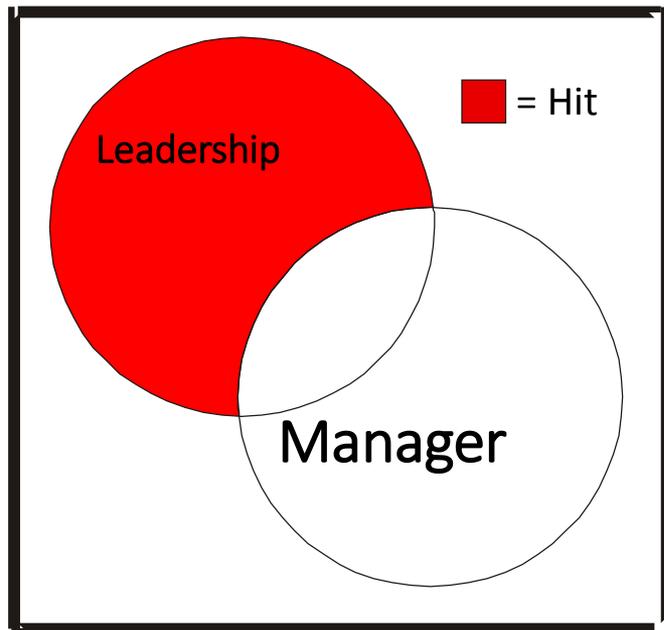
Using the Boolean Operator ‘AND’ for the topic “Leadership in 21st century organisations”

The Boolean Operator 'OR' (synonyms, alternatives, broadens search)



Using the Boolean Operator 'OR' for the topic
"Leadership in 21st century organisations"

The Boolean Operator 'NOT' (exclude certain words from your search)



Using the Boolean Operator 'NOT' to exclude Manager from the topic *Leadership*

Phrases

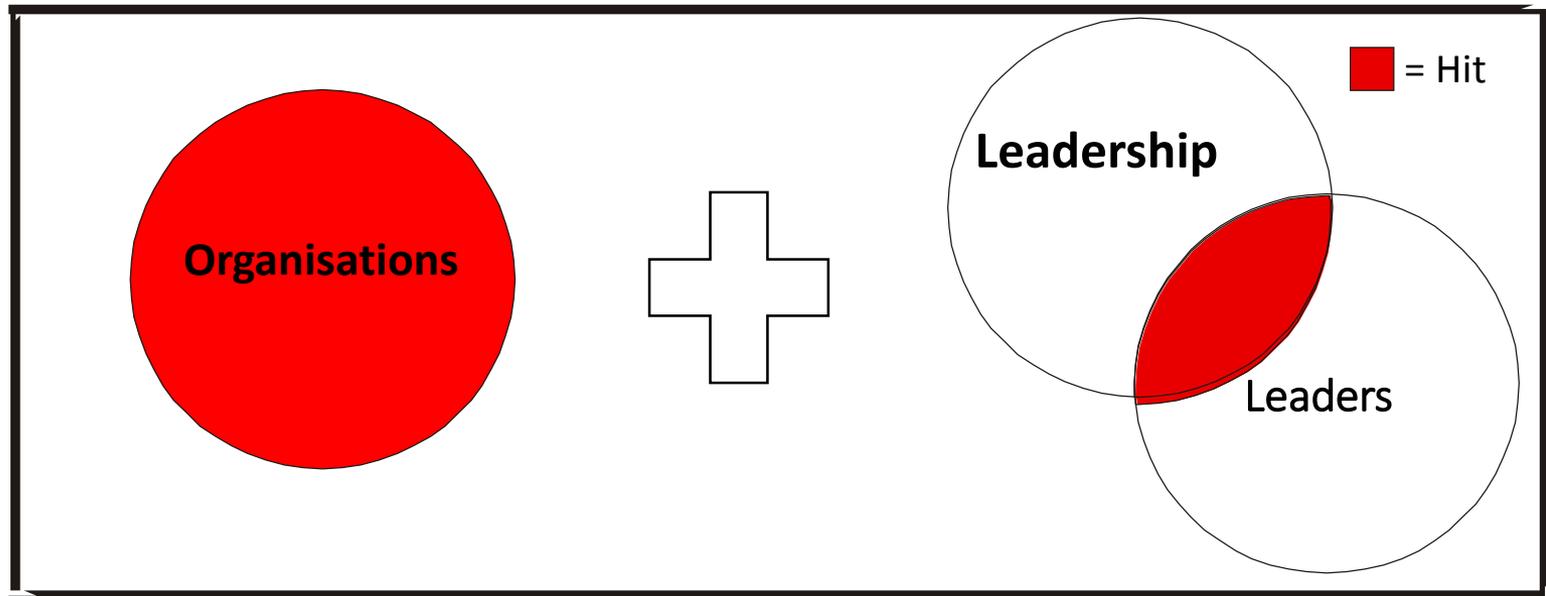
- More than one word contained in “ ” to search for a specific phrase
 - “artificial intelligence”
- Certain databases use () to signify phrases instead

Brackets

- Useful to combine search phrases into one using brackets
 - Using the topic “Leadership in 21st century organisations” the searches can be
 - Leadership AND (21st century organisation)
 - Leadership AND organisations

Brackets

- Brackets avoid ambiguity:
 - (leadership OR leaders) AND organisations
 - It will not include ... in the search



Truncation / Stemming

- Truncation involves the shortening of the word (*) to allow the inclusion of plurals and similar phrases
 - Eg. Lit* for literature BUT
- lit* - literatures, literature

BUT ALSO littleness, litigation, lithography

Best truncation would be
literature*

Proximity Searches

- Good to use for phrases: “21st century organisation”
- Using a proximity search you can search for your keywords in proximity to each other
- Use the search help to find proximity searches but in general it is designated by the “/”
 - Eg. within same sentence: **leadership /s organisation**
 - Eg. within same paragraph: **leadership /p organisation**

Wildcards

- If you are looking for a word that has a plural in the word, you can use a wildcard
 - Usually designated by “?”
- Eg. searching for articles on woman and women in general
 - You would use **wom?n** instead and it would bring results back with both woman and women in it.



Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Sources **do not clearly relate** to the research problem;
- **Lack of defining and identifying** the most relevant sources related to the research problem;
- Relying exclusively on **secondary analytical sources**;
- **Uncritically accepting** another researcher's findings and interpretations
- Reporting **isolated statistical** results rather than synthesizing them; and,
- Only including research that **validates assumptions**

Summary

- Demonstrates a **familiarity** with a body of knowledge and establishes the credibility of your work;
- Summarises **prior research** and says how your project is linked to it;
- **Integrates and summarises** what is known about a subject;
- Demonstrates that **you have learnt from others** and that your research is a starting point for new ideas.

References & Tools

- Lawrence A. M. & Brenda T. M. 2009. *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Curtin University Library – The Literature Review:
<http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/c.php?g=202406&p=1332621>
- Queens Margaret University - Writing a Literature Review :
<http://archive.qmu.ac.uk/els/docs/writing%20a%20literature%20review.pdf>
- Academic Literacy Workshop (compiled by Ellen Hurst) -
<https://vula.uct.ac.za/access/content/user/01407397/Academic%20literacy%20workshop/Academic%20Literacy%202012%20-%20Final%20Edition.pdf>
- Literature Review Matrix Table (templates & examples):
<https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/writingcenter/assignments/literaturereview/organization>



Elizabeth.Moll-Willard@uct.ac.za

Andiswa.Mfengu@uct.ac.za

Thank you!



UCT LIBRARIES