Week 5

Reviewing the Related Literature

Day to Do Task	Week 5 Daily Writing Tasks	Estimated Task Time
Day 1 (Monday?)	Read through page 163 and fill in the boxes on those pages; start documenting your time (page 169)	60 minutes
Day 2 (Tuesday?)	Evaluate your current citations (pages 163–164)	60 minutes
Day 3 (Wednesday?)	Identify and read the related literature (pages 164–167)	8 hours
Day 4 (Thursday?)	Evaluate the related literature (pages 167–168)	60+ minutes
Day 5 (Friday?)	Write or revise your related literature review (page 168)	120+ minutes

Above are the tasks for your fifth week. Make sure to start this week by scheduling when you will write and then tracking the time that you actually spend writing. This week involves a lot of reading, so make sure you allot enough time to do the tasks.

FOURTH WEEK IN REVIEW

You have now spent four weeks working on your article. You have worked on designing a writing plan, finalizing your abstract, developing your argument and threading it throughout your article, and identifying appropriate journals for publication. If you have been writing at least fifteen minutes a day, you are doing great!

If you are still not writing regularly or getting around to all the tasks you had hoped to do—don't feel guilty! Guilt about the past prevents you from action in the present. When you feel bad, it is difficult to get motivated. As a friend once said, you can't hate yourself into changing. Accept that developing good writing habits often takes longer than four weeks. Then shake off those negative feelings and just focus on today. Today is just as good a day to get started as yesterday, and if you are rereading this tomorrow or in a month or a year, today is still a good day to get started. Since this workbook breaks revising an article down into small steps, you have help in setting reachable goals.

No matter what you did this last week, take a minute to write in the chart below a positive message to yourself about writing. In it, be kind to yourself and be hopeful. If this makes you uneasy, remember what Samuel Johnson wisely said, that intellectuals often believe that an "unwillingness to be pleased" is the proof of intelligence. It is "much easier to find reasons for rejecting than embracing," he points out (Johnson 1751). So let the embrace be a triumph over the quotidian. In academia, we tend to deify the hostile and the negative. Dare to be positive! You can also phone or e-mail a friend to do this exercise in dialogue.

Positive Message to Myself about Writing

Last week you learned that many journals need you more than you need them. You studied the various types of academic journals and which types were best for your article. Then you worked on reviewing several journals, both to evaluate their rank and to determine if they would be a good match for the article you are revising. These steps will help you in revising your article for a particular journal. You then worked on a query letter to the editor of prospective journals. If the editors respond, you can determine which journal would be most receptive to your article. This week you will focus on improving your literature review.

READING THE SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

As mentioned, you must relate your research to the previous research in order to be published. Yet, when most scholars think about reading in their field, a wave of anxiety sweeps over them. There is so much to read! With at least 200,000 journal articles published annually, and over 275,000 new books published every year in the United States alone (Bowker 2008),[26] it is impossible to keep up. Even a good reader, someone who manages to read five books a week, week in and week out, will only read 250 books a year or about 10,000 books over a career. Since most read more like one book a week, or 2,000 books total, our ability to read even a fraction of what is published in our discipline is limited. I was in a conference room in the early 1990s when an older professor said he could remember when it was possible to read everything published in his field. A sigh of longing went around the room.

It is essential then to abandon the hope of being comprehensive in your reading. No one is reading everything in his or her discipline. If you stop feeling guilty about what you are not reading, you can start a plan for reading what you can.

When I was a graduate student, I had the great good fortune of landing a job as an abstractor. I worked on a bibliographic project in my field in which I was required to read books and articles and write an abstract about them. Over a three-year period, I abstracted over 2,000 books and articles. I

was expected to read each piece and write an abstract about it in twenty minutes. When I started the job, this requirement seemed absolutely insane. Twenty minutes! To "read" a 300-page book? I had taken a speed-reading course in high school, and the job still seemed impossible. By the end of my first year, twenty minutes still seemed too little time, but I now thought thirty minutes would do the job. What changed my mind? I learned what to look for.

When you start graduate school, reading takes a long time. You're lucky to get through a twenty-page article in two hours. Then, when you look at your reading assignments for class, much less for your own research, you can feel discouraged. When you are starting out, you must read slowly because you are still trying to get an understanding of basic concepts and approaches. Fortunately, the more you read, the easier it gets.

As you go along, you should be able to read more and more quickly. Then you will learn to skim. That's what I learned to do as an abstractor. The more I read, the more I learned not to read for elegant language or general information. I learned that what I needed to know from any piece was the same: the topic, the approach, and the argument. That's it. To learn that, I could read the back of the book or jacket flap and the first few pages of the introduction. With an article, I could read the abstract and introduction. Then I could make an informed choice about what to read more thoroughly. Skimming is easier to do in some fields than others. The structure of science and social science articles are designed for skimming. Humanities articles that announce their project on page ten are not. Still, once you learn the conventions of your field, you can learn to skim almost anything. Once you have skimming skills, you still have a lot to read and absorb. How do you do that?

TYPES OF SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

All published journal articles cite other written materials, loosely known as "the literature." These citations of the literature fall into distinct categories. Knowing these categories can help you think about how to go about reading and citing this literature.

Original literature. These creative or documentary texts are rarely based on other texts; they are sometimes called "primary sources." If you are writing about fiction, novels and poetry would serve as your original literature or primary source; if you are writing about the visual arts, the images; about music, the scores; about architecture, the buildings. For instance, if you are a historian, you usually have many primary sources, from diaries and letters to newspapers and pamphlets. In the social sciences, if you are doing ethnographic or qualitative studies, the original literature consists of the words of your subjects. If you are writing about how women make economic decisions, their own words from interviews or focus groups would be your primary source. If you are analyzing government statistics, the government documents would be your primary sources. Much of what I say in this chapter doesn't apply to reading and writing about original literature. That's because you must engage with your original literature at a deep level; there are no shortcuts.

What is my original or primary literature for this article?	

Derivative literature. These texts for the general public are based on secondary sources (and thus are sometimes called "tertiary literature"). This is the type of literature that tends to fill classroom papers and should ***not*** be used for journal articles. As an undergraduate, you are expected to list all your sources and so your bibliography will often include general websites, encyclopedia entries, popular magazine articles, almanacs, and textbooks. By the time you are writing for publication, these kinds of citations make up no part of your bibliography. You do not need to include citations of where you found basic information such as the size of a country, the date of a text, the name of a particular year's Nobel-prize winner, the general meaning of a term, and so on. The rule is that if the information appears in many sources, and you are not quoting it directly, you do not need to cite where you found it. Of course, it is always wise to footnote the source of absolutely everything when you are writing, in case any questions arise. You can delete many of these later when submitting for publication (so long as you haven't quoted the derivative source directly). (One note: If you tend to get sucked into the internet looking for basic information like correct spellings or when a person died, it is better to buy and load an electronic encyclopedia onto your hard drive. It is much easier to find information quickly in such sources than on the internet. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* is my favorite.)

One common mistake that students make is citing derivative literature when they should be citing scholarly literature. For instance, you cannot cite ***Newsweek*** as a source on inflammation and disease, or cite a classroom website as a source for a quote from Julius Wilson. The real source of the information is not in the magazine or website, they are themselves quoting from articles in journals or published books. Derivative literature is never an adequate source for original quotes from scholars or for experimental data. Learn to use the right body of literature for the right purpose.

Contextual literature. These texts have background information on your topic. Students can spend infinite amounts of time on this category of literature. Try to avoid tracking down obscure information about the historical, epochal, geographical, economic, demographic, aesthetic, or political context of your subject. If you are writing an article about Frances Burney's *Evelina*, you may not need to read an entire book about eighteenthcentury London. If you are writing an article about risky traditional practices associated with HIV transmission, you may not need to read a book about the biology of disease transmission. Only you can decide what is relevant; just be careful to limit this kind of reading so that you can actually finish your article.

How can I limit my reading of the contextual literature for this article?	

Methodological literature. These texts attack or defend the methodology you are using. If you know your methodology has its challengers, address this upfront by citing scholarly literature that addresses the methodology's shortcomings or strengths. If your methodology is common and accepted, you may not need to read this body of literature. Citations to methodological literature often appear in published articles because peer reviewers questioned the method and the author had to find support for it.

Do I need to cite methodological literature in this article?	

Theoretical literature. These texts supply you with conceptual approaches to your topic (e.g., feminist or queer theory, critical pedagogy, behavioral approaches). Scholars often read this category of literature long before writing any particular article. Your coursework as a graduate student should have introduced you to various theoretical approaches in your field. This early reading often has shaped your general thinking and may have inspired your argument in its first form. Citing these "classics," as they are sometimes called, signals your scholarly camp.

What is my theoretical literature for this article?	

Related literature. These texts are the prior research on your exact topic. As discussed in Week 2, to get published, your research must be demonstrably related to what has been written before on the topic. This is the "related literature." For many students, this point—that they must cite the related literature—is one of the most difficult concepts to grasp. Perhaps this is because a student can write a number of classroom papers without ever being asked to comment on what has already been written on the topic, especially in the humanities. Students know that they are supposed to reference various theories and theoreticians (like Giorgio Agamben, Theodor W. Adorno, or Judith Butler), but they don't always know that they are expected to cite those ordinary beings like themselves who have written on the topic itself. For instance, if you are writing about Stendahl's *Le Rouge et le noir* or the semiconductor industry, you must articulate how your article relates to the arguments of previous scholarly research on that book or industry. If you are writing about the causes of a social problem, you must discuss the research of those who have previously claimed to identify its causes. If you are challenging the premises of a particular policy, you must analyze the previous research on that policy. This week's tasks help you to focus on writing about related literature.

STRATEGIES FOR GETTING READING DONE

If scholars rarely talk about the process of writing, they almost never talk about their process of reading. It seems useful to share some strategies.

Reading Theoretical Literature

If you are in the humanities or interpretive social sciences, don't decide that you are one of those students who "doesn't do theory." Everything is theoretical. Everything you write is influenced by some theory, whether you know it or not. As John Maynard Keynes said some time ago, "Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slave of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back" (Keynes 1936). So, don't get intimidated. Trust your instinct that quite a bit of theorizing is a case of the emperor's new clothes. Your article doesn't have to be packed with theoretical references; you just need to articulate your theoretical approach to your topic and to display a grasp of that approach. To get this grasp, try the following.

Take theory courses. If you have not read much theory, it is easier to learn the basics orally than to read such texts on your own. Although such courses can seem intimidating and frustrating, try to use the class to focus on what theories would be helpful to you in thinking about your interests.

Read with an expert. Ask to do an independent study with a professor in your field. That way you can read the seminal theoretical works and then discuss them with someone knowledgeable. This will further your understanding of their import.

Read book reviews. Reading book reviews is a great way to keep abreast of your field, theoretical approaches, and the related literature. As one author put it, "book reviews, not books, [are] the principal engines of change in the history of thought." Precisely because they reduce and summarize, they contribute the "distortions" that are essential to the "forward flow" of scholarship (Baker 1991, 64). If you don't have the money to subscribe to periodicals with book reviews, check out the free online book reviews at the H-Net website www.h-net.msu.edu. Many book reviews also appear in online databases as well.

Read biographies of theoreticians. It can be easier to grasp a thinker's ideas in the context of his or her life. Excellent biographies have been written about a number of the important twentieth-century thinkers. Many of them had fascinating lives, so such books can be more leisurely reading, something you dip into as a break from other reading.

Buy and use reference books. Always have on hand some books that summarize important concepts, theories, and terms. Some excellent sources in the humanities are the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, *Critical Theory Since Plato*, *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*, *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, *How to Do Theory*, or *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. Such books have brief, extremely helpful descriptions of important theories. These summaries help you identify theoreticians whose thoughts would be useful to your argument. When you turn to the theoretician's

actual work, having read the summaries helps you to understand the original better and more quickly. It is often more important to know what scholars now think about, for example, Durkheim, then what Durkheim actually said or, realistically, what you think Durkheim said. (Unless Durkheim's thought is your whole subject.) The reference books may enable you to go straight to the most relevant pages in the theoretician's work. As a famous theoretician recently admitted, "I'm going to say this officially, so you can use it. I don't care. . . . Do you know that I have not seen a lot of the films that I write about? For example in *Enjoy Your Symptom* there is a long chapter on Rossellini. I haven't seen the films. I tried to, but they are so boring. They're so boring! . . . Now, I will reveal something [else] to you: often I don't have time to read the books about which I write. I will not tell you which ones. More and more (My God! This is a horrible thing to say!) I rely on summaries like *Cliffs Notes*" (Zˇiizˇek 2003). Believe me, he is not the only one. I'm not holding him up as a model (except of scholarly courage) but as a reminder that we live in the real world, not the ideal one. All professions have Faustian bargains—for many scholars the deal they must strike is between reading and writing.

Subscribe to public intellectual newspapers. One of the best ways to learn theory is to subscribe to newspapers that publish the work of intellectuals. In such forums, scholars often present their theories in shorter form and in language that is more accessible. They also tend to be more open about their feuds with other scholars. Finally, this kind of reading tends to be a lot more fun than most peer-reviewed journals.

One of the best is the *Times Literary Supplement*, a famous British weekly, often called the *TLS*, which reviews important scholarly books. Leading figures in the field usually do its reviews, contextualizing the book theoretically and helping you get a better sense for the placement of the book in the scholarly firmament. A comparable U.S. publication is the *New York Review of Books* (not to be confused with the *New York Times Book Review*), although it tends to have a narrower range of interpretation than *TLS*. Depending on your field or interests, periodicals like *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, or *The New Republic* also have useful book reviews and articles.

An outstanding publication is the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, a weekly newspaper about universities. It includes articles about the business of academia, a list of scholarly books published that week, short articles by scholars about their work, and excerpts from forthcoming books. It also has many first-person articles about the joys and frustrations of being a scholar, often quite funny or moving. You can get an excellent sense for major trends by reading this newspaper. I think it is the most interesting periodical being published in the United States today. If you plan to become a professor, you should consider subscribing or at least read the online version.

Reading Related Literature

Reading the related literature requires slightly different skills than reading the theoretical literature. It usually consists of reading peerreviewed journals. Here are some tips for doing so.

Set up your bibliographic software. It is a hassle to set up reference management software like Endnote but if you haven't done it yet, you need to do it now. The most frustrating aspect of setting up Endnote is making it actually work with your word processing software. For instance, you must still go into Microsoft Word tools to set up the link to Endnote. If you need help, see if you can get IT support to run a group session helping people in your department load the software on their laptops. Once it is up and running, it will save you time for the rest of your career.

Winnow your reading list. It is easy to drown in the related research. Your article is not your last statement on the subject and should not be comprehensive. Many articles are published that reference just five to ten related articles. Read only those materials that aid you in filling a real gap in your article over those materials that take you in a new and fascinating direction. Using your argument to guide your choices is important. Have a winnowing strategy by eliminating certain categories of materials. Some limiters that scholars use are to set aside those materials written:

- some time ago (e.g., read nothing written over ten years ago, or five or two, depending on your field)
- in another language (e.g., read articles in English and French not Spanish)
- in questionable or nonrecommended publishing outlets (e.g., don't read conference proceedings)
- for journals outside your discipline (e.g., read anthropology journals not sociology journals)
- by certain kinds of authors (e.g., read well-known authors not graduate students)
- on a different geographical area (e.g., read articles on West Africa not Southern Africa)
- on a different context (e.g., read articles on public hospitals not private hospitals)
- or a different time period (e.g., read articles about the nineteenth century not the eighteenth century)
- about different kinds of experiments (e.g., read quantitative studies not qualitative studies)
- about different kinds of participants (e.g., read studies of the elderly not teenagers)
- using different variables (e.g., read studies of age and gender, not age and race)
- without your keyword in the title or abstract (e.g., read only those articles with your keyword)
- in nonelectronic formats (e.g., read only those articles electronically accessible in full from your home computer)

I am not insisting that you use any of these particular methods of winnowing (the last one in particular is problematic). Many a scholar has gotten famous by ignoring such limits and deciding to review a category of related literature that no one else had looked at closely, like that in other languages or in dissertations. So, the choice is up to you. Just acknowledge from the outset that you cannot read everything. Have a strategy for reading rather than embarking on reading 300 articles and

books in the next week and then reading only the first three on the list, which may not be relevant.

Make reading social. Start a journal club that meets once a week or once a month, and have each person report on an article that he or she read. That way you share the work. Often, you will learn more from the discussion of the article than you would by just reading it.

Schedule library reading. In scientific disciplines, graduate students were regularly given the advice to spend Friday afternoons in the periodical section of their university library. Building journal reading into your weekly schedule is an excellent idea regardless of your discipline. It keeps you up-to-date on trends and names and enables you to hold fruitful conversations with others in your field. Concentrate on those issues with articles of direct interest.

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Read the newest material first. It is frustrating to read several older books on a topic and then read the most recent book, because the most recent book often summarizes the previous ones, reviews them, and offers the best way forward. You can always go back to the older books, but it's best to start with the newest so that you don't waste time taking notes on ideas that have been dismissed or improved upon.

Limit note taking. When students start out, they find themselves using their notes to reproduce the articles they read. That's because everything about the article seems relevant, not to mention intimidatingly smart and well-thought-out. You copy down every sentence that seems particularly well put. By the time you are done taking notes, you could give a conference presentation on each article. At most, you will have space in your 5,000to 15,000-word article for a quote or two, or maybe just one reference, from this source. Most of those words need to be your own words. Having dozens of great quotes can be an obstacle to writing an article about what you think. So, remember, when reading you aren't looking for quotes, you are looking for debates and arguments.

Don't wait to write. A student once confessed in my class that she had spent a year reading intensively, hours every day, and taking copious notes. At the end of the year, she sat down to write, picking up the notes from her first text. Unfortunately, she could not make heads or tails of her notes.

She had put exclamation marks next to quotes she no longer understood the import of, and her self-admonitions were now nonsense to her (e.g., "I have no idea what I meant by my note 'make sure to address agency in this context' "). "I wish," she said, "that I had started writing at the beginning and inserted material where it seemed relevant. If I had written up just a paragraph on each text, something about what I found important about the text and how it related to my argument I would be a farther ahead. I have enough for ten books here." It is best to try to read a bit, write up what is relevant, and then read some more and write some more.

Some Famous Reading Habits

It is interesting to learn about the reading habits of productive scholars.

Henry A. Giroux is famous for forwarding critical pedagogy and writing synthesizing articles in the discipline of education. In an interview, he described his reading process. "When I first started writing, I used to put everything down on cards, file them, and then go over them when trying to write. This method failed miserably for me because by the time I finished my research I could barely remember what I had read initially, and simply rereading a number of cards loaded with various ideas just did not prove useful to me. The method I developed over thirty years ago and still use today seemed to solve the problem of working with a short memory and trying to engage a great deal of information and sources in order to do justice to any particular topic. Here's how it works. Whenever I read something, I mark off in the text those paragraphs that contain important organizing ideas. I might circle a paragraph and write an organizing idea in the margins. When I finish the piece, I copy it and go through a cut-and-paste procedure in which I type out the source on the top of a piece of paper, type in the organizing ideas from the piece (article, chapter, and so on), and place the paragraph underneath its respective organizing idea. Hence I may read a twenty-page piece by, let's say, Fred Jameson. In that piece, I may find fifteen sections that I have marked as important. I then reference the piece, type out the organizing ideas starting with the order in which I read the piece. I then paste the respective paragraphs under the typed heading. In the end, I may end up with a four-page cut-out of Jameson's piece. I then duplicate it so I can have a clean copy and I file the original. When my research is done, I read all of the cut-and-paste articles, one by one, and I write next to each paragraph in each article an organizing idea. I then type out a cover sheet listing all of the organizing ideas for each working article. I then paste all of the cover sheets on artist boards and try to figure out from reading the sheets how I might develop my arguments. The method really works for me. Moreover, I file everything that I cut and paste, and when necessary I can go back and read my notes and familiarize myself with any number of issues, traditions, or theoretical concerns in a short period of time. I must say, though, that after using this method for over twenty-five years, I have more notes than I can possibly ever read" (Giroux 2003, 102–103). His former student Peter McLaren well remembers Giroux's process of reading, writing comments in the margin, typing, cutting sources to

just one page each, and then posting those pages around his writing station to read while he wrote.

Edward O. Wilson is a Pulitzer-prize winning Harvard sociobiologist and public intellectual famous for trying to integrate the sciences and the humanities. He has a publication list of over twenty books, including *The Ants* (1990) and *The Future of Life* (2002), and over four-hundred journal articles, many of which have each been cited in thousands of other journals and books. His reading method is that he subscribes to sixty journals, from the *New York Review of Books* to *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Belgium*. He spends his mornings reading whichever journals arrived the previous day and taking notes. He then goes to one of his favorite restaurants for lunch and spends two hours writing at one of the tables. Since he is retired, he now takes the afternoons off (Ringle 1998).

Klaus Herding is a now retired German art historian who spent some time doing research at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. An art history graduate student I know remembers Herding reading five books every morning. He arrived at work at 7:00 a.m. and read until about 10:30 a.m. That's about forty-five minutes per book. He did this to keep up with the literature and to find valuable references for his own work. He claimed that the routine of it was so familiar that he could actually read quite a bit and retain much of it. Perhaps it is not surprising that over his career he published more than 250 scholarly articles and books.

Even if you never read as much as these three successful scholars, you can learn from their principles of reading: reduce articles to their essence, read and write in the same day, subscribe to journals, and learn to skim.

IDENTIFYING YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE RELATED LITERATURE

Once you have embarked on reading the related literature, then what? How do you cite prior scholarship? You need to start by identifying your general relationship to the related literature and then continue by evaluating that literature. Establishing your relationship to previous arguments in the related literature doesn't have to take much space—in your introduction it can be just a sentence or paragraph.

What's Your Entry Point?

Two scholars usefully call your argument's relationship to previous arguments your "entry point," your way into the ongoing scholarly conversation on a topic (Parker and Riley 1995). If you imagine your article as entering into a conversation, it makes perfect sense that you wouldn't just walk into a room and start talking about your own ideas. If there were people already in the room, you would listen to them for a while first. If you decided to speak, you would do so because you agreed or

disagreed with something someone else said. If the conversation went on for a long time without addressing some topic dear to you, you might say, "I notice that we haven't talked about such and such yet." In all cases, you would acknowledge the conversation and then make your point.

A useful aspect of this conversation analogy is that it focuses your mind on argument. You wouldn't walk into a room and portentously announce descriptive information (e.g., *Midnight's Children* was published in 1981 or South African elections were held in 1994). Everyone in the room already knows this basic information. Such statements aren't argumentative. Remember, an argument is something you can coherently respond to by saying, "I agree" or "I disagree." You enter into the conversation by supporting an argument, debating an argument, or announcing that an argument needs to be made. Therefore, your entry point is where your argument enters the debate occurring in the previous research on the topic.

Let's look at some examples in published articles of authors announcing their relationship to previous research, their entry point.

- Specialists in communication have called for additional research into traditionally accepted rhetorical strategies. [*Extending past research is a traditional entry point.*] We do research on Grice's theory of indirection. [*You are providing that additional research.*] We conclude Grice's theory of indirection is adequate for explaining how bad news is delivered and understood.[27] [*Your Argument.*]
- [The capital asset pricing model is] still the preferred model for classroom use in MBA and other managerial finance courses. [*Questioning a policy or practice is a traditional entry point.*] [While] econometricians have empirically rejected its predictions and financial theorists have criticized its restrictive assumptions, . . . no one to our knowledge has studied [the capital asset pricing model] in an evolutionary framework.[28] [*Filling a gap in the literature is a traditional entry point.*]
- Textbooks warn writers to avoid the passive voice, but actual scientific texts commonly feature such discourse. [*Addressing a contradiction is a traditional entry point.*] We have conducted a study on when scientific writers chose the passive voice in order to provide guidance for other writers.[29] [*You are solving the contradiction.*]
- Conventional assimilation theory has begun to be disputed for the children of recent immigrants. [*Weighing in one side of a debate is a traditional entry point.*] We look at how retaining an immigrant culture affects education. [*You are providing data for the question of whether conventional assimilation theory should be disputed.*] Retaining an immigrant culture, rather than assimilating into the dominant one, increases educational success.[30] [*Argument.*]
- Although educational attainment levels have improved somewhat, Latino students continue to

enter school later, leave school earlier, and receive proportionately fewer high school diplomas and college degrees than other Americans. [*Addressing a social failure is a traditional entry point.*] We are interested in showing how changing social relationships, activities, and structures within the high school and university could raise Latino students' eligibility for UC admission.[31] [*You are offering a solution to the problem of low Latino educational attainment.*]

All of these entry points can be reduced to three traditional positions you can have regarding the previous research:

- finding it inadequate or nonexistent and filling the gap,
- finding it sound and extending it, and
- finding it unsound and correcting it.

Since articles often depend on several bodies of research, sometimes all three of these positions coexist in the same article. Let's look at these three positions more closely.

Addressing a gap in previous research. Identifying a gap (or more than one) in the literature and setting out to fill it is one of the most common endeavors of journal articles. It is also a strong claim for significance. Just be sure that your claim is correct if you say that very few scholars have addressed your topic, or no scholar has addressed your topic in quite your way. I have seen peer reviewers send more than one submission back to an author with the literature gap claim crossed through and a list of published works penned next to it. Also, if no one has written on the topic before, or in quite your way, you may have to prove to the reader that the topic or approach is important. That is, the reader may suspect that the gap is there for a reason. Below are some examples in published articles of author positioning based on a gap in the literature.

Humanities:

- Little attention has been paid to those texts that do not circulate primarily within identified feminist circles or feminist cultures, but which are located at the point of feminism's perceived entry into the public written discourse of the mainstream or of those in power. . . . Paying attention to such texts . . . has profound consequences.[32]

Social Sciences:

- A key to sustainable resource planning is effective implementation of management plans. Despite its obvious significance, planning implementation remains a relatively neglected area of planning research... The purpose of this article is to help address this gap in the literature

by reporting results of a case study evaluation of a regional land and resource management plan in British Columbia, Canada.[33]

Extending previous research. Approving of and using other scholars' theories to analyze new subjects is also a common scholarly position. Thus, naming authors or articles you find useful is part of positioning yourself vis-à-vis the previous research. This can be as simple as identifying the school, movement, or tradition your research participates in. For instance, stating that your work is "psychoanalytic," or using the word "postcolonial," positions you as part of a stream of research. Below are some examples of authors positioning themselves positively vis-à-vis previous research.

Humanities:

- What I propose is a theory of interpretation based on what I refer to as the 'simultaneity of discourse,' a term inspired by Barbara Smith's seminal work on black feminist criticism.[34]
- In my search for a methodological device for a critical inquiry into Third World films, I have drawn upon the historical works of this ardent proponent of liberation [Frantz Fanon], whose analysis of the steps of the genealogy of Third World culture can also be used as a critical framework for the study of Third World films.[35]
- I situate my own reading of the rape in *A Passage to India* within the current effort of feminist theory to account for the heterogeneous text of women's history.[36]

Social Sciences:

- If it is taken seriously, this result confirms the theory of Li and Lui (2004) that a [state-owned enterprise] SOE with comparatively worse performance than an average private firm is more likely to privatize, lending supports to the efficiency hypothesis. However, since the significance level is low and the regression for privately controlled firms does not provide a significant result, this conclusion should be accepted with care.[37]
- The paper examines the impact of financial sector liberalization (FSL) policies on the financial management of small and mediumsized enterprises (SME) in Ghana, using six case studies. Its findings, which confirm and extend the conclusions of previous studies, are integrated into a framework that explains the impact of FSL and the factors at work.[38]

Correcting previous research. Another traditional position is stating that scholarly approaches to a subject are erroneous and that your article will overturn such misconceptions. For graduate students, this is often the most tempting position. And it can even be the right one. Just be sure to give credit where credit is due, to keep your tone collegial, and to acknowledge how others' work enables your work. Note the careful way in which the authors below announce their intentions vis-à-vis the

previous research. They often speak about offering a contrasting or alternate opinion rather than an outright rebuttal.

Humanities:

- I hope to be able to interrogate some of the impressive claims made for [Rudyard Kipling's] *Kim* . . . In doing so, I am aware that I am reading somewhat against the critical consensus on *Kim*.[39]
- Spanish American literature has been studied mostly through the thematic or biographical approach . . . However interesting these approaches may be . . . they have not been very helpful, for instance, in evaluating the intrinsically aesthetic merits of a work.[40]

Social Sciences:

- Although many argue that conflict is a result of group solidarity, psychological research finds strikingly little evidence that this is true. Some research even finds that more cohesive groups are more likely to employ cooperative strategies in prisoners' dilemma situations... Overall, the preponderance of evidence suggests that, as argued here, situations of intergroup conflict can promote the cohesion of the groups involved, though not in all situations.[41]

What's my entry point? Do I state it clearly? Do I show how my argument relates to previous arguments?	

It can be that you have multiple entry points—you are addressing a gap in one body of literature, correcting some assumptions of another body of literature, and agreeing with a third body of literature.

What Is a Related Literature Review?

Above, I asserted the importance of positioning your article vis-à-vis the previous research, of articulating your entry point into the scholarly conversation. This can sometimes be done quite briefly; for instance, by stating something as simple as "no research has been done on Chicana labor in Boyle Heights factories; this article fills that gap." But what if there is a lot of literature on your topic? Or what if you disagree with what little has been written? Or what if you think that another body of research entirely can help us think about your topic? Then you must write what's called a related literature review.

For many students, the related literature review is one of the most difficult parts of the article to write. It is easy to air one's own ideas; it is not always easy to summarize and evaluate others' usefully. Related literature reviews vary so much from published article to published article that it can be difficult to determine what the common elements to such reviews are. Sometimes a literature

review makes up the entire content of the article, sometimes just a paragraph.

A related literature review is an evaluation of the existing scholarship on your topic or significant to your topic. If your entry point is stating how your argument relates to previous arguments, a related literature review is an evaluative summary of those previous arguments. The literature review notes the previous research's relationships, limitations, problematic interpretations, inadequate approaches, and so on. The literature review is used to establish the significance and origin of your argument, to defend your approach or methodology, and to show your relationship to what has come before. It is a typical part of many articles' introductions.

One of the best ways to think about writing a related literature review is to imagine yourself telling a colleague about a debate you overheard. You report who participated in the debate (and sometimes who didn't), who took what side, who was most convincing to you, who the least. Then you note what would make an argument more convincing, points that weren't made, or points that could be better made with other evidence. If you hope to keep your colleague interested, you will not give a he-said, she-said version of the debate. It is not useful to anyone to reproduce verbatim all the statements made in the debate. What is useful is to summarize and evaluate it.

In a book, and especially in a dissertation, the related literature review is often exhaustive. No related book is left unturned. In an article, however, you must be more efficient. You cannot individually summarize every article and book written on the topic. You also can't list all the information to be gleaned from them. At the same time, you cannot just provide a list of titles and call it a related literature review. In writing a related literature review for an article, you must focus on evaluating the existing literature with your argument firmly in mind. This allows you to select and group the related research into sides of a debate and then review each side rather than working your way through each piece.

So, for instance, if you are writing about race and *Wuthering Heights*, you would note which of the most famous texts on *Wuthering Heights* do not address race, and then summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the racial analysis of those that did. You might divide the later into two groups, those that address gender as well and those that don't. This is one example of how a related literature review would go. It can be very helpful for you to study the related literature reviews in your field.

Many articles require more than one related literature review, as they are efforts to integrate information from various fields. For instance, if you are writing about Vietnamese immigration to the United States, you may need to review political science research about Vietnamese national politics, history research about U.S. immigration policy, and anthropological research about the living situation of Vietnamese immigrants in the United States. If you are writing about Latino educational attainment in Los Angeles, you might review the research explaining attainment and the research on Latinos in Los Angeles.

Of course, much of your analysis of this research might appear throughout the article and not just in

the introduction, but the introduction is a good point to give a broad overview. In the humanities, you are not required to cite the related literature as much as in the social sciences. But, published articles are always based on a knowledge about what other scholars say, whether the articles actually cite other literature on the topic or don't.

An example of a literature review in the humanities is a review of the scholarship about Samuel Johnson's first play, *Irene*.

> Almost two hundred years later, D. Nichol Smith and E. L. McAdam kindled critical interest with their 1941 edition of Johnson's poetry. Though Smith's introduction to *Irene* is uncritical, his blanket dismissal of literary indebtedness sparked Betrand Bronson's 1944 essay, "Johnson's 'Irene.' " Comparing the play to other dramatic versions, Bronson says that Johnson robbed Irene of tragic appeal and made Aspasia the heroine: "The exigencies of the dramatist are irreconcilable with the requirements of the Christian moralist." Likewise Leopold Damrosch concludes: "Johnson the moralist has overwhelmed Johnson the tragedian."
>
> Some bold critics, however, have attempted to rescue the play from naïve and uninteresting dramatics. Philip Clayton argues its success as a neoclassic drama, and Marshall Waingrow insists that the moral question is not simple. In his enthusiasm to find Johnson always a shrewd and compassionate moralist, Waingrow contends that the play focuses on an issue larger and more subtle than apostasy: the inextricable link between vice and virtue. Thus, he can maintain that Irene is the legitimate heroine who betters Aspasia's advice. Waingrow misses the mark. He strains the evidence to claim complexity for what is an unseasoned Johnson's biased and unimaginative moral lesson.[42]

Below is an example of the type of very short related literature review one often sees in humanities articles.

> A work *of Gyn/Ecology***'s** scope and passionate intensity can hardly fail to generate controversy. Mary Daly has been criticized for promoting a racist rhetoric, for abrogating the right of third world women to determine the analysis of their own culture and their own oppression, and for minimizing the material conditions of women's lives. I agree with those criticisms, but my concern in this article is a much more limited one. I want to discuss some aspects of Mary Daly's poetics (her theory and practice as a writer); take up the connection made by Laleen Jayamanne between the politics of Daly's writing and her relationship to romanticism; and then make a couple of comparisons between *Gyn/Ecology* and the work of Luce Irigaray, another feminist for whom work in and with language is of prime political importance.[43]

An example of a literature review in the interpretive social sciences appears in an article about how couples view images of romance and marriage in film. The literature review is organized by the scholarly debate.

> Such questions go to the heart of a continuing debate about whether global media and culture industries deny opportunities for those who constitute "the masses" to experience "authentic" emotions and culture. For some theorists, the very existence of modern information technologies has resulted in an ordering of social relations that denies alternatives to the ruling-class hegemony, and "technology and technological consciousness have themselves produced a new phenomenon in the shape of a uniform and debased 'mass culture' which aborts and silences criticism" (Bottomore in Jenks, 1993: 109). For others, the media are instead viewed as vehicles for "reinforcing" prior dispositions, not cultivating "escapism" or passivity, but capable of satisfying a great diversity of "uses and gratifications"; not instruments of a levelling of culture, but of its democratization (Morley, 1995: 299). . .
>
> At issue here is the conceptualization of 'domination' or 'influence' on the one hand, and 'resistance' on the other. Yet on both sides of the debate, there is a continuing assumption that media texts—at least potentially—have a direct effect on their audiences, and that audiences have direct relationships with those texts. I intend to propose an alternative means of understanding the

audience-text relationship . . . Rather than assuming that media texts influence their audiences, or that audiences resist the messages of media texts, is it possible to consider the case that both audiences and texts are subject to the influence of a cultural logic of the 'romantic'?[44]

An example of an efficient related literature review appears in a qualitative article about educational achievement. It is not organized according to a scholarly debate, but to expose a gap in the literature.

> The success of high achieving Black undergraduates often draws great praise; however, research on Black collegians has focused primarily on those who experience academic difficulty. Although it is critical to comprehend the experience of Black students who struggle academically, it is also imperative to gain an understanding of the within-group differences between Black students. Black high achievers are typical college students in many ways; yet, the issues of Black students and gifted students can come together to shape their experiences in unique ways (Fries-Britt, 1997, 2000; Lindstrom & Van Sant, 1986; Noldon & Sedlacek, 1996, 1998; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). The existing literature on Black high achievers reveals that they often face such challenges as subtle and overt racism; reconciling their racial, ethnic, cultural, and gifted identities; and social isolation (e.g., Cooley, Cornell, & Lee, 1991; Fries-Britt, 1997, 1998, 2000; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Person & Christensen, 1996; Solorzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002; Steele, 1999). These experiences can limit these students' achievement and diminish their motivation. Scholars have discussed the important role that social support structures, such as engagement with other Black students, mentoring, and interactions with faculty, play in helping students overcome negative experiences and obstacles to success (Bonner, 2001; Fries-Britt, 1997, 1998; Freeman, 1999; Noldon & Sedlacek). However, although the literature discusses barriers that Black high achievers face and the role that social support plays in mitigating the impact of these factors, there is less understanding of what pushes these students to continue to strive for academic excellence and pursue their goals despite these challenges.[45]

These four examples from published articles reveal much about what makes for strong related literature reviews. Study your field for examples of how literature review is done in your field.

Common Mistakes in Citing the Literature

Don't cite one source too much. If you cite one article or book throughout your article, or repeatedly in reference to your argument, peer reviewers may suspect that your work is derivative. Don't depend on one secondary source for more than one or two paragraphs at most. Most published articles have twenty to a hundred citations to contextual, methodological, theoretical, and related literature. For instance, a scholar studying disciplinary variation found that the average sociology article included 104 citations while the average philosophy article included 85 (Hyland 2004, 24). If a particular text is your original literature, or the primary source you are studying, you can, of course, reference it repeatedly, but if you cite any other kind of text repeatedly, you will need to make clear that you are not depending on it for the majority of your data or argument.

Don't cite irrelevant literature. If you cite literature that isn't directly related to your topic, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as digressive. For instance, if you are analyzing an educational experiment in which undergraduates do real field research, do not spend half the article discussing various theories of field research.

Don't overcite definitions. Classroom essays can devote pages to scholars' definition of various

terms. Publishable articles don't. It takes a sentence and maybe a footnote to define most terms. Few articles are published that simply dispute other scholars' definitions.

Don't misattribute. If you attribute general beliefs or entire systems of thought to one person, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as unscholarly. For instance, you cannot state in passing that "Howard Winant discovered that race is a socially constructed phenomenon." Thousands have argued for the social construction of identity. At most you could write, "Sociologists since Durkheim have argued that social interaction makes reality; Howard Winant was instrumental in calling attention to the constructed nature of race."

Don't cite the citation. If you cite a scholar's articulation of another scholar's idea, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as unscholarly. That is, don't state, "I am using John Doe's definition of globalization" when Doe is using Arjun Appadurai's definition of globalization. Take the time to find the original definition or articulation of an idea and cite it. Likewise, if Brian Edwards (2007) discusses "what Edward Said called 'traveling theory,' "don't cite Edwards on "traveling theory," cite Said. Just because you found out in Edwards' article that this idea belongs to Said, doesn't mean you have to cite Edwards. It means you must read and cite Said.

Don't cite asides. If you cite as related literature those articles that don't fully address the debate you are engaging in, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as unscholarly. For instance, several articles have been written about "the age of circulation." Don't cite an article for this theory that has only a sentence or two on "the age of circulation." Students who have only read assigned reading for the classroom often make the mistake of using only what has been assigned. Take the time to find articles and books that are devoted to the topic.

Don't cite the derivative. If you cite websites or newspapers as the source of your information about important scholarly arguments and debates, peer reviewers can dismiss your article as unscholarly. For instance, don't base your article on a definition of modernism from an online site about an exhibit at the Tate Gallery in London, even if it is a really good quote. (It can serve as a primary source, just not a secondary source. That is, you can discuss the exhibit definition if you are studying exhibitions or curators.) Don't cite U.S. demographic data from any source but the census (it's easy to find online). Use scholarly sources.

Don't quote too much. Your job is to summarize and evaluate the related literature, not reproduce it. If you have too many quotes, especially block quotes, you are probably not digesting the related literature enough.[46] The literature review should not take up half of your article.

Don't omit citations. If you use the phrases "scholars argue that" or "research shows that," you should always include citations to those scholars' publications or that research. Most editors will not

accept vague references to scholarly trends without citations of actual publications.

Note to Periphery Scholars

What can you do as a scholar if you don't have access to the related literature? Scholars in many parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America do not have access to good libraries or online archives. You have some available tactics, however. First, I have found that scholars often have better access than they think they do. If you have access to the internet, be sure to use Google Scholar and other free services to search for related literature. If you find something that looks interesting, you can often find the author's e-mail address online as well, and e-mail him or her to request a copy of their article. This may even start a helpful conversation, and they may be able to provide other materials. They may be able to identify for you some of the current debates as well. It is the obligation of those scholars in resource-rich environments to aid those who are not. Second, address your limited access directly in cover letters to the editor. Tell the editors that you think you have good data, but you don't have access to the related literature. If the editors like the article, they may also be helpful. Some editors are aware of the difficulties periphery scholars labor under and sometimes want to help. Just do your best to cite at least two articles published in the previous two years.

AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

It can often be difficult to find other scholars with whom you can have frank conversations about plagiarism. The topic is so hot that most professors avoid discussing it except in warnings to their undergraduates. Unfortunately, the blanket advice given to undergraduates cannot always guide you as a person embarking on publication.

Before turning to better advice, let me give the usual warning. We are entering a brave new world where all the documents ever published are going to be available for crosschecking, and the day is coming when many published authors are going to be exposed for their borrowing of others' work. Some of this has already started happening; see the special report on the topic in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Bartlett and Smallwood 2004). New websites like Turnitin.com make it possible to check any article for plagiarism in seconds. Plagiarizing is no longer a lottery game where it is unlikely that your name will ever be picked. It is now an absolute that you will be caught. So, it is extremely important to get in the habit of citing others with care.

If you think that you will be able to defend your borrowing practice, be warned that deans and the general public are not impressed with the following defenses: "I have an excellent memory; I had no idea that I was repeating that work verbatim" or "I feel so bad; I'm such a sloppy notetaker!" or "The pastiche approach is an acceptable postmodern methodology" or "In my culture, this is accepted practice." The issue is so charged that little you say will be seen as anything but an expression of guilt. You may not lose your job or student status, but rumors may follow you for the rest of your

career.

If you are a conscientious scholar, all these warnings will make you anxious. They make me anxious! I wrote this workbook over ten years— what if something I incorrectly copied eight years ago comes back to haunt me? But, such anxiety isn't really helpful. The very fact that you bought this book and have worked hard enough to reach this chapter is an excellent sign that you are unlikely to commit plagiarism with any deliberateness. Still, you may wonder, am I unknowingly committing some academic sin? It is easy to remain uncertain about where citation ends and plagiarism begins. Most students know the basic rules.

- Never take another's entire article (published or unpublished) and represent it as your own.
- Never take an entire article and vary every fourth or fifth word and claim it as your own.
- Never take an entire article and follow the structure and argument of the piece, exactly paralleling the author's train of thought but not quite in his or her language.
- Never take an article, translate it into another language, and claim it as your own.
- Never lift a page or section word for word from another's piece and place it in your own.
- Never lift various paragraphs word for word from another piece and sprinkle them throughout your own.
- Never lift a paragraph or a sentence word for word from another's piece and place it in your own unless you put quote marks around it and add a citation to the original.

If you avoid all of the above, you will never lose a job or your reputation due to accusations of plagiarism.

However, there remains a gray area that is often not emphasized in undergraduate courses: be careful when paraphrasing. Some types of paraphrasing are also considered plagiarism. It is not always enough to paraphrase someone else's work and cite the original. If your wording is too close to their wording, it may be problematic, despite the citation. If you stay too close to one paragraph from one source in one article, you are unlikely to be chased out of the profession. If you do this repeatedly from the same source, you are definitely plagiarizing and can be called to account.

This issue of paraphrase plagiarism is covered in the excellent undergraduate text *The Craft of Research*. The authors give a paragraph verbatim and then show various examples of paraphrasing it that are problematic. Whenever I show their "borderline plagiarism" example to graduate students, half the class exclaims, "Oh my God! I've plagiarized."

Here are the examples, taken directly from *The Craft of Research* (Booth, Colomb, and Williams 1995, 169):

> **Original Sentence:** It is trickier to define plagiarism when you summarize and paraphrase. They are not the same, but they blend so seamlessly that you may not even be aware when you are drifting from summary into paraphrase, then across the line into plagiarism. No matter your intention, close paraphrase may count as plagiarism, even when you cite the source.

Plagiarized Version: It is harder to describe plagiarism when summary and paraphrase are involved, because they differ, their boundaries blur, and a writer may not know that she has crossed the boundary from summary to paraphrase and from paraphrase to plagiarism. Regardless of intention, a close paraphrase is plagiarism, even when the source is cited. This paragraph, for instance, would count as plagiarism of that one (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 169).

Borderline Plagiarized Version: Because it is difficult to distinguish the border between summary and paraphrase, a writer can drift dangerously close to plagiarism without knowing it, even when the writer cites a source and never meant to plagiarize. Many might consider this paragraph a paraphrase that crosses the line (Booth, Colomb, and Williams, 169).

Correctly Summarized Version: According to Booth, Colomb, and Williams, writers sometimes plagiarize unconsciously because they think they are summarizing, when in fact they are closely paraphrasing, an act that counts as plagiarism, even when done unintentionally and sources are cited (169).

Although it is a common practice for students to do what is done above—take a couple sentences from someone else's work, then cut them a bit, vary a few of the words so there is no need for quote marks, and then put a footnote citing the original—this is borderline plagiarizing. If you are doing this repeatedly throughout your article, stop and revise. If you are just doing it occasionally from different sources, I wouldn't obsess about it. Just remember that you want to use your own language as much as possible. As the professor of health sciences Dr. David Hayes-Bautista always says, never do anything that you wouldn't want broadcast on the front page of your local newspaper.

To avoid plagiarizing, here are some helpful tips.

- When reading something useful in another text, try setting that text down and typing what you remember it to have said. Taking notes from memory like this can be a good way to avoid putting things exactly as they did. If you have an excellent memory, this may not work—be sure to check your notes against the original and confirm that they are not too close.
- Take notes in such a way that it is always clear which are your comments on the text and which are quotes or paraphrases from the text. Some have the habit, when taking notes, of always putting their own thoughts or commentary in brackets. I know someone who, when typing notes, uses all capitals for his own thoughts. That way, you know exactly what is taken directly from the text, whether paraphrased or in quote marks.
- Always revise. Any author who is carefully going over every sentence in his or her piece—seeking for ways to improve diction, sentence structure, clarity, and flow—is unlikely to have chunks of others' work remain. Even if a paragraph entered the article wholesale from somewhere else, its integrity won't survive a real revision process. Whenever I see cases of an author getting in trouble for publishing an article that includes word for word paragraphs from others' work, I always find it striking because they clearly aren't revising their work. What kind of author leaves whole paragraphs of their work untouched? The problem with such an author is deeper than merely borrowing.

WRITING ABOUT OTHERS' RESEARCH

Many of us have been reading and writing about research for a number of years. It is still possible to learn a few new techniques for doing this thoroughly and efficiently, however.

Day 1: Reading the Workbook

On the first day of your writing week, you should read the workbook up to this page and answer all the questions posed in the workbook up to this point.

Day 2: Evaluating Your Current Citations

Your first step in identifying how much reading you have left to do is evaluating your existing citations. Use the form below to evaluate whether your article has enough citations of the right type.

	Number of Citations?	More (or less) Citations Needed?	Topics that Need More Citations
Original Literature			
Derivative Literature			
Contextual Literature			
Methodological Literature			
Related Literature			
What percentage of my article is the literature review? Is it too long? Is it too short?			

After filling out this form, ask yourself some hard questions. How much derivative literature do you cite? (It should be zero or close to zero.) Do you cite any related literature? Is your contextual literature or methodological literature taking over the article? What kinds of citations do you need more of? Usually, you need to increase the number of related literature citations.

Day 3: Identifying and Reading the Related Literature

If you have already read the related literature, congratulations! This week is going to be a lot easier. If you haven't, as is often the case, you have some work to do. Your main aim with this article is to attempt to be thorough without bogging down. You are not trying to be comprehensive. Many of us find that starting to read articles is like entering the forest of no return. We just keep going deeper and deeper and getting more and more lost and eventually forgetting the destination we were trying to reach in the first place. I have constructed the following steps to help you in dipping into the related literature but not getting lost in it.

It is extremely important to be realistic about how much you can read. Even if you can read (and understand) a page a minute, that is 60 pages an hour or 240 pages in an afternoon or evening. You can still only read ten books in a packed forty-hour week. Very few people are reading forty hours a week or a page per minute. In the following exercise, you are going to work on skimming materials,

rather than reading them, but you should still end up with a manageable final reading list of only about a dozen materials.

Ask. Ask those in your field what they recommend you read on the topic. What do they consider essential reading and what can be safely skipped? You can also ask a reference librarian for assistance in this task. Many librarians wish more scholars asked them for assistance in finding references, so don't be shy.

Search. First, you need to identify what has been published on your topic. In doing so, you follow much the same techniques as you used to find a suitable journal. Do an electronic search of several article and book databases, do a shelf search, and check the bibliographies of the books and articles you used most in writing your article. Since material is always being added to databases, you might want to do an electronic search using the keywords most closely related to your article even if you did one just six months ago.

Draft a reading list. Once you have done these tasks, collate a list of materials that you intend to skim for their usefulness. Do not spend a lot of time typing this list up, organizing it alphabetically, or otherwise massaging it. It is only a step, not a destination.

How many articles and books did I find on my topic?	

Winnow your reading list. Examine your list of unread references and start doing triage, based on the title and, if you have it, the abstract. Since you cannot read all of the materials you have identified, you must decide which ones you are going to read. See the earlier section on winnowing lists.

How do I intend to winnow my reading list?	

Be especially careful to vet the texts recommended by colleagues. When asked for reading recommendations, some scholars seem to treat this as a memory game in which the more titles they remember, the higher their score. You are more interested in relevance than their recall. If you examine lists of oral recommendations, they are not always closely related to your research. Also, colleagues often insist that you read books that they enjoyed reading, however off topic, "just for general insight." Feel free to read such works; just don't put them on your list of related literature. They are not related. If you end up with a list of more than ten articles and five books, review your list closely. Also, although professors are usually in the business of telling you to read more, more, more, they can sometimes respond well to the request for help in limiting article topics and research. If you started by asking the professor what to read, you might also ask the professor to prioritize that list.

Finalize your reading list. Once you have winnowed the list down, you should prioritize those remaining. You should organize the reading list in order from the most important to least important, so that if you are interrupted, you have been reading to effect. For instance, you may want to prioritize bibliographic articles by reading them first. Dissertations often have great reviews of the related literature. You should end up with no more than two dozen materials on your list. Even if you can read (and understand) a page a minute, reading twenty-four articles of about twenty pages each is eight hours of work.

What materials remain on my reading list?	(On a separate page, print out a list by author and date. Include library call numbers where relevant.)

Skim the identified materials. Since most of us can do research until the cows come home, try to limit this task. It's good to do this task under slightly uncomfortable circumstances. This keeps you focused on skimming, not reading. For instance, do this skimming at the library rather than in the comfort of your own home. One technique I find very effective is to skim articles while standing up in the stacks where I find the journal. In this position, you simply cannot fall into actually reading the article. If you take a pen and note cards, you can write down the citation and its main argument right there, standing. Another technique is to use the book index to focus on the most relevant pages. Remember, you are in the library merely to learn if the materials you have chosen to review are going to be helpful. Since most of us read articles online now, it can be very difficult to limit this type of reading effectively.

Do not, I repeat, *do not* get involved in skimming for future articles or research. Do not get distracted into thinking up completely new directions for your article. You have one purpose in being at the library: to find materials that are going to speed you on your way to sending your article to a journal in twelve weeks.

If, while skimming, you find some articles or books that are going to be helpful to you in revising the article, download the article or photocopy the relevant sections and take them home. Always make sure to photocopy the copyright page so you have all the bibliographic data. Again, don't download or photocopy more than five to ten such articles. If you have more, you won't read them.

You can read the few related sources you have selected in several ways.

Take notes sparingly. Do not seek to "represent" the sources in your notes. You do not have to write a book report on the book or article. You just need to identify the article's argument and which side of various debates it is on. If you can use your note-taking to start writing up your related literature review, all the better. That is, start writing up sentences about the source: "This article argues that . . . The author takes the side of...A weakness of this article is . . ." If you can do miniature book reviews of the book, evaluating not summarizing, that can also help.

Highlight. If the source is your own copy or book, you can read it and put pencil check marks in the

margin next to useful material. You can put one check mark next to material that you find interesting, two check marks next to material that would be useful, and three check marks next to material you absolutely must include in your article. When you are done reading the book and placing your checkmarks, sit down at your computer and take notes on the material where you put three check marks. I find that, when I am reading, all sorts of things interest me and get check marks, but when I go back through, only the three check marks really matter, and a review of the two check marks shows only some of them are relevant. It's a way of tricking my perfectionist impulses. If you do this, be sure to type up your notes within a day or two of reading the material so you can remember why you checkmarked what you did.

Read and insert. Another technique is to sit down at your computer with your photocopies or electronic sources and open an electronic version of your article. Start reading the related literature, and when you come to entirely relevant material—such as the argument or a review of a scholarly debate—immediately turn to your article and add a sentence in the paragraph to which it relates. Be sure to include the reference. If you are not exactly sure how to incorporate the material into your article at a certain point, put it in a footnote. It may become clearer later how you can move this information up into the text. Most of the time, you end up deleting such material so don't add too much. The concept here is that note taking can involve you too much in the other person's thought and not enough in your own. If you have to figure out immediately where in your article the information fits, then you are forced to evaluate it realistically.

Day 4: Evaluating the Related Literature

Now that you have read the related literature, what have you found about the relationships between various articles and scholars? How are previous scholars justifying their arguments, claiming novelty, acknowledging debts, displaying allegiances, and signaling disciplinary communities? How are their arguments similar? Where do they differ? What is known and what remains to be known? What variables have been established as important, and which haven't been explored yet? How are key concepts or theories getting defined or used? What are the limitations or blind spots of this literature? Is there a narrative? Using these questions, start grouping the texts by argument and debate.

Day 5: Writing or Revising Your Related Literature Review

The best way to start thinking about writing or revising a related literature review is to read those that other scholars have written. Since you have spent this week reading articles, go back and study one or two of their related literature reviews. How did they organize it? How many articles did they cite? What proportion of the article is devoted to the literature review? Such study will guide you as you are writing your own. Some like to organize their literature review chronologically—here is what we used to think, now we think differently. Some like to organize alphabetically— by author's last name. It is best, however, to organize the literature review by the debate. That will help you

avoid just summarizing instead of evaluating. As Howard Becker (1986) warns in his chapter titled "Terrorized by the Literature" (still one of the best works on citing scholarly literature), "Use the literature, don't let it use you." You can also consult the undergraduate text *They Say, I Say*, which gives detailed examples of how to relate your ideas to others (Graff and Birkenstein 2005). Just remember that your argument should be organizing your related literature review; don't let the literature take over. Spend this day writing or revising your related literature review. When done, you can ask a friend of colleague to read it and let you know if you have been clear about the debate, the related literature, and your entry point.

DOCUMENTING YOUR WRITING TIME AND TASKS

On the following weekly plan, please graph when you expect to write and what tasks you hope to accomplish this week. Then keep track of what you actually did. Remember, you are to allot fifteen minutes to one hour every day to writing. At the end of the week, take pride in your accomplishments and evaluate whether any patterns need changing.

Week 5 Calendar							
Time	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**
5:00 a.m.							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00 p.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							

11:00							
12:00 a.m.							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
Total Minutes Actually Worked							
Tasks Completed							

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26 Even fifty years ago, scholars were complaining about the "staggering" number of articles and books published every year (Altick 1963, 129).

27 Adapted from Kathryn Riley's research, cited in Parker and Riley 1995, 84–85.

28 Sciubba 2006.

29 Adapted from Kathryn Riley's research as cited in Parker and Riley 1995, 87.

30 Cynthia Feliciano's research (2001).

31 Ortiz and Gonzales 2000.

32 Hamilton 2001.

33 Albert, Gunton, and Day 2003.

34 Henderson 1990.

35 Gabriel 1989.

36 Sharpe 1991.

37 Guo and Yao 2005.

38 Tagoe et al 2005.

39 Williams 1989.

40 Flores 1995 [1954].

41 Hale 2004.

42 Livingston 1989, 220.

43 Morris 1988.

44 Wilding 2003.

45 Griffin 2006.

46 As one sixteenth-century author put it, do not fatten your writing with others' works. "They lard their lean books with the fat of others' works." Robert Bur- ton, cited in Altick 1963, 185.