



# Notes on literature research

## Search options

- 1) Main text: A presentation is usually based on a given main text. Use the bibliography at the end of the essay/book for initial research.
- 2) Seminar literature list: Often this list contains not only essays that are the basis for the seminar, but also further references.
- 3) Library: You can find the literature listed in 1) and 2) using the keyword search in the online library catalogue (OPAC). By first reading globally, you can also find new keywords to deepen your search.
- 4) Overviews and introductions offer another possibility. These often even provide annotated references.
- 5) Wikipedia: You probably know that this is not a citable source. Nevertheless, it can be helpful in some subject areas to gain an initial insight. There are sometimes good references at the end.
- 6) Search the online archives of subject-specific journals for suitable articles. Some subjects have databases. Enquire about them.
- 7) Internet search engines: Searching here is not easy, as there is too much information on offer. It is also difficult to determine whether a site or article is reputable. Nevertheless, if you have great difficulty finding literature, you can sometimes find important information here.
- 8) <http://scholar.google.de/>: An interesting site to include in your research.
- 9) Tips from fellow students and lecturers: For new subject areas in particular, it is helpful to ask fellow students who have already dealt with the topic or to ask for literature tips during office hours.

## Literature review:

Since the processing time for a term paper/presentation is limited, it is impossible to read through all articles/books completely. It is therefore important to get as much information as possible about the content in as little time as possible. Pay attention to the following parts first:

**Title:** Think carefully about what might be hidden behind it, which subject area this belongs to and whether this is closely related to your topic.

**Abstract:** If the title is promising, it is advisable to read the abstract first (if available).

**Table of contents:** For books, this should be read very carefully.





**Introduction:** This section often contains an overview of what is discussed in which chapter and what results can be expected. Research questions are also posed. Consider whether these are relevant to your topic.

**Final section:** Take a look at the results section. Can you use the results for your own work? Can you use them as a foundation?

If the selected literature in these sections seems relevant, start reading. Don't forget to take notes or make an excerpt.

## Other important criteria for selecting literature:

**Topicality:** endeavour to find literature on your topic that is as up-to-date as possible. Pay attention to the year of publication and the edition.

**Reliability and scientific quality:** This criterion is particularly important in relation to online sources. So pay attention to:

- **Imprint:** If this is not available and no author can be found, you should check carefully whether the content of this page is citable (correct and scientific). If you have any doubts, look for other sources.
- **Author:** Be careful with master's or magister theses! Even if they have been published, you must check whether the work fulfils scientific standards and whether the content is presented correctly.
- **Type of text:** Check carefully whether the article is scientific!
- **Content:** Can similar information be found in other articles? Is the presentation objective and detailed enough?

