

## Referring to Literature

One of the distinguishing features of academic writing is that it is informed by what is already known, what work has been done before, and/or what ideas and models have already been developed. Thus, academic writers frequently make reference to external sources. In some cases, where the individual author is important, the author's name will be the main subject of the sentence; in other cases, the source may only be mentioned in brackets ( ... ) or via a number notation system (e.g. footnotes and endnotes). The 'author as subject' style is less common in the empirical disciplines (sciences) and more commonly used in the humanities. The verbs and verb phrases typically used for referring to sources are listed below. Note that different referencing systems are used in different disciplines. In the examples given here, the Harvard in-text referencing system has been used.

The literature review: it is the purpose of the literature review section of a paper or dissertation to show the reader, in a systematic way, what is already known about the research topic as a whole, and to outline the key ideas and theories that help us to understand this. As well as being systematic, the review should be evaluative and critical of the studies or ideas which are relevant to the current work (refer to *Being Critical*). For example, you may think a particular study did not investigate some important aspect of the area you are researching, that the authors failed to notice a weakness in their methods, or that their conclusion is not well-supported.

A note on verb tenses: For general reference to the literature, the present perfect tense (have/has + verb + ed) tends to be used. For reference to specific studies carried out in the past, the simple past tense is most commonly used. This is always the case where a specific date or time in the past forms a part of the sentence. When referring to the words or ideas of writers, the present tense is often used if the ideas are still relevant, even if the author is no longer alive. The examples given below reflect these general patterns.

### General descriptions of the relevant literature

A large and growing body of literature has investigated ....

More recent attention has focused on the provision of ....

Much of the current literature on X pays particular attention to ....

Over the past decade most research in X has emphasized the use of ....

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of ....

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on ....

The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.

During the past 30 years, much more information has become available on ....

A considerable amount of literature has been published on X. These studies ....

The first serious discussions and analyses of X emerged during the 1970s with ....

What we know about X is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how ....

### General reference to previous research or scholarship: normally more than one author

Traditionally, it has been argued that .... (Smith, 1982; O'Brien, 1984).

Surveys such as that conducted by Smith (1988) have shown that ....

Many historians have argued that .... (e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Smith, 1994).

There is a consensus among social scientists that ....(e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; ....

Recent evidence suggests that .... (Smith, 1996; Jones 1999; Johnson, 2001)  
 Recently, in vitro studies have shown that X can .... (Patel *et al.*, 1997; Jones *et al.*, 1998).

Several studies investigating X have been carried out on ....  
 Several attempts have been made to .... (Smith, 1996; Jones 1999; ....).  
 Several studies thus far have linked X with Y (Smith, 2002; Jones 2004; ....).  
 Several studies have revealed that it is not just X that acts on ..... (Smith, 1996; Jones ....  
 Several biographies of Brown have been published. Smith (2013) presents .....  
 The geology of X has been addressed in several small-scale investigations and ....  
 Data from several sources have identified the increased X and Y associated with obesity.

Previous studies have reported .... (Smith, 1985; Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1992).  
 Previous research has indicated that various X indicators have a positive impact on ....  
 Previous research findings into X have been inconsistent and contradictory (Smith, 1996; ....)

Numerous studies have attempted to explain .... (for example, Smith , 1996; Kelly, 1998; ....)  
 A number of authors have reported analyses of trends in X that demonstrated ....  
 A number of studies have found that .... (Smith , 2003; Jones, 2004).  
 A number of studies have examined X (e.g. Smith, 2003; Jones, 2005), but to date none has ....

Xs have been identified as major contributing factors for the decline of many species (1).  
 X has also been shown to reverse the anti-inflammatory effects of Y in murine-induced arthritis.

Twenty cohort study analyses have examined the relationship between ....  
 At least 152 case-control studies worldwide have examined the relationship between.....  
 Other studies have considered the relationship ....  
 The relationship between X and Y has been widely investigated (Smith, 1985; Jones, 1987, ....  
 The causes of X have been widely investigated (Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Smith, 1994).  
 Factors thought to be influencing X have been explored in several studies.

It has been suggested that levels of X are independent of the size of the Y (Smith *et al.*, 1995).  
 It has conclusively been shown that X and Y increase Z (Smith *et al.*, 1999; Jones, 2001 ....).  
 It has been demonstrated that a high intake of X results in damage to .... (Smith, 1998; ....).

**Reference to current state of knowledge**

There is an unambiguous relationship between X and Y (Rao, 1998).  
 X is one of the most intense reactions following CHD (Lane, 2003).  
 X has been found to oppose the anti-inflammatory actions of Y on Z (Alourfi, 2004).  
 A relationship exists between an individual’s working memory and their ability to .... (Jones, 2002).  
 GM varieties of maize are able to cross-pollinate with non-GM varieties (Smith, 1998; Jones, 1999).

**Reference to single investigations in the past: researcher(s) as sentence subject**

Smith (1999)	found that as levels of literacy and education of the population rise .... showed that reducing X to 190°C decreased .... (see Figure 2) . demonstrated that when the maximum temperature is exceeded ....
Jones <i>et al.</i> (2001)	investigated the differential impact of formal and non-formal education on .... analysed the data from 72 countries and concluded that .... reviewed the literature from the period and found little evidence for this .....

interviewed 250 undergraduate students using semi-structured ....  
studied the effects of X on unprotected nerve cells.  
performed a similar series of experiments in the 1960s to show that ....  
carried out a number of investigations into the ....  
conducted a series of trials in which he mixed X with different quantities of ....  
measured both components of the ....  
labelled these subsets as ....  
examined the flow of international students ....  
identified parents of disabled children as ....  
used a survey to assess the various ....

Wang *et al.* (2004) have recently developed a methodology for the selective introduction of ....

#### **Reference to single investigations or publications in the past: time frame prominent**

In 1975, Smith *et al.* published a paper in which they described ....  
In 1990, Patel *et al.* demonstrated that replacement of H<sub>2</sub>O with heavy water led to ....  
Thirty years later, Smith (1974) reported three cases of X which ....  
In the 1950s, Gunnar Myrdal pointed to some of the ways in which .... (Myrdal, 1957)  
In 1981, Smith and co-workers demonstrated that X induced in vitro resistance to ....  
In 1990, Al-Masry *et al.* reported a new and convenient synthetic procedure to obtain ....  
In 1984, Jones *et al.* made several amino acid esters of X and evaluated them as ....

#### **Reference to single investigations in the past: investigation prominent**

Preliminary work on X was undertaken by Abdul Karim (1992).  
The first systematic study of X was reported by Patel *et al.* in 1986.  
The study of the structural behaviour of X was first carried out by Rao *et al.* (1986).....  
Analysis of the genes involved in X was first carried out by Smith *et al.* (1983).  
One study by Smith (2014) examined the trend in ....  
A recent study by Smith and Jones (2012) involved ....  
A longitudinal study of X by Smith (2012) reports that ....  
A small scale study by Smith (2012) reaches different conclusions, finding no increase in ....  
  
Smith's cross-country analysis (2012) showed that ....  
Smith's comparative study (2012) found that ....  
Detailed examination of X by Smith and Patel (1961) showed that ....  
Brown's (1992) model of X assumes three main ....  
  
In an analysis of X, Smith *et al.* (2012) found ....  
In an investigation into X, Smith *et al.* (2012) found ....  
In another major study, Zhao (1974) found that just over half of the ....  
In a study which set out to determine X, Smith (2012) found that ....  
In a randomised controlled study of X, Smith (2012) reported that ....  
In a large longitudinal study, Smith *et al.* (2012) investigated the incidence of X in Y.  
In one well-known recent experiment, limits on X were found to be ..... (Al-Masry, 2013)

#### **Reference to single investigations in the past: research topic as main focus**

To determine the effects of X, Zhao *et al.* (2005) compared ....  
X was originally isolated from Y in a soil sample from .... (Wang *et al.*, 1952).  
The electronic spectroscopy of X was first studied by Smith and Jones<sup>1</sup> in 1970  
X formed the central focus of a study by Smith (2002) in which the author found ....  
X was first demonstrated experimentally by Pavlov (Smith, 2002). In his seminal study ....

The acid-catalyzed condensation reaction between X and Y was first reported by Smith in 1872  
 To better understand the mechanisms of X and its effects, Al-Masry (2013) analysed the ....  
 The way in which the X gene is regulated was studied extensively by Ho and colleagues (Ho *et al.* 1995 and 1998).

**Reference to what other writers do in their text: author as subject**

- Smith (2013) identifies X, Y, and Z as the major causes of ....
  - Perez (2013) draws on an extensive range of sources to assess ....
  - Toh (2013) mentions the special situation of Singapore as an example of ....
  - Al-Masry (2013) uses examples of these various techniques as evidence that ....
  - Smith (2013) questions whether mainstream schools are the best environment for ....
  - Jones (2013) draws our attention to distinctive categories of X often observed in ....
  - Brown (2013) considers whether countries work well on cross-border issues such as ....
  - Smith (2013) discusses the challenges and strategies for facilitating and promoting ....
  - Jones (2013) provides in-depth analysis of the work of Aristotle showing its relevance to ....
  - Rao (2013) lists three reasons why the English language has become so dominant. These are: ....
  - Smith (2013) traces the development of Japanese history and philosophy during the 19th century.
  - Smith (2013) defines evidence based medicine as the conscious, explicit and judicious use of .....
  - Rao (2013) highlights the need to break the link between economic growth and transport growth .....
- By drawing on the concept of X, Smith has been able to show that ....  
 Drawing on an extensive range of sources, the authors set out the different ways in which ....  
 In Chapter 2, Smith provides us with a number of important ....  
 In the subsequent chapter, Smith examines the extent to which ....  
 Some analysts (e.g. Carnoy, 2002) have attempted to draw fine distinctions between ....  
 Other authors (see Harbison, 2003; Kaplan, 2004) question the usefulness of such an approach.

In her major study, In her seminal article, In her classic critique of ....., In her case study of ....., In her review of ....., In her analysis of ....., In her introduction to .....,	Smith (2012) identifies five characteristics of ....
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**Reference to another writer’s ideas or position (author as subject)**

According to Smith (2003), preventative medicine is far more cost effective, and therefore ....  
 As noted by Smith (2003) X is far more cost effective, and therefore ....

Smith (2013)	points out argues maintains claims concludes suggests	that	preventative medicine is far more cost effective, and therefore better adapted to the developing world.
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Smith (2013)	argues for	an explanatory theory for each type of irrational belief.
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	offers proposes suggests	
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**Synthesising sources**

Similarly, Nicoladis (2006) found that X ....  
 In the same vein, Smith (1994) in his book XYZ notes ....  
 This view is supported by Jones (2000) who writes that ....  
 Smith argues that her data support O'Brien's (1988) view that ....  
 Al-Masry's (1986) work on X is complemented by Smith's (2009) study of ....  
 Almost every paper that has been written on X includes a section relating to ....  
 Unlike Smith, Jones (2013) argues that ....  
 In contrast to Smith, Jones (2013) argues that ....  
 A broader perspective has been adopted by Smith (213) who argues that ....  
 Conversely, Wang (2010) reported no significant difference in mortality between X and Y.

Smith argues that ....  Al-Masry (2003) sees X as ....	Similarly, Jones (2013) asserts that ....  Likewise, Wang (2012) holds the view that ....
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Some writers (e.g. Smith, 2002) have attempted to draw fine distinctions between ....  Some authors have mainly been interested in questions concerning X and Y (Smith, 2001; Jones ....)  Much of the available literature on X deals with the question of ....	Others (see Jones, 2003; Brown, 2004) question the usefulness of ....  Others have highlighted the relevance of ....  But Smith (2008) is much more concerned with ....
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Zhao (2002) notes that ....  Smith (2013) found that X accounted for 30% of Y.	However, Jennings' (2010) study of Y found no ....  Other researchers, however, who have looked at X, have found .... Jones (2010), for example, ....
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Smith (2010) presents an X account,  While Smith (2008) focusses on X,	whilst Jones (2011) ....  Jones (2009) is more concerned with ....
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**Some ways of introducing quotations**

Commenting on X, Smith (2003) argues: ‘.... ....’

As Smith argues: ‘In the past, the purpose of education was to ....’ (Smith , 2000:150).

As Carnoy (2004: 215) states: ‘there are many good reasons to be sceptical’.

In the final part of the Theses, Marx writes: ‘Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point ....’

Sachs concludes: ‘The idea of development stands today like a ruin in the intellectual landscape...’ (Sachs, 1992a: 156).

As Smith	reminds us: ‘.... .... .... ....’ observes: ‘.... .... .... ....’ notes: ‘.... .... .... ....’ points out: ‘.... .... .... ....’ argues: ‘.... .... .... ....’	(Smith 2003: 23).
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**Summarising the review or parts of the review**

Together, these studies outline that ....

Overall, these studies highlight the need for ....

Collectively, these studies outline a critical role for...

The evidence presented in this section suggests that ....

The studies presented thus far provide evidence that ....

Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that ....

Together these studies provide important insights into the ....

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that ....