

Useful sentence stems for a literature review

100 adaptable sentence stems for introductions, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, and synthesis.

What is in this guide?

This guide groups the stems into six writing functions commonly needed in a scoping review. The wording has been adapted from established academic writing resources so you can model academic phrasing without copying it mechanically. Use the placeholders in square brackets to tailor each stem to your own topic and categories.

Quick tips

- Use these stems to support structure and academic voice, not to replace your thinking.
- Keep your tense choices consistent: use the present tense for general claims and the past tense when referring to specific studies where appropriate.
- In Results, write across studies and categories; in Discussion, explain what the patterns mean.

Introduction and rationale

Move from territory to gap to purpose to structure.

No.	Sentence stem
1	Interest in [topic] has grown in recent years because...
2	[Topic] has become an important concern in [field/context] due to...
3	Recent scholarship has drawn increasing attention to...
4	Within [field], there is growing interest in...
5	[Topic] is particularly relevant to [population/context] because...
6	Researchers have increasingly examined...
7	Despite this growing interest, the literature remains unclear regarding...
8	While previous studies have explored [aspect], less attention has been paid to...
9	Existing scholarship has tended to focus on [x] rather than [y].
10	The current literature provides useful insights into [x], but several questions remain.
11	One area that remains underexplored is...
12	A key challenge in this field concerns...
13	Another issue relates to how [term] is defined and applied.
14	For the purposes of this review, [term] refers to...
15	In this review, [term] is used to describe...
16	A scoping review was appropriate because the aim was to map...
17	A scoping approach was selected in order to identify the range and nature of...
18	The objective of this review was to explore...
19	This review was guided by the following question: ...
20	The remainder of this review is organised as follows: ...

Methods

Keep Methods concrete and plain. This section should show exactly what you did, not what you hoped to find.

No.	Sentence stem
21	This review followed a scoping review approach to map the available evidence on...
22	Eligibility criteria were developed in relation to [population], [concept], and [context].
23	Sources were included if they addressed...
24	Sources were excluded if they focused solely on...
25	The search strategy was designed to capture literature relating to...
26	Searches were conducted across [database names] for sources published between...
27	Additional sources were identified through...
28	Titles and abstracts were screened against the inclusion criteria.
29	Full-text sources were then assessed for relevance to the review question.
30	Data were charted using a template that captured...
31	The charting process focused on key descriptive information, including...
32	Extracted data were organised according to...
33	The evidence was summarised descriptively rather than statistically.
34	Findings were grouped by...
35	This approach enabled the review to identify patterns across...

Results

Use Results to map patterns, categories, and gaps. Avoid writing one paragraph per study unless there is a very clear reason.

No.	Sentence stem
36	A total of [number] sources met the inclusion criteria.
37	The included sources were published between [year] and [year].
38	Most of the included sources were conducted in...
39	The evidence base consisted primarily of...
40	Across the included literature, several broad patterns emerged.
41	Three main categories were identified across the literature.
42	The first category concerned...
43	A second strand of the literature focused on...
44	A smaller group of sources examined...
45	The literature was concentrated in [area/context], with relatively little work in...
46	Most sources addressed [x], whereas fewer considered...
47	Across studies, [issue] was commonly reported.
48	A recurring theme in the literature was...
49	Another notable pattern was the emphasis on...
50	Several sources highlighted the importance of...
51	In contrast, relatively few studies explored...
52	The findings suggest considerable variation in...
53	There was some consistency across sources in relation to...
54	However, the literature was less consistent regarding...
55	Definitions of [term] varied across the included sources.
56	Methodologically, the evidence was dominated by...
57	Few sources provided detailed discussion of...
58	Evidence relating to [subtopic] was limited.
59	Research involving [population/context] appeared comparatively sparse.
60	Taken together, the included sources indicate that...

Discussion

Discussion is where you interpret the map of evidence. Explain what the patterns mean, why the gaps matter, and what follows from them.

No.	Sentence stem
61	This review mapped the available evidence on [topic] and found that...
62	Overall, the literature suggests that...
63	One of the main insights from this review is that...
64	The findings indicate that research in this area has largely centred on...
65	The concentration of studies in [area] may reflect...
66	The uneven distribution of evidence suggests that...
67	The prominence of [theme] in the literature may be linked to...
68	These patterns should be interpreted in light of...
69	Although the evidence base is growing, important gaps remain.
70	In particular, limited attention has been paid to...
71	The lack of research on [subtopic] is significant because...
72	The variation in how [term] was defined makes comparison difficult.
73	Another issue concerns the relatively small number of studies examining...
74	Taken together, these findings point to a need for...
75	These results align with broader discussions about...
76	At the same time, the review highlights tensions between...
77	The review also shows that current scholarship tends to privilege...
78	This has implications for [practice/policy/research] because...
79	Future work would benefit from greater attention to...
80	More research is needed to clarify...

Conclusion and implications

Conclude by pulling the map together: what is known, what is missing, and why that matters.

No.	Sentence stem
81	In summary, this scoping review identified...
82	The review has shown that the literature is most developed in relation to...
83	It has also highlighted clear gaps in relation to...
84	Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests that...
85	The field would benefit from more research involving...
86	There is also a need for greater conceptual clarity around...
87	Further studies should examine...
88	Future scoping or systematic reviews may usefully focus on...
89	Overall, this review provides a foundation for...
90	The mapping undertaken here can support future work on...

Synthesis and critical language

These stems help you move from description to synthesis. Use them to compare studies, qualify claims, and maintain an academic voice.

No.	Sentence stem
91	Collectively, these sources suggest that...
92	When considered together, the literature points to...
93	A more cautious interpretation is that...
94	This pattern should not, however, be overstated.
95	It is important to note that these findings are based largely on...
96	This may partly reflect the way in which [term] has been conceptualised.
97	A key limitation across the literature is the limited attention given to...
98	By contrast, a smaller body of work has argued that...
99	Rather than treating these findings as contradictory, it may be more useful to view them as...
100	This section has mapped the main areas of agreement, variation, and omission in the literature.

Note

The stems in this guide were adapted from established academic writing resources. They are intended as reusable scaffolds rather than direct quotations. Always adjust wording, tense, and emphasis so the sentence fits your own review question, evidence base, and argument.

References

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- University of Adelaide. (n.d.). English for Uni: Essay writing.