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School of Business

23C59000 - Consumer research

How to read and write academic texts & How to pitch

Ilona Mikkonen, DSc.

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Agenda

- The "very basics"
 - What is an **academic article**?
 - **How to read** research articles (analytically and critically)?
 - **How to write** academic texts?
 - **What kind of sources** can you cite in academic texts?
- The "more advanced"
 - **How to write** a literature review
- How to pitch?



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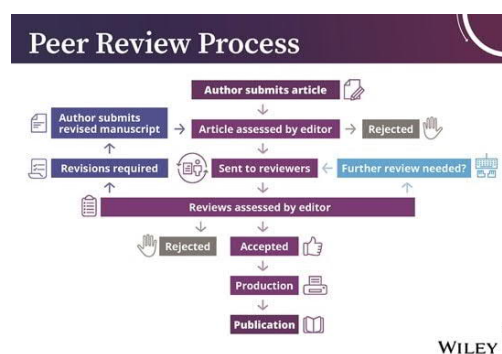
What is an academic article?

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Academic journals and articles

- Academic journals are periodicals in which **researchers** publish articles on their work
- Academic articles go through a **double-blind peer-review process**



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Academic journals and articles

- Academic texts report **recent, original research** and/or **develop new theory/knowledge**
 - Academic texts **develop arguments**: the purpose is to argue for the correctness of the findings
 - Academic texts **require transparency**: own findings and references have to be clearly identifiable, and all citations have to be marked

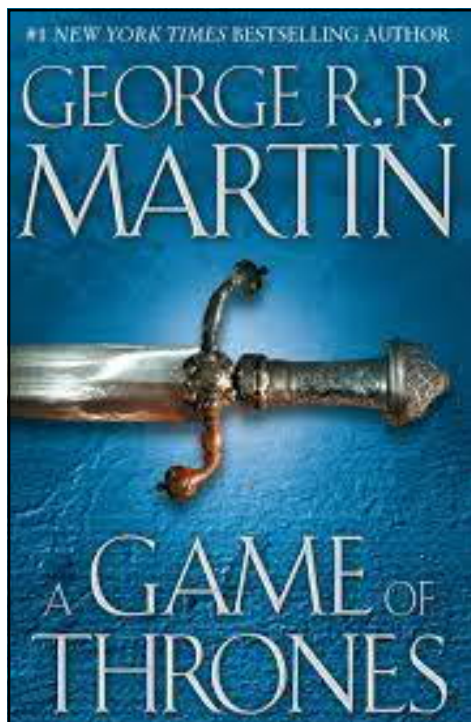
Typical structure of an academic article

- **Regardless of discipline**, academic articles generally contain the following sections:
 - Abstract
 - Introduction
 - Literature review/Theoretical background
 - Methods and data
 - Findings
 - Discussion and/or conclusion
 - References

How to read research articles?

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How do you normally
read for pleasure
(books or journalism)?

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Selling Pain to the Saturated Self

REBECCA SCOTT
JULIEN CAYLA
BERNARD COVA

How can we comprehend people who pay for an experience marketed as painful? On one hand, consumers spend billions of dollars every year to alleviate different kinds of pain. On the other hand, millions of individuals participate in extremely painful leisure pursuits. In trying to understand this conundrum, we ethnographically study a popular adventure challenge where participants subject themselves to electric shocks, fire, and freezing water. Through sensory immersion, pain brings the body into sharp focus, allowing individuals to rediscover their corporeality. In addition, painful extraordinary experiences operate as regenerative escapes from the self. By flooding the consciousness with gnawing unpleasantness, pain provides a temporary relief from the burdens of self-awareness. Finally, when leaving marks and wounds, pain helps consumers create the story of a fulfilled life. In a context of decreased physicality, market operators play a major role in selling pain to the saturated selves of knowledge workers, who use pain as a way to simultaneously escape reflexivity and craft their life narrative.

Keywords: extraordinary experience, pain, embodiment, ethnography, sociology of consumption, experiential consumption, knowledge work.

Reading research articles is more **analytical, iterative** process

It is less about reading than it is about **studying**

You are looking for facts and ideas, not entertainment!

How to read articles

1. **“Screen” the article** (title, authors, keywords, abstract)
2. **Getting the “punch line”**
 - **Read the abstract** slowly until it makes sense
 - **Read the introduction** -authors will present the punch line of their research (question, approach, positioning, main findings)
 - **Skim the discussion.** Read the first few paragraphs and the last few paragraphs. If it is short and/or easy to understand, read the whole thing
 - **Check the figures and tables.**

How to read articles

3. First reading

- Skim the abstract and the introduction once again
- Skim the methods section
- Read the results section
- Read the discussion



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How to read articles

4. Increased understanding

- **Write and mark down thoughts** on the article
- **Circle words** you do not know or that you think are important
- **Check important points elsewhere** (if you don't understand them)
- **Jot down** further ideas or questions.
- **Read the references.** Look up points that were not fully explained

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How to read articles by each section

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Abstract

- This is the **summary of the journal article**. Almost all journal articles have an abstract. The abstract appears as a **short paragraph at the start** of the article, sometimes italicized or indented to set itself apart from the rest of the article.
- *What's important:* The abstract **tells you the point of the article**. Always read the abstract to make sure the article is suited toward your topic.

Pain to the Saturated Self

COTT
LA
DOVA

How can we comprehend people who pay for an experience marketed as painful? On one hand, consumers spend billions of dollars every year to alleviate different types of pain. On the other hand, millions of individuals participate in extremely painful leisure pursuits. In trying to understand this conundrum, we ethnographically study a popular adventure challenge where participants subject themselves to electric shocks, fire, and freezing water. Through sensory intensification, pain brings the body into sharp focus, allowing individuals to rediscover their corporeality. In addition, painful extraordinary experiences operate as regenerative escapes from the self. By flooding the consciousness with grueling unpleasantness, pain provides a temporary relief from the burdens of self-awareness. Finally, when leaving marks and wounds, pain helps consumers create the story of a fulfilled life. In a context of decreased physicality, market operators play a major role in selling pain to the saturated selves of knowledge workers, who use pain as a way to simultaneously escape reflexivity and craft their life narrative.

Keywords: extraordinary experience, pain, embodiment, ethnography, sociology of consumption, experiential consumption, knowledge work

mental facet of human existence. We have all suffered from it. Pain has a simple migraine can render us incapacitated in the world. Consumers spend

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billions of dollars every year on medication and health care for just this reason—to alleviate pain. The simultaneous appeal of pain-inducing consumer experiences is thus a confounding phenomenon. Obstacle races that induce intense physical pain and exhaustion are marketed as a challenge. On one hand, consumers seek medication to soothe their pain. On the other, many consumers are willing to pay for experiences that are marketed as intensely painful. How can we make sense of this paradox?

Although pain is a central facet of the human condition, it remains understudied and under-theorized within the so-

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Introduction

- The writer's introduction is the first section of the paper. Although not always labeled, it generally **introduces the topic, the thesis, and tells readers why the research is important**
- What's important:* look for the **thesis**; what's the author trying to **prove or show**? How do they intend to **contribute** to their field?

If you only read one section, it should be the introduction!

Selling Pain to the Saturated Self

REBECCA SCOTT
JULIEN CAYLA
BERNARD COVA

How can we comprehend people who pay for an experience marketed as painful? On one hand, consumers spend billions of dollars every year to alleviate different kinds of pain. On the other hand, millions of individuals participate in extremely painful leisure pursuits. In trying to understand this conundrum, we ethnographically study a popular adventure challenge where participants subject themselves to electric shocks, fire, and freezing water. Through sensory intensification, pain brings the body into sharp focus, allowing individuals to rediscover their corporeality. In addition, painful extraordinary experiences operate as regenerative escapes from the self. By flooding the consciousness with growing unpleasantness, pain provides a temporary relief from the burdens of self-awareness. Finally, when leaving marks and wounds, pain helps consumers create the story of a fulfilled life. In a context of increased physicality, market operators play a major role in selling pain to the saturated selves of knowledge workers, who use pain as a way to simultaneously escape reflexively and craft their life narrative.

Keywords: extraordinary experience, pain, embodiment, ethnography, sociology of consumption, experiential consumption, knowledge work

A fundamental facet of human existence. We have all felt it. We have all suffered from it. Pain has such power that even a simple nightmare can render us incapable of functioning in the world. Consumers spend

billions of dollars every year on medication and health care for just this reason—to alleviate pain. The simultaneous appeal of pain-inducing consumer experiences is then a confounding phenomenon. Obstacle races that induce intense physical pain and exhaustion are marketed as a challenge. On one hand, consumers seek medication to soothe their pain. On the other, many consumers are willing to pay for experiences that are marketed as intensely painful. How can we make sense of this paradox?

Although pain is a central facet of the human condition, it "remains understudied and under-theorized within the social sciences" (Green 2011, 378), especially in consumer research. Consumer researchers have long acknowledged that consumers may seek physically and emotionally painful experiences (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982), but the topic of pain itself has rarely been addressed.

Our research puts forward a more comprehensive understanding of pain and its role in extraordinary experiences. We develop our insights from an ethnography of Tough Mudder, a particularly grueling adventure challenge involving a series of approximately 75 military-style obsta-

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Elvira Fischer served as editor and Robert Koenigsbauer served as associate editor for this article.

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Literature review

- A literature review **looks at past research on the topic**. The literature review demonstrates to other researchers that the author is thoroughly acquainted with their topic.

What's important:

- If you're still searching for sources for your paper, a literature review **can point you to other sources you can use**.
- It can also broadly educate you on this area of research.

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THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In building the theoretical foundations of our study, we draw from past consumer research on extraordinary experiences, as well as insights from a variety of disciplines on pain, to help us analyze and understand this puzzling phenomenon: why would consumers pay for experiences that are deliberately marketed as painful?

Extraordinary Experiences as Escapes

Extraordinary experiences such as river rafting (Arnould and Price 1993), skydiving (Celsi et al. 1993), climbing Everest (Tumbat and Belk 2011), surfing (Cannifford and Shankar 2013), and participating in the Burning Man festival (Kozinets 2002) or the Mountain Man Rendez-Vous (Belk and Costa 1998) resemble Tough Mudder. Indeed, these adventures all allow individuals to free themselves from the tedium of the everyday by engaging in an event that is intense and temporally marked-out, which are the defining features of an extraordinary experience (Abraham 1986). From this perspective, these various activities are escape attempts (Cohen and Taylor 1976) providing relief from the structural demands of institutional arrangements (Turner 1969).

Past scholarship has brought to light various features of contemporary life that individuals are eluding: the repetitive monotony of the "9 to 5 lifestyle" (Arnould, Price, and

or the nine could offer 2009).

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Methodology

- In this section, the author details how they will try to support (or disprove) their thesis.

What's important:

You should know **how the writer obtained their information**

- Did they use a survey? What type of survey? Who did they survey?
- Or did they do an experiment? What type of experiment? How did they get test subjects?
- Or is it a qualitative paper? How was the data collected and analysed?



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ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

After reviewing past research on pain, we identified a variety of methodological challenges. For instance, if pain is such a personal experience, and if the experience of pain is so difficult to communicate to others (Scarry 1985), how can we investigate and describe this experience? Moreover, what kind of representational strategy can we employ to problematize the body through discourse and beyond the mind/body dichotomy? Dualistic thinking has been so prevalent in shaping Western intellectual history that we still lack the words, concepts, and theoretical frameworks to conform to Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenological project.

In order to deal with these methodological issues, we have used a wide range of ethnographic methods, which we detail below and in the following table. As we seek to develop an ethnography that attends to the "physical, material, psychological and emotional dimensions" of pain (Buckingham and Degen 2012, 337), we deploy various types of data collection, including: (1) participant observation; (2) the collection of visual materials; (3) in-depth interviews; and (4) netnography.

Participant Observation

Our lead researcher conducted the bulk of the ethnographic fieldwork, taking on three different roles to provide a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the Tough Mudder experience: as a spectator, a volunteer, and a Tough Mudder participant. As a spectator she was able to take ethnographic field notes detailing the chronology of the event, the interaction between participants and obstacles, and the sensory qualities of the experience itself

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Findings

- The author explains the results of their research
- Quantitative and qualitative studies have different ways of reporting findings (e.g. qualitative → heavy use of quotes and fieldnotes to back up analysis)

What's important:

- you don't have to read it word-by-word unless you are particularly interested or it belongs to the key sources of your own thesis

FINDINGS

Our findings are organized to describe three complementary levels of analysis. First, we focus on pain as a personal experience, and we show that pain facilitates a reappearance of the body to the participant's consciousness. Second, we describe how pain becomes meaningful and gains significance through an intricate process of ritualization and dramatization. What Tough Mudder is selling is a dramatized pain that symbolizes a rebirth of the individual's corporeality. Finally, we look at what happens in the aftermath of the event. We demonstrate that pain operates very differently during and after the event. When pain floods their consciousness, participants seem unable to

My breathing became ragged towards the top and I tilted my hands as though I were holding hiking poles to maximize the efficiency of my steps. I clung onto the temporal nature of the discomfort. Although it was temporary, I was aware it was building fast, as if I were in a small compartment that was rapidly filling up with water" (field notes 2015).

After another intense training session involving 150 pull-ups, we find her tending to her sore arms. She is not able to type anymore:

"I couldn't straighten my arms. I was in agony, even if I kept my arms bent it still hurt because the tendons around my elbow linked up my arms to my back. I now notice I can't type properly. I loaded up on Chinese remedies, had an agonizing shower then hit the hard pain killers—Ibuprofen" (field notes 2015).

Figure 1 shows her bruised arms covered in dandelion ice, a traditional Chinese remedy for severe muscle bruising. At this particular moment, all her attention is directed to a specific part of her body that aches.

After another training run, the lead researcher also talks about the additional difficulties she experiences walking:

"A colossal mass of agony greeted my ligaments the next morning after training. It made me really appreciate what they do, how they support me, balance and stabilize my entire 5ft8 being, and now I have beaten them into an abyss of fragility and pain. I couldn't walk properly" (field notes 2012).



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Conclusion/Discussion

- The author's summary of the journal article. The author will also explain the implications (practical and/or theoretical) and what further research could/should be done. →What do their findings actually mean, considering the existing body of literature?

What's important:

- You can find ideas for research here

DISCUSSION


We approached this ethnography as the solving of a mystery (Alvesson and Kärreman 2007). Consumers spend billions of dollars each year on pain relievers, yet at the same time extreme and painful experiences like Tough Mudder are becoming more popular by the day. In order to better understand this puzzling dilemma, we closely examined past scholarship on extraordinary experiences in consumer research (Arnould and Price 1993; Belk and Costa 1998; Canniford and Shankar 2013; Celsi et al. 1993; Kozinets 2002; Tumbat and Belk 2011).

Marketed pain is a theoretical "breakdown" (Alvesson and Kärreman 2007, 1266), an anomaly that existing theories, models, and vocabularies cannot fully resolve. Indeed, past consumer research is limited in helping us understand how pain could add meaning to an extraordinary experience, or why consumers would pay to endure pain.

In contrast, our research opens up new avenues of thinking about extraordinary experiences, as a way for consumers to rediscover their forgotten bodies, and as temporary moments of escape from their self. These insights, we believe, highlight the centrality of the body in endowing extraordinary experiences with meaning.

Pain and the Rediscovery of the Body in Extraordinary Experiences

Pain produces a very specific kind of embodiment. The stinging discomfort of icy water and the rattling pain of electric shocks transform the body into the "thematic object of the subject's experience" (Zeiler 2010, 335). The body in pain no longer functions as "a *from* structure, the painful body becomes that *to* which he attends" (Leder




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How to understand what you have read?

The basic five questions you need to ask and answer:

1. What is the study about?
2. How does it fit into what is already known?
3. How was the study done?
4. What was found?
5. What do the results mean?



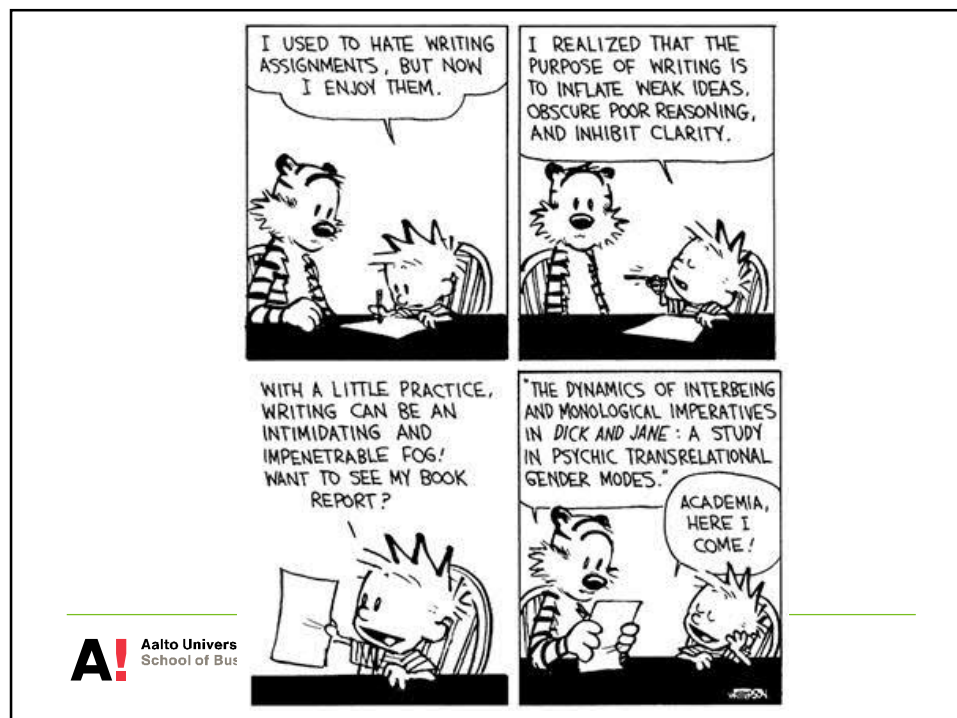
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How write academic text?

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Characteristics of academic writing

- Academic writing is
 1. **Informative** – the purpose is not to entertain
 2. **Argumentative and linear** – all parts of the text are structured to support the central argument
 3. **Precise** – you have to know the meanings of words, and use them accurately
 4. **Objective** - emphasis on information and arguments, not on you
 5. **Hedging** - You might need to qualify your stance; or the strength of your claims
 6. **Complex and formal** - more complex grammar, vocabulary and structures; avoiding colloquial expressions

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Characteristics of academic writing

Regardless of the topic area, audience, and purpose, certain general guidelines apply

1. Use **formal words and structures** (do NOT use shortened verb forms or negatives such as I'm, don't)
2. **Do not over-emphasize your own person** or that of someone else (impersonality, objectivity → passive voice, impersonal structures, etc.)
3. **Be cautious** when dealing with issues not necessarily accepted by everyone (→ modal auxiliaries such as may/might/should; adverbs and adjectives such as potential, perhaps, possibly, likely, etc.)
4. Use the professional terminology of your field, but avoid saying things in an overly complicated manner – **good writing is easy to understand** (this is where many novice academics go wrong!)
5. Keep in mind **your intended audience** and its expectations

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Two important rules:

Rule #1: YOU LEARN TO WRITE BY WRITING! –
WRITE, WRITE, WRITE

Rule #2: QUALITY COMES FROM REVISION! –
EDIT, EDIT, EDIT

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CITATIONS!!! Why are they so important in academic writing?

1. **Giving credit to whom credit is due** – one cannot present ideas formulated by others as their own (that would be plagiarism)
2. Academic transparency: the reader can **check** whether a claim made by the author is valid, or **evaluate** whether the author has interpreted the original correctly
3. The reader can **find the original text** (this is why a full reference list is needed)

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Proper citation technique

- In consumer research discipline **in-text citations** are used, i.e. references are places within the text in brackets
- Typically the reference is in the form of (Lastname, year) for research articles and (Lastname, year, page number) for books

Analysis refers to breaking the data into manageable parts (Uusitalo 1991, 23).

- The citation can also be the subject of the sentence:

According to Uusitalo (1991, 23), Analysis refers to breaking the data into manageable parts.

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Proper citation technique

- Multiple authors:

One study found that the most important element in comprehending non-native speech is familiarity with the topic (Gass & Varonis, 1984).

or

Gass and Varonis (1984) found that the most important element in comprehending non-native speech is familiarity with the topic.

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Proper citation technique

- Multiple works

Research shows that listening to a particular accent improves comprehension of accented speech in general (Gass & Varonis, 1984; Krech Thomas, 2004)

- Web page with author and with no author:

Role-play can help children learn techniques for coping with bullying (Kraiser, 2011).

The term Nittany Lion was coined by Penn State football player Joe Mason in 1904 ("All things Nittany," 2006).

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Proper citation technique

- For more information on proper citations and reference lists, please check out:

<https://guides.libraries.psu.edu/apasquickguide/overview>

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How to write a literature review?

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Doing a Literature Review

Jeffrey W. Knopf, *Naval Postgraduate School*

Students entering a graduate program often encounter a new type of assignment that differs from the papers they had to write in high school or as college undergraduates: the literature review (also known as a critical review essay). Put briefly, a literature review summarizes and evaluates a body of writings about a specific topic. The need to conduct such reviews is by no means limited to graduate students; scholarly researchers generally carry out literature reviews

In general, a literature review has two key elements. First, it should concisely summarize the findings or claims that have emerged from prior research efforts on a subject. Second, a literature review should reach a conclusion about how accurate and complete that knowledge is; it should present your considered judgments about what's right, what's wrong, what's inconclusive, and what's missing in the existing literature. In contrast to some other ways of surveying a body of

or not in dealing with a certain problem. In this context, one might focus, for example, on the "lessons learned" from previous efforts to deal with a certain problem (and those lessons learned might have been proposed by outside scholars or by practitioners themselves).

To return to the first context, reviewing existing knowledge can itself be the end goal if one simply wants to ascertain the current "state of the art" on a particular subject or problem. In this context

**A literature review
summarizes and evaluates a body of writings
about a specific topic**

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In general, a literature review has two key elements. First, it should concisely summarize the findings or claims that have emerged from prior research efforts on a subject. Second, a literature review should reach a conclusion about how accurate and complete that knowledge is; it should present your considered judgments about what's right, what's wrong, what's inconclusive, and what's missing in the existing literature. In contrast to some other ways of surveying a body of literature, such as an annotated bibliography, the literature review is a work of synthesis. For this reason, it is important not to simply write a summary list of what each individual work says, but instead to focus on the body of work viewed as a whole.

Here you'd go through a lot of articles to see what's in there regarding your topic of interest

Here you analyze the literature you've found

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"A literature review is a work of synthesis!"

→ what is missing in prior literature?

What is confusing about prior literature?

What do we need to know more about and why?

It is NOT just a list or a summary of prior literature.

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The writing style of a literature review

Extraordinary experiences such as river rafting (Arnould and Price 1993), skydiving (Celsi et al. 1993), **climbing Everest** (Tumbat and Belk 2011), surfing (Canniford and Shankar 2013), and **participating in the Burning Man festival** (Kozinets 2002) or the **Mountain Man Rendez-Vous** (Belk and Costa 1998) resemble Tough Mudder. **Indeed, these adventures all allow individuals to free themselves from the tedium of the everyday** by engaging in an event that is intense and temporally marked-out, which are the defining features of an extraordinary experience (Abrahams 1986). **From this perspective, these various activities are escape attempts** (Cohen and Taylor 1976) providing relief from the structural demands of institutional arrangements (Turner 1969).

Demonstrates the author is well-read and knows the topic by active comparison and lists

Includes the authors interpretation what prior studies are about

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Some common mistakes

1. Literature review is **too broad** (instead of building a convincing position or case for the research, it is a broad summary of different topics, without them being linked to each other in a meaningful way)
2. Literature review is **too narrow** (focuses only on a couple of prior studies, does not give a clear picture of what has been done and what is still missing)
3. **Bad citation styles or lazy work** (for example, always go to the original works and build your own argument, instead of citing what someone else wrote about some original piece)

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What kinds of sources can you use in academic writing?

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Must be used: peer-reviewed academic articles

Your references should be 80% from this category)

ASB ranked journals are a must

4*	3	2
Journal of Consumer Psychology	European Journal of Marketing	Academy of Marketing Science Review
Journal of Consumer Research	Industrial Marketing Management	Advances in Consumer Research
Journal of Marketing	International Marketing Review	Consumption, Markets and Culture
Journal of Marketing Research	Journal of Advertising	Electronic Markets
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Journal of Advertising Research	International Journal of Advertising
Marketing Science	Journal of Interactive Marketing (formerly JDM)	International Journal of Consumer Studies
	Journal of International Marketing	International Journal of Market Research
4	Journal of Public Policy and Marketing	International Journal of Retail and Distribution
International Journal of Research in Marketing	Marketing Letters	Journal of Brand Management
Journal of Retailing	Marketing Theory	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing
	Psychology and Marketing	Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing
		Journal of Consumer Affairs
		Journal of Consumer Behavior

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- **May be used (proceed with caution)**
 - **Conference proceedings** from academic conferences
 - **Academic books** – typically written by academic researchers for a more general audience, published by academic publishing houses, such as Routledge, Sage, Harvard University Press. Often peer-reviewed, but not double-blind
 - **Statistics from reliable sources** (such as Tilastokeskus) → these can be to argue why the topic is important. But always check who has published the statistic!
 - **White papers, resolutions etc.**, published by, for example, governments, The UN, advocacy groups, research institutions, think tanks etc. **But be careful → mind the politics!**

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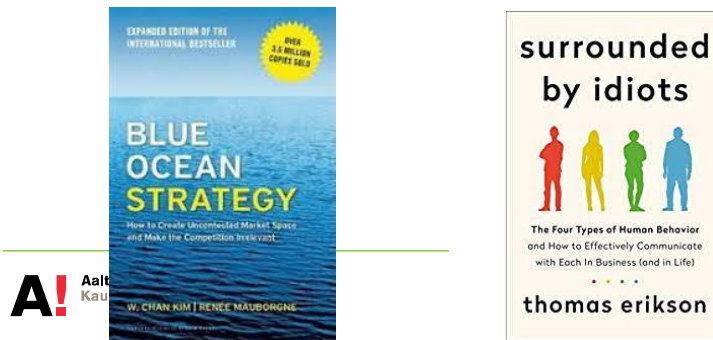
- **High-quality dictionaries and encyclopedias, text books to some extent**
(for example Oxford English Dictionary → sometimes can be ok) → especially when you need to define something, dictionary can be a good starting point)
- **Practitioner literature**
(e.g. Advertising Age)
- **High-quality journalism, offline and online**
(e.g. NY Times, Economist) → especially when introducing a marketplace phenomenon and giving it background)
- **Reports by large consultancy firms**
(PWC, Deloitte, Accenture) → especially for numbers and statistics, also good insights on consumer trends etc.

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- **SHOULD BE AVOIDED**

- **Consultancy books and popular psychology**

- They are **most often based on anecdotal evidence**, not research, and they have not gone through a peer-review process
- They can be sometimes be useful to provide background information on the phenomenon → such as show, that popular managerial books have noted it ☺



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- **Bachelor and Master's thesis, dissertations**
→ when you're writing your thesis, you can browse through them for structure etc. You may also cite if really interesting original findings, but note that **they have not been peer-reviews**. Good for finding better sources!
- **Random web pages**
- **Company-produced or sponsored material** (can be used as data!)

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How to pitch?

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What is a pitch?

pitch

noun

UK  /pɪtʃ/ US  /pɪtʃ/

pitch *noun* (PERSUASION)



[C]

a speech or act that attempts to persuade someone to buy or do something:

- *The man in the shop gave me his (sales) pitch about quality and reliability.*
- *She **made** a pitch **for** the job but she didn't get it.*
- [+ to infinitive] *The city **made** a pitch **to** stage the Olympics.*

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**A pitch is a
short speech or presentation
intended to
persuade and convince
the listener to
invest in or buy
something**

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What you should include in your pitch

- **Problem** → **what** is this research project looking to fix
- **Solution** → **how** is your research going to fix the problem
→ **why are you doing this, what value does your research create**
- **Method** → **how** are you planning to carry out the research

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Next steps

- If you haven't already, **sign up in Perusall** and start working on the first reading – **the deadline is on March 11 @ 13.00** (the course code is **MIKKONEN-2VYDL**)
- If you haven't already, **contact the members of your group** and start brainstorming for an idea for the project
- Next lecture will be on research methods and design



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Question, comments, grievances?