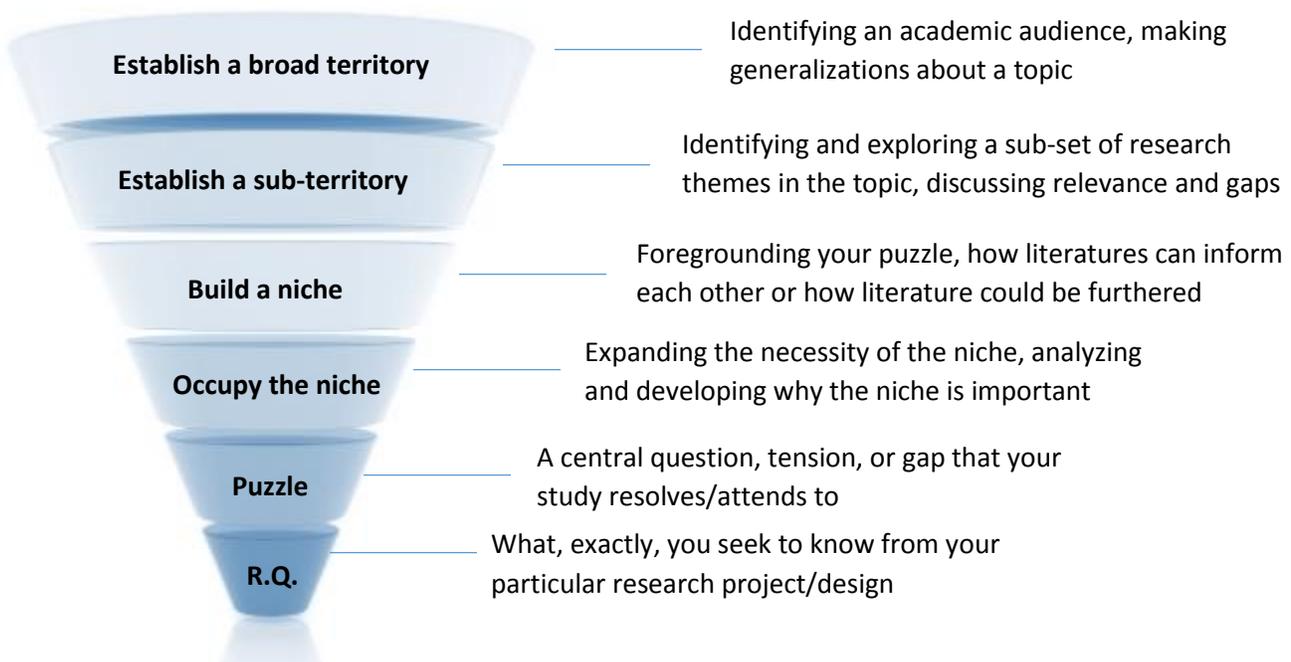


The Literature Review Funnel

The “literature review funnel” is a heuristic – a tool for discovering the broader audience and impact for your academic research project. Do not think of this funnel as a law that you must follow step-by-step. Rather, think of it as a way to visualize your introduction and literature review by considering the broader literatures from which you are “distilling” your specific research question.

Similarly, think of this heuristic as a loose guideline for mapping an author’s argument and contribution. Every literature review is a rhetorical construction – meaning the author presents their literature *as they see it* and *as necessary for justifying* the necessity of their own project. The introduction will usually feature a condensed version of this structure as well as a review of methods and, sometimes, key findings. Then the author “unpacks” or expands this structure in the literature review.



Common Rhetorical “Moves”

Any verb following the author/study as subject shows you what the author wants to do:

- Explore, Investigate, Examine
- Build upon, Extend, Expand
- Show, Argue, Demonstrate

Lists often show how the author is presenting the “lay of the land” in a given area of literature.

Words that claim the cause, effect, or general trends in a body of literature signal the conclusions the *author wants* the reader to see.

Other “Moves” that signal niche-building

In addition, Moreover
However, By contrast, Unlike
While
On one hand, on the other hand
Has yet to
In this way
By *doing x*, I *accomplish y*
Which I call “*abc*”
From *this*, then *that*
As *Other Authors* have shown
Situating, linking, connecting
Raises questions