

## Building a bibliography

**For a term paper:** typically, no need to cite sources outside the course. But **versions for conferences or publication do need to cite widely!**

### How to find relevant sources

- **The bibliography of papers you have read** directly on the topic
- **Papers** you have read in other contexts that come to mind. The connection could be an **analogy, structural similarity**, or that they discuss your topic briefly though their overall focus is elsewhere. Where a paper cites someone else for a point, cite the original source.
- **Google Scholar and PhilPapers search.** Try out multiple relevant key words. Especially for science papers, reasonable to focus on most cited (weighing for how recent the paper is).
- **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Philosophy Compass.** Read relevant overviews, and then papers references there. (Handbooks by Oxford and Routledge, where available, are also often very helpful for surveys.)

It's good to have a sense of which philosophy journals are reputable:

### Meta-rankings and existing rankings of philosophy journals

From: [Ranking philosophy journals: a meta-ranking and a new survey ranking](#)

Journal	PCA	AM	HM	Weighted	Leiter	SJR	CiteScore	h5-index	JNCI
<i>Noûs</i>	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	4	1
<i>Philosophical Studies</i>	2	5	4	4	8	8	6	2	7
<i>Philosophy &amp; Phenomenological Research</i>	3	3	2	3	5	5	5	3	10
<i>Synthese</i>	4	4	3	2	11	13	4	1	2
<i>Mind</i>	5	2	5	5	2	3	3	5	24
<i>Australasian Journal of Philosophy</i>	6	7	7	9	6	7	7	7	22
<i>Philosophical Review</i>	7	6	6	7	1	2	2	12	27
<i>Journal of Philosophy</i>	8	8	8	6	4	6	9	14	16
<i>Pacific Philosophical Quarterly</i>	9	10	9	8	15	10	11	8	4
<i>Erkenntnis</i>	10	12	10	11	13	14	13	6	4
<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i>	11	9	12	14	9	12	9	10	25
<i>European Journal of Philosophy</i>	12	11	13	17	18	19	18	10	20
<i>Canadian Journal of Philosophy</i>	13	14	15	13	12	11	14	17	4
<i>Philosophical Issues</i>	14	13	11	10	27	4	11	17	7
<i>Inquiry</i>	15	15	17	16	22	15	18	14	15
<i>Journal of the APA</i>	16	16	16	15	19	23	18	14	8
<i>Philosophers' Imprint</i>	17	17	14	12	7	9	13	10	10
<i>Analysis</i>	18	18	18	21	10	21	24	18	21
<i>American Philosophical Quarterly</i>	19	19	19	18	14	16	18	20	13
<i>Ratio</i>	20	20	20	19	25	17	18	22	19
<i>Metaphilosophy</i>	21	21	21	20	31	26	22	20	13
<i>Southern Journal of Philosophy</i>	22	22	22	22	30	24	18	20	13
<i>Res Philosophica</i>	23	24	23	23	33	22	22	24	11
<i>Dialectica</i>	24	23	25	26	23	20	26	25	23
<i>Philosophia</i>	25	25	27	25	32	25	26	24	19
<i>Thought</i>	26	26	26	24	20	18	27	26	17
<i>Philosophy</i>	27	27	28	27	29	27	24	27	26
<i>International Philosophical Quarterly</i>	28	29	29	29	35	28	28	28	28
<i>Review of Metaphysics</i>	29	28	24	28	34	29	29	29	29

This table reports our meta-rankings as well as some of the prominent existing rankings. "PCA" is the aggregation of the existing rankings using Principal Component Analysis; "AM" is the aggregate ranking based on the arithmetic mean, and "HM" is based on the harmonic mean. "Leiter" is Brian Leiter's 2018 "general" philosophy journals ranking; "SJR" is the ranking induced by Scimago; "CiteScore" is the ranking induced by Scopus; "JNCI" is the ranking induced by World of Science

This list is only generalist journals. In philosophy of mind and philosophy of psychology, *Mind & Language*, *Philosophical Psychology*, and *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* are also reputable

sources. (There are other extremely prestigious venues in other subfields; e.g. *Ethics* or *Philosophy and Public Affairs* are comparable to top-15 generalist journals).

It can be worth seeing the first stage of collecting a bibliography as analogous to brainstorming: collecting all articles that seem relevant, then culling/selecting the ones you will actually read (or read in detail).

### How to select what to read

- It depends on how much time you have!
- Prioritize articles that are **directly** on your topic and **published in well-regarded venues**. (Within that: the ones that seem most interesting to you.)
- **Read literature review pieces** on the topic to know the lay of the land.
- When short on time, prioritize **recent** articles that also summarize older, important pieces. (And then can cite those based on having learned what points they make).
- Can cite articles based on the abstract/skimming if just citing e.g. “For defenses of view X, see...” or similar kinds of referencing.
- Hack: read articles that are not as directly central but seem especially suggestive to you, by people whose work you tend to like, etc. (as a source for “special sauce”).

### Managing a bibliography

Some people use bibliography managers (Zotero, Mendeley, etc.). Search “Citation Management” or “Bibliography Management” online for guides. What I do:

- I put relevant articles in the same folder with name “AuthorName\_PaperTitle”.
- I use Obsidian (or another note-taker/word processor) to take summary notes, with an index at the top. I usually include quick comments on central points.
- I write papers in Latex using Overleaf and use BibTex to save citation names. (And use Google Scholar or PhilPapers to get .bib files/formatted citations.)
  - In Word or Google Docs, **use the Citation tool. Do not write citations by hand** (more work, more likely to make mistakes).
  - **Do not leave citing for the end.** It will create way more work and be overwhelming. Take the time to find who you need to cite as you go along.
- My personal view: err on the side of **citing more rather than less**, and look around to know what is out there and make sure you do not snub people who have said very relevant things to your project, defended views you mention, etc.