

# TOEFL Listening Lesson 28

**Setting:** The student visits the professor during office hours.

## Questions

**1. What is the main purpose of the student's visit to the professor?**

- A. To ask for an extension on the term paper
- B. To get clarification about how to conduct a literature review
- C. To request help finding sources for a group project
- D. To ask whether she chose a good topic for the paper

**2. According to the professor, what is a key feature of a literature review?**

- A. It presents the student's personal opinion on the topic
- B. It provides a list of all sources the student has read
- C. It shows how different sources relate and interact with each other
- D. It summarizes all the facts about a specific topic

**3. What does the professor suggest the student do to find more sources?**

- A. Use only the university library's printed books
- B. Contact scholars who have written about the topic
- C. Search newspaper archives for recent developments
- D. Check the bibliographies of scholarly articles

**4. Why does the professor mention phrases like “in contrast” and “building on this idea”?**

- A. To show how to critique weak sources
- B. To help the student avoid plagiarism
- C. To suggest ways to structure the review clearly
- D. To demonstrate transitions used in argumentative essays

**5. Why is the student surprised during the conversation?**

- A. She did not know that opinions are not included in the literature review
- B. She thought she could use blogs and websites as sources
- C. She assumed the review was more like a book report
- D. She believed the review should come at the end of the paper

## Script

### **Student:**

Hi, Professor. Do you have a moment? I had a few questions about the literature review we're supposed to write for our term paper.

### **Professor:**

Of course, come in. What specifically are you having trouble with?

### **Student:**

Well, I guess I'm not exactly sure what a literature review *is*. I mean, I know it has to do with summarizing sources, but I don't know how to organize it or what to include.

### **Professor:**

That's a common question. A literature review isn't just a summary of sources—it's more like a synthesis. You're showing what research has already been done on your topic, how different scholars agree or disagree, and what gaps still exist.

### **Student:**

Okay, so... it's not just a list of who said what?

### **Professor:**

Exactly. You're trying to present a conversation among scholars. Think of it as laying the groundwork for your own argument. It shows your reader that you've done your homework and that your paper fits into an ongoing academic discussion.

**Student:**

That makes sense. But I'm not sure how to start. Should I just begin by searching the library database?

**Professor:**

That's a good place to begin. Start broad—use keywords related to your topic and see what comes up. Academic databases like JSTOR or Google Scholar are great. Once you find some solid articles or books, check their bibliographies to find more.

**Student:**

Oh, I hadn't thought about looking at their sources. That's smart.

**Professor:**

It's one of the easiest ways to build out your reading list. And as you read, take notes—not just on what each author says, but how they relate to each other. Are they building on one another? Are there any debates?

**Student:**

So I should be comparing the sources to each other as I go?

**Professor:**

Exactly. And try to group them by theme or perspective. That will help you structure your review later. Don't feel like you have to go chronologically.

**Student:**

Got it. And how many sources should I be aiming for?

**Professor:**

For this paper, around six to eight scholarly sources would be appropriate. Make sure they're peer-reviewed. Stay away from blogs or general websites.

**Student:**

Right. And when I write the review, should I be including my own opinion?

**Professor:**

Not yet. The literature review is objective. You're just presenting the landscape of existing research. Save your own argument for the next section of the paper, after the review.

**Student:**

Okay, so I should just describe what's been said and how it connects?

**Professor:**

Yes, and be sure to use transitions to help guide the reader. Phrases like "in contrast," "similarly," or "building on this idea" show how the sources relate to each other.

**Student:**

That helps a lot. I think I was imagining it more like a book report or something.

**Professor:**

That's a common first impression. But once you start analyzing the relationships between sources, it'll start to come together. You might

even find that a few articles are central to your topic—those are the ones you'll want to focus on most.

**Student:**

And... how do I know when I've found a "gap" in the research?

**Professor:**

Good question. A gap might be something that hasn't been studied yet, or it might be a disagreement in the field that hasn't been resolved. Sometimes you'll notice that certain populations haven't been included in studies, or that old methods are being questioned.

**Student:**

So part of my job is to find those gaps and use them to shape my own paper?

**Professor:**

Exactly. Once you've mapped out what's already known, you can decide what new perspective you want to bring in.

**Student:**

This is super helpful, thank you. I was really overwhelmed before, but now I feel like I have a clear plan.

**Professor:**

I'm glad to hear that. And don't hesitate to come back if you need help along the way—or if you want to run your outline by me before you start writing.

**Student:**

I might take you up on that! Thanks again, Professor.

**Professor:**

Anytime. Good luck with your paper.

## Answers

**1. What is the main purpose of the student's visit to the professor?**

**Correct answer:** B. To get clarification about how to conduct a literature review

**2. According to the professor, what is a key feature of a literature review?**

**Correct answer:** C. It shows how different sources relate and interact with each other

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**Correct answer:** D. Check the bibliographies of scholarly articles

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