Helpful Hints for Writing a Literature Review

1. Take **A LOT** of notes while doing research. If you put each note on a separate note card, when writing your paper all you have to do is put the note cards in a logical order.

2. It is **ALWAYS** obvious to your teacher when you are copying directly out of a published resource. Take the time to paraphrase the info and write it in your own style. See example below:

   **Copying Directly:** Outdoor shooting ranges are thought to use more than 80,000 tons of lead shot and bullets each year. About 4,400 tons of lead fishing sinkers are sold each year in the US. Some states have limited the use of lead shot in heavily hunted areas to minimize the effects of lead in the environment.

   **Citing a source:** Outdoor shooting ranges use more than 80,000 tons of lead shot and bullets each year. Researchers have also found that over four-thousand tons of lead fishing sinkers are sold each year in the United States (Morris, 134). According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, in order to reduce the effects of lead in the environment, some states have limited the use of lead shot in areas that are popular with hunters (dnr.state.mn.us).

3. While a research paper/literature review is intended to be very fact-filled, don’t forget to use transition statements to tie together the facts within a paragraph. Transitions also need to be used between paragraphs. See example below:

   **No Transition:** Greywateraction.org says that gray water is recycled from sinks, dishwashers, bathtubs, showers, and washing machines. Gray water is not taken from garbage disposals, toilets, or diaper pails.

   **Transition:** Greywateraction.org states that gray water is clean, recycled water. It can be taken from many areas in a house including sinks, dishwashers, bathtubs, showers, and washing machines. To ensure safety while using gray water though, it is not recycled from garbage disposals, toilets, or diaper pails.

4. Paraphrasing makes concise wording possible and avoids using direct quotes that don’t add quality to the paper. See example below:

   **Direct quote:** “Most exciting of all, on several occasions they picked small leafy twigs and prepared them for use by stripping off all the leaves. This was the first recorded example of a wild animal not merely using and object as a tool, but actually modifying an object and thus showing the crude beginnings of tool making” (Jackson, 214).

   **Paraphrase:** Jane Goodall was excited when she realized that the chimpanzees were using grass stems as tools to get termites from their mounds. This was the first time that the “crude beginnings of tool making” were shown in wild animals (Jackson, 214).