

# How to avoid the top six problems with literature reviews...

and cruise to dissertation victory

# #1

## STATE YOUR CONTEXT

(a.k.a. Where are you?)

Explain the context and scope of your chosen *public administration* topic.

- CONTEXT=Address the historical, cultural, and ideological factors that have affected and currently affect your topic.
- SCOPE=the extent or degree of the problem (How many stakeholders, facilities, municipalities, etc.? How many dollars? How many years?)

Define key terminology that is specific to your issue.



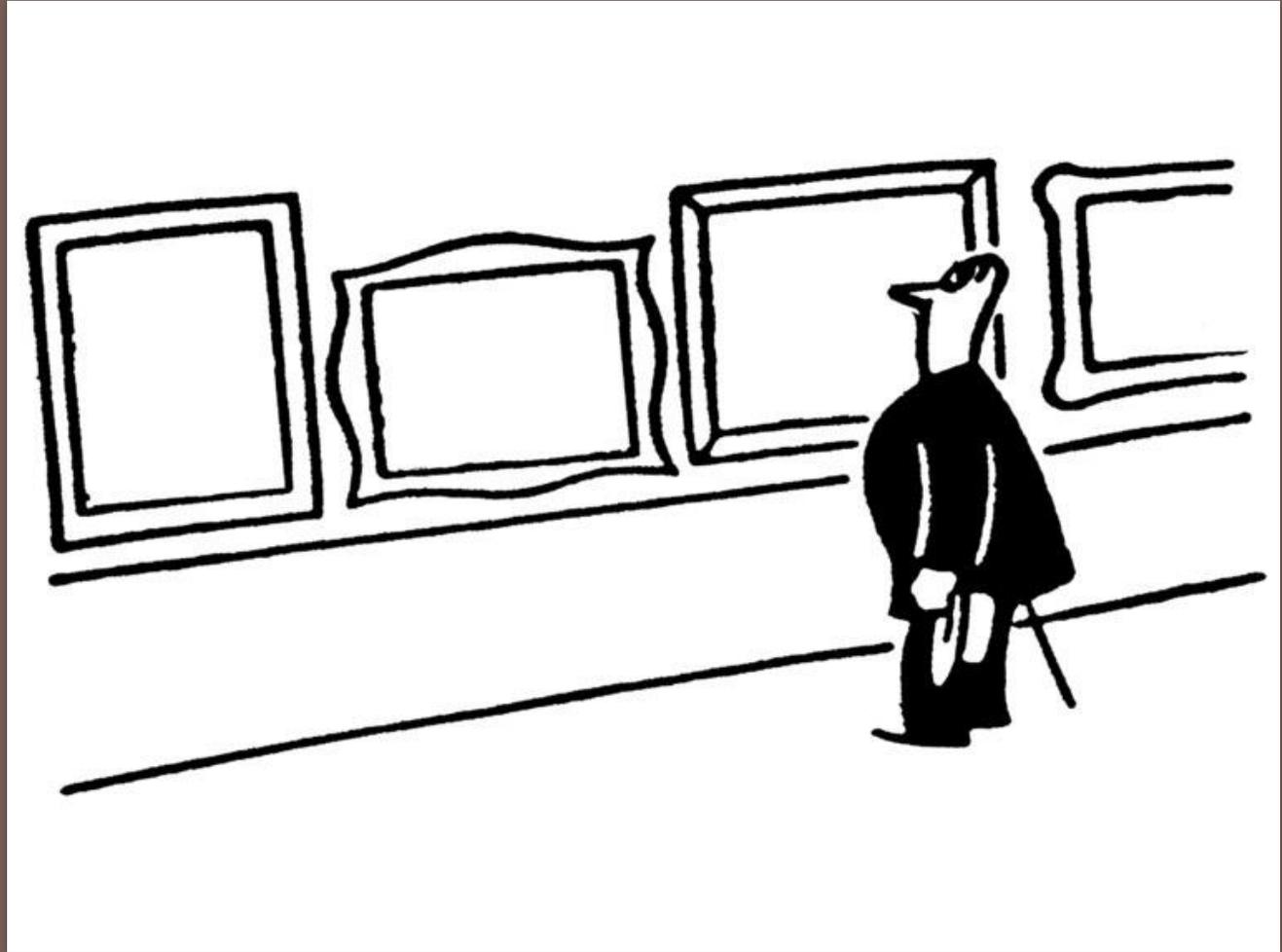
## #2

### APPROACH YOUR TOPIC USING A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FRAMEWORK

Discuss your problem as a public service issue:

- Identify stakeholders and relevant policies.
- Assess programs, policies, and organizational environments (including culture, politics, and setting).
- Acknowledge impacts of diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

Assess proposed solutions and outcomes in terms of public service values and ethics.



<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/10/29/looking-at-frames-at-the-louvre>

# #3

## STATE YOUR VIEWPOINT

Academic writing is argument. Identify your viewpoint and state it explicitly. This is necessary whether you agree, disagree, (do a little of both) or introduce an entirely new perspective.

State your claim(s) or thesis early in your writing. The reader should be able to identify your viewpoint in relationship to the viewpoint of other authors or stakeholders.





# #5

## EXPLICATE

(a.k.a. No one can read your mind)

When you provide evidence and data, tell the reader how this evidence supports your theory, thesis, or argument. If you don't, you run the risk that it will be interpreted incorrectly. Or worse, that it won't be recognized as important at all.

Likewise, be sure to provide evidence in defense against possible counterarguments.



# #6

## FINISH STRONG

(a.k.a. Are we there yet?)

How do you know when your literature review is complete?

Your literature review is successful if you have justified the need for your research project. That means you have answered the questions:

- Why is this issue important?
- Who does this issue affect?
- What question(s) will my proposed research answer?

