

How to Write Annotations

What is an annotated bibliography? •

- An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. •
- Each citation is followed by a brief (usually less than 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph: the annotation. •
- The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority.

The Process •

- First, locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic. •
- Examine and review the actual items, then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic. •

Please note: you don't need to read every source word for word as you write your annotations for this class

- practice scanning the contents. •
- Cite each book, article or document using the appropriate MLA or APA style. •
- Write a concise annotation following each citation, summarizing the central theme and scope of the book, article or document.

Start your annotation with a summary

- A summary briefly describes the contents of a source.
- Scan or read the information quickly to determine its main idea, argument or purpose. - -
Then write a few sentences of what it is about in your own words.

Here is an easy way to begin a summary: •

In "[name of article]" [author] states [State the main point of the article first.]

Each annotation should include as many of the following criteria as possible: •

- Evaluate the authority or background of the author •
- Comment on the intended audience •
- Explain how this work illuminates your research topic •
- Mention bibliographies, charts, graphs, statistics or illustrations that are pertinent •
- Discuss the writing style of the author •
- Comment on any bias or point of view shown in the work
- Write a few sentences that express your judgment and opinions of the author/publisher's background.
- Do not fill the space with generalizations •
- Use more special word combinations as possible for the beginning, continuation and finishing of the annotation
- Avoid such vague adjectives as "excellent" and "good." Instead, use adjectives that communicate something specific about the source.