How to Write an Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An Annotated Bibliography is a list of citations taken from books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief description and evaluative paragraph of the work.

What is the purpose of an Annotated Bibliography?

The purpose of the annotated bibliography is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

How long should an Annotated Bibliography be?

An annotated bibliography is usually about 150 words long.

What is the difference between Annotations vs. Abstracts?

Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author’s point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority. Abstracts are descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes.

How do I find sources to prepare an Annotated Bibliography?

To find sources to prepare an Annotated Bibliography try the following:

- The John B. Cade Online Catalog to search for books
- Electronic Databases to search for magazines, journals and newspaper articles
- Periodical Indexes to locate print sources for magazines and journal articles

How do I prepare an actual Annotated Bibliography?

1. First, locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may be useful information for your topic.
   Remember to choose resources that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic.
   Consider the following questions to help guide your research:
   - What problem am I investigating?
o What question(s) am I trying to pursue?
  o What kind of material am I looking for? (Books, journal articles etc.)

2. Summarize the argument of a source:
   Remember:
   o An Annotation briefly restates the main argument of a source.
   o An Annotation of an academic journal, for example, will typically identify the thesis (research question, or hypothesis), methods and conclusion within the article.
   o Identifying the argument of a source is different from describing or listing its contents.

3. Cite your sources using the appropriate style suggested by your instructor.
   MLA Citation Style and APA Citation Style are available in the John B. Cade Library Reference Department. Check with your instructor to find out which style is appropriate for your class.

4. Annotated Bibliography Samples:

**APA Style Annotated Bibliography**

(Journal Example)


Mael takes a cursory look at trends in feminist theatre. Although many women playwrights such as Marsha Norman dislike being labeled “feminist,” Mael maintains that feminist theory has had a tremendous impact on the content and form of woman’s plays since the 1960s. Female playwrights have found in the theatre a that allows them to express their experiences, feelings and thoughts on a myriad of topics, including re-examining woman’s history, challenging traditional male-female roles, exposing the emotional trauma of rape and abortion, and exploring relatively uncharted areas such as the relationships between women. An annotated bibliography of plays written by women follows Mael’s article.

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**MLA Style Annotated Bibliography**

This collection of sixteen original articles brings together findings from basic research and from clinical management of language disabilities in children. Linguistic approaches to the problem are discussed in articles concerning the structure of language and its onset in young children. Six articles discuss various causes of language disabilities, including neurological aspects, and the problems of the emotionally disturbed child, the deaf child, disadvantaged children, and retarded children. Diagnosis is viewed from both medical and nonmedical standpoints. Educational, medical, and social management of language-impaired children is discussed.

Remember:

- Identify the author’s thesis (central claim or purpose) or research question. The introduction and the conclusion will help you.
- Look for repetition of key terms or ideas throughout the text.
- Look at the organization and layout of the text. Examine what is emphasized.
- How is evidence or data interpreted in the text? Identify the method used to investigate the problem(s) addressed.
- Examine opening sentences of each paragraph. This is typically where author(s) often state their main point in the paragraph.
- Look for paragraphs that summarize the argument.

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