

Annotated bibliography



University of
Southern
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An annotated bibliography is a list of appropriate sources (e.g. books, journals or websites) used for researching a specific topic.

An annotated bibliography usually contains:

- a summary of the source's content
- its relevance to the topic
- an evaluation of the source's credibility

Annotated bibliographies are a good way of organising your research to provide a clear overview of the chosen topic.

Selecting sources

When choosing sources for an annotated bibliography it is important to note the source's:

- Currency/Timeliness
- Relevance
- Credibility
- Bias/Agenda/Purpose
- Strengths/Limitations

When writing your annotated bibliography, it is important to determine the topic you are investigating, whether there is a specific question to answer, the types of sources you need to focus on, and whether they are reputable and or high quality.

General format

The citation is written first.

Each annotation is a concise paragraph that **summarises and evaluates** the information from one source.

Evaluating the strengths and limitations of the sources **allows the researcher to decide if that specific source is relevant** to their topic.

An annotated bibliography is a collection of multiple annotations.

Source citation in full reference style

Summary of the source:

- description of main idea/purpose/argument
- summarise content & key points
- overall findings
- methodology/design of research (if applicable)

Your evaluation of the source:

- What are the strengths?
- Any issues/failings/limitations?
- Overall significance to field of study?
- Overall relevance to your research?

Example

SAMPLE MLA ANNOTATION (Check which referencing style your assessment requires)

Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*. Anchor Books, 1995.

Lamott's book offers honest advice on the nature of a writing life, complete with its insecurities and failures. Taking a humorous approach to the realities of being a writer, the chapters in Lamott's book are wry and anecdotal and offer advice on everything from plot development to jealousy, from perfectionism to struggling with one's own internal critic.

In the process, Lamott includes writing exercises designed to be both productive and fun. Lamott offers sane advice for those struggling with the anxieties of writing, but her main project seems to be offering the reader a reality check regarding writing, publishing, and struggling with one's own imperfect humanity in the process. Rather than a practical handbook to producing and/or publishing, this text is indispensable because of its honest perspective, its down-to-earth humor, and its encouraging approach.

Chapters in this text could easily be included in the curriculum for a writing class. Several of the chapters in Part 1 address the writing process and would serve to generate discussion on students' own drafting and revising processes. Some of the writing exercises would also be appropriate for generating classroom writing exercises. Students should find Lamott's style both engaging and enjoyable.

Source:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/annotated_bibliography_samples.html

Final Checklist

- ✓ Arrange annotations in alphabetical order by authors' surnames.
- ✓ Keep annotations brief (150 – 200 words; or what is specified in the task).
- ✓ Write in full sentences in an academic style.
- ✓ One annotation per source.

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here:

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