

Annotated Bibliography Guidelines

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a bibliographic list of sources, accompanied by a summary and/or evaluation of each source. This summary and/or evaluation is called an “annotation.” The bibliographic information is written in the standard bibliographic style of your discipline (in our case, MLA style). The annotation is written in paragraph style, using complete sentences and proper punctuation. The length of annotations can vary according to the type of project and the requirements of the teacher.

The following is taken from the *Purdue Online Writing Lab* (OWL)
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html

Why should I write an annotated bibliography?

***To learn about your topic:** Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you're forced to read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information. At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow you to see what has been done in the literature and where your own research or scholarship can fit. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view.*

***To help other researchers:** Extensive and scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything important that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.*

The annotations usually accomplish one or more the following tasks:

- Summarize the source
- Assess the source – Was the source useful? Was the source reliable? What is the “authority” connected to it? Were there any biases? Etc.
- Reflect on the source’s usefulness – How does it fit into your research? How is it used in your paper? What purpose does it serve in your argument? Why did you choose this particular source?

Guidelines and requirements for the Unit 2 Project

For the Unit 2 Project, I’m asking that you complete all of the above-mentioned tasks, when compiling your annotated bibliography:

- Summary of the source

- General evaluation of the source
- Reflection on the source's usefulness for your project

Write a paragraph (3-6 well-developed sentences, see example below, in which summary, evaluation, and reflection are present for each entry) for each of your 6 sources.

Annotated Bibliography Example

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001. Print.

In this book, Ehrenreich attempts to ascertain whether it is possible for an individual to live on a minimum-wage in America. Taking jobs as a waitress, a maid in a cleaning service, and a Wal-Mart sales employee, the author summarizes her work, her relationships with fellow workers, and her financial struggles.

An experienced journalist, Ehrenreich is aware of the limitations of her experiment and the ethical implications of her experiential research tactics and reflects on these issues. The author supplements her experiences with scholarly research on her places of employment, the economy, and the rising cost of living in America. Ehrenreich's project is timely, descriptive, and well-researched.

Using this source will enhance my project, as Ehrenreich not only shares valuable information about the same topic I am working on, but she also discusses other relevant materials, and exemplifies useful methodological approaches to work on the subject.

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

Lamott's book offers 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 issues like plot development, perfectionism, and struggling with one's own internal critic. Lamott also includes fun and productive writing exercises.

Lamott's 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. This text is indispensable because of its honest perspective and encouraging approach.

This book will be useful for my research paper about the struggles and anxieties connected to writing, although I will also need to consult other texts that offer statistics and sociological surveys.