

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An annotated bibliography is a formally arranged list of books, articles, or other sources which includes a brief commentary on each one. Your teacher might assign an annotated bibliography as a separate exercise or as the first step in a research project.

The Procedure

After locating and reading the required number of items, prepare a regular bibliography entry for each work, using the appropriate format—either MLA or APA. (Use the Academic Skills Centre’s handout sheets on bibliography format.) As usual, these entries must be arranged in alphabetical order.

Following each entry, add a brief description of the work. In some cases, a critical assessment must be included. After reading the information below, consult your instructions to determine the type and amount of information that is required.

Types of Annotation

In some cases, the teacher might require only one or two sentences summarizing the content of each work. In other cases, you might be expected to specify each work’s thesis, its main points and the type of evidence used to support them. You might have to include a critical judgment, and/or to mention how each work will be useful in your research.

Short annotations usually consist of several lines, but longer ones typically reach 100 to 150 words.

If necessary, ask your teacher to clarify how much information is expected for each of your annotations, and whether a critical assessment is to be included.

Style and Format

Annotations follow directly from each bibliography entry. (See format models.) They must be written in your own words, and must be very clear and concise.

In both MLA and APA formats, annotated bibliographies are double-spaced. The first line of each entry (typically the author’s name) begins at the left-hand margin, while all the following lines are indented. (To do this, use the computer’s “hanging indent” feature.)

The heading is: Annotated Bibliography

The reverse side of this sheet shows two models, one with a short descriptive annotation and one with a longer critical annotation. Both are shown in MLA format.

NOTE: BOTH MODELS BELOW HAVE MLA BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRIES. IF YOU ARE WORKING IN THE APA SYSTEM, BE SURE TO USE ITS BIBLIOGRAPHY FORMAT INSTEAD.

In the first model below, the annotation is very brief, describing the content of a book in a few words.

Williams, Roberta B. *Twentieth-Century Women of Science*. 2nd ed. New York: Hudson, 2004. Print. A discussion of major contributions to the sciences by women between 1900 and the late twentieth century, including profiles on the careers of ten prominent scientists in a variety of fields.

The second model shows a longer annotation which not only describes the article's content, but also includes critical comments and a point about how this source will figure in the student's research.

Jones, Ralph H. "Poe's Neurotic Characters." *American Literary Journal* 56.3 (2002): 76-81. *ProQuest Literary Bookshelf*. Web. 10 Oct. 2009. This article focuses on major characters in six of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, analyzing their mental and emotional problems. Jones argues that abnormal psychology is central to Poe's most successful works of fiction, and he supports his views by describing the strange actions and delusions of various characters. The article is written in straightforward language, and quotations are used effectively. The psychological terms are explained clearly. This source will be useful in supporting my view that the horror in Poe's work is based on the mental problems of his characters, not on supernatural forces.