

How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography

Definition: A bibliography is a list of sources (books, journals, websites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. A bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.). An annotation is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an annotated bibliography includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.

Annotations:

- **Summarize:** Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.
- **Assess:** After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate its worth or validity. Consider the following questions in determining the reliability of the source: Does it have a reputable sponsor or publisher? What credentials does the author have? Can the information be verified in other respectable sources? Is the publishing date current enough for the topic of research? Does the author have a bias and does that bias affect the information's accuracy? Who is the information written for and is the audience focus appropriate for a research paper?
- **Reflect:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Purpose:

- **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.
- **To help you formulate a thesis:** Every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis. So a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. 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.

Format:

- **The bibliographic information:** Generally, the bibliographic information of the source (the title, author, publisher, date, etc.) is written in [MLA](#) format.
- **The annotations:** The annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages. The length will depend on the purpose. Your annotations will need to include a summary of the material in the source, an assessment of the validity of the source, and your reflection on the use of the source in your research.

Example:

Herold, Benjamin. "Technology in Education: An Overview." *Education Week*. February 5, 2016.

www.edweek.org/ew/issues/technology-in-education/. Accessed January 31, 2018.

Summary: In this article for *Education Week*, Benjamin Herold gives an objective overview of different types of learning that can occur when schools have access to technology. He provides information on eight different types of technology-embedded educational methods and tools, and each section has a description, bullet point goals, and links to additional resources. The author addresses some of the advantages and disadvantages of each type while maintaining an objective attitude towards all.

Assessment: This is a credible source, though not a very specific one. It is fairly recent, although two years in terms of technological updates can render some sources obsolete. The addition of internal and external links for each method adds to the support of this source. The author, Benjamin Herold, is a staff writer for *Education Week* on the topic of technology in education. *Education Week* is designed for educators and is published by Editorial Projects in Education (EPE), a 60+ year old organization that claims its mission to be raising and contributing to the current discussion of topics in American education. There is no overt bias demonstrated in this article or by the source.

Reflection: Given that I want to focus on the benefits of access to technology in education, this source will benefit me, particularly as I am developing background on multiple ways technology can be embedded in the classroom. I may also use the links provided to investigate methods in more detail and from other sources.

Requirements:

- 5 sources
- MLA format with appropriate heading
- Drafts of your research question and thesis at the beginning of annotated bibliography

Annotated Bibliography Rubric

- **A (47-50 points)** The bibliography submitted properly cites all sources used. The student chose relevant and adequate resources to thoroughly research the problem of focus for the essay. The citations included in the bibliography communicate the student's ability to read, evaluate, and organize information effectively.
- **B (43-46 points)** The bibliography submitted properly cites most sources used. The student chose relevant and adequate resources to research the problem of focus for the essay. The citations included in the bibliography communicate the student's ability to read, evaluate, and organize information satisfactorily.
- **C (39-42 points)** The bibliography submitted properly cites some of the sources used, though the citations are uneven in development. The student chose relevant resources to research the problem of focus for the essay, though additional resources may have needed to be consulted. The citations included in the bibliography communicate the student's ability to read, evaluate, and organize information sufficiently.
- **D (35-38 points)** The bibliography submitted does not properly cite the sources used and/or the student did not choose relevant and/or adequate resources to research the problem of focus for the essay. The citations included in the bibliography do not communicate the student's ability to read, evaluate, and organize information sufficiently.
- **F (0-34 points)** The bibliography submitted does not cite and/or annotate 5 as required by the assignment.