Writing an Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of sources that includes a summary and/or an evaluation of each source. It is the same concept as a traditional bibliography; however, it contains notes, or ‘annotations’ from the author of the paper. The annotation for each source directly follows the citation for the source in the bibliography list. The annotation can vary in length. It is usually between four and ten sentences, but can be shorter or significantly longer.

Why am I writing an Annotated Bibliography?

Writing an annotated bibliography will help you understand your topic. Exploring and explaining the research and literature that is available about your intended topic will help you learn about your topic and will help guide your research.

An annotated bibliography is also important to those who will read your paper, including your teacher. An annotated bibliography will inform your readers of the content, accuracy, and relevance of the sources you used to write your paper. This is your chance to explain and defend why each source was used for the paper.

How should I organize my Annotated Bibliography?

Annotated bibliographies are usually written in the same style as the accompanying research paper. If your paper is written in APA style, your annotated bibliography should also be written in APA style. If you did not write your paper in a particular style, ask your teacher how your annotated bibliography should be structured.

Annotations are written in paragraph form and follow the citation for the source. In most cases, annotated bibliographies are organized alphabetically, just as a standard bibliography would be. However, some teachers may require other organization methods. Your teacher is the final authority.
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What is included in each Annotation?

The information contained in an Annotated Bibliography will vary according to your teacher’s requirements. **Always check with your teacher to know what needs to be included in your annotated bibliography.** Some elements that may be included in an annotated bibliography are:

- **Summary and purpose of source**
  - Provides basic summarizing information about the source. Any annotated bibliography should describe what the source was about and what the author argued or accomplished in the work.
  - (This source was an in depth study of…; This source provides background info…; This source provides an analysis of…, This source is an opinion piece about…)

- **Qualifications of author**
  - Provides any information that can be found about the author’s background, area of expertise, or current occupation.
  - (Smith, author of several published books in the field…, Jones, a professor of Political Science at Stanford…)

- **Bias of author**
  - Shares information you have found that could show that the author is biased about the topic he or she is writing about.
  - (Brown, a well known Republican…, Williams, a former president of the ACLU…)

- **How the source was used in your paper**
  - Explains how you used the source in your paper and how it was helpful to your research.
  - (The source provided an opposing view to my thesis…, This source was used as background information in my paper…)

MW 1/10
Examples (These examples are in APA style)


Colton’s book provides a detailed exploration of the life of Boris Yeltsin, a key player in the fall of Communism in Russia. There is significant stress on Yeltsin the person, allowing readers to get to know the man who is usually known solely for his politics. The book reads almost like psychoanalysis of the leader, allowing readers to see what shaped the man who shaped modern Russia.

Colton, the Director of Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies and author of several books on modern Russia, makes the argument that Yeltsin played a more significant role in shaping modern day Russia than he is usually credited with. The book benefits from Colton drawing from people intimately familiar with provides a thorough analysis of Yeltsin, satisfying readers with both those with a casual interest in his life, and those who are Russian history buffs.

This source was very helpful for my paper about Russia after the fall of Communism. It provided a lot of information about Yelstn’s role in modern Russia. While I needed other, more general sources as well, this provided key information about a huge player in modern Russia.

Hedges article discusses the role of the media in glorifying and misrepresenting war. He assaults the idea that war unites and nation and that going to war is noble. He blames the media outlets more than individual journalists or new viewers; however, the article is a clear attack on modern day perceptions and veneration of war.

Hedges formerly wrote for the *New York Times* and has published books with a clear left wing slant; however, he also has extensive experience in many different war zones as a reporter. He may have a clear opinion, but his expertise in writing about wartime reporting is backed up with professional credibility. He speaks of war with the voice of someone who knows what it is like, who knows what it does to people and places, and who wants to see an end to war.

While there is certainly much to be written about government’s blame for war, this article is an interesting assessment of how the media is complacent with the government’s war agenda. For my paper about Americans’ perceptions of the War in Iraq, this will help me discuss how the media controls what we see and hear about this war.