

DUAL CREDIT ENGLISH ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT

From University of North Carolina On-line Writing Center:

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/annotated-bibliographies/>

Welcome to the wonderful world of annotated bibliographies! You're probably already familiar with the need to provide bibliographies, reference pages, and works cited lists to credit your sources when you do a research paper. An annotated bibliography includes descriptions and explanations of your listed sources beyond the basic citation information you usually provide.

WHY DO AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?

One of the reasons behind citing sources and compiling a general bibliography is so that you can prove you have done some valid research to back up your argument and claims. Readers can refer to a citation in your bibliography and then go look up the material themselves. When inspired by your text or your argument, interested researchers can access your resources. They may wish to double check a claim or interpretation you've made, or they may simply wish to continue researching according to their interests. But think about it: even though a bibliography provides a list of research sources of all types that includes publishing information, how much does that really tell a researcher or reader about the sources themselves?

An **annotated bibliography** provides *specific information* about *each* source you have used. As a researcher, you have become an expert on your topic: you have the ability to explain the content of your sources, assess their usefulness, and share this information with others who may be less familiar with them. Think of your paper as part of a conversation with people interested in the same things you are; the annotated bibliography allows you to tell readers what to check out, what might be worth checking out in some situations, and what might not be worth spending the time on. It's kind of like providing a list of good movies for your classmates to watch and then going over the list with them, telling them why this movie is better than that one or why one student in your class might like a particular movie better than another student would. You want to give your audience enough information to understand basically what the movies are about and to make an informed decision about where to spend their money based on their interests.

WHAT DOES AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DO?

A good annotated bibliography:

- encourages **you** to think critically about the content of the works you are using, their place within a field of study, and their relation to your own research and ideas.
- proves **you** have read and understand your sources.
- establishes **your** work as a valid source and you as a competent researcher.

- situates **your** study and topic in a continuing professional conversation.
- provides a way for **others** to decide whether a source will be helpful to their research if they read it.
- could help **interested researchers** determine whether they are interested in a topic by providing background information and an idea of the kind of work going on in a field.

WHAT ELEMENTS MIGHT AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY INCLUDE?

1. Bibliography according to the appropriate citation style (MLA, APA, CBE/CSE, etc.).
2. Explanation of main points and/or purpose of the work—basically, its thesis—which shows among other things that you have read and thoroughly understand the source. (**YOUR OWN SUMMARY OF THE WORK! DO NOT COPY AN ABSTRACT... THIS IS PLAGIARISM!**)
3. Verification or critique of the authority or qualifications of the author.
4. Comments on the worth, effectiveness, and usefulness of the work in terms of both the topic being researched and/or your own research project.
5. The point of view or perspective from which the work was written. For instance, you may note whether the author seemed to have particular biases or was trying to reach a particular audience.
6. Relevant links to other work done in the area, like related sources, possibly including a comparison with some of those already on your list. You may want to establish connections to other aspects of the same argument or opposing views.

The first four elements above are usually a necessary part of the annotated bibliography. Points 5 and 6 may involve a little more analysis of the source, but you may include them in other kinds of annotations besides evaluative ones.

For more extensive research papers (probably ten pages or more), you often see resource materials grouped into sub-headed sections based on content, but this probably will not be necessary for the kinds of assignments you'll be working on. For longer papers, ask your professor about his/her preferences concerning annotated bibliographies.

YOUR TASK:

Create an annotated bibliography consisting of information about **TEN DIFFERENT SOURCES**.

Your Final Annotated Bibliography must include:

- 10 sources
- Proper MLA Citation Format
- Commentary on points 1-4 as described above

Sample MLA Annotation (from OWL at PURDUE)

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

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.

In the sample annotation above, the writer includes three paragraphs: a summary, an evaluation of the text, and a reflection on its applicability to his/her own research, respectively.