



Annotated Bibliography

How Do I... Undergraduate Research Guides

Part of the "Cite and Manage My Sources" Series

In this guide you will learn how to:

- Differentiate between types of annotations
- Write an annotated bibliography
- Ask the right questions to write your annotations

Need More Help? Ask a Librarian!

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What is the purpose of an annotation?

The purpose of an annotation is to describe the cited material, whether a book or article. It is a brief, descriptive note that should provide sufficient information about the book or article so that a determination can be made as to whether the actual material should be examined. Annotations help to clarify the book or article, and they will often provide evaluative information about it as well.

Each annotation need not address all of the concerns below, but so far as possible, it should improve the decision-making and simplify the researcher's work. Annotations can be any length, but usually are about 50 to 150 words in length, depending on the item itself.

Annotations are NOT book reviews. Be wary as you begin to write your annotations that you do not create a book review. An annotation also differs from an abstract, in that the abstract is simply a summary of the content. The annotation provides more guidance to the reader in determining the usefulness of an individual work.

Types of Annotations:

Informative

Written in the tone of the book or article, an informative annotation presents the original material in a shorter form.

Descriptive

Provides a description of the text, avoiding the addition of any evaluative commentary on its quality.

Evaluative

In addition to the information included in the previous annotation types, includes an evaluative judgment of the material as well.

Annotation Content:

Author

- Who is the author?
- What is his/her occupation, position, education, experience, etc?
- Is the author qualified (or not) to write the article?

Author Bias

- Does the author have a bias or make assumptions upon which the rationale of the article or research rests?
- What are they?

Purpose

- What is the purpose for writing the article or doing the research?

Conclusion/Justification

- Does the author satisfactorily justify the conclusion from the research or experience?
- Why or why not?

Relationship to Other Works

- How does the study compare with similar studies?
- Is it in tune with or in opposition to conventional wisdom, established scholarship, professional practice, government policy, etc?
- Are there specific studies, writings, schools of thought, philosophies, etc., with which this one agrees or disagrees and that one should be aware?

Author Conclusion

- At what conclusion does the author arrive?

Intended Audience

- To what audience is the author writing?
- Is it intended for the general public, for scholars, policy makers, teachers, professionals, practitioners, etc?
- Is this reflected in the author's style of writing or presentation?
- How is this evidenced?

Information Source

- What method of obtaining the data, or conducting the research was employed by the author?
- Is the article (or book) based on personal opinion or experience, interviews, library research, questionnaires, laboratory experiments, standardized personality tests, etc?

Significant Attachments

- Are there significant attachments or appendices such as charts, maps, bibliographies, photos, documents, tests or questionnaires?
- If not, should there be?

Check out other **How Do I... Guides** in this series, **Cite and Manage My Sources**:

- **Avoiding Plagiarism**
- **Integrating Sources**