

Annotated Bibliographies

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of **citations** to books, articles, films, and other documents. Each citation is followed by a brief descriptive and critical paragraph, normally between 100 and 200 words. This paragraph is known as an **annotation**, and its purpose is to inform readers of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of sources cited.

As **annotations** are both descriptive and critical, they expose the author's points of view and biases, along with appropriateness of expression, and authority.

Abstracts, on the other hand, summarize a text without evaluation or critique. Abstracts are usually found at the beginning of a scholarly journal article, or in an index of periodicals.

How is an Annotated Bibliography Organized?

As the writer of an annotated bibliography, it's up to you to determine which scheme will work best for you in presenting a collection of citations and annotations to your readers. Normally, within each section or subsection of the bibliography, entries are organized alphabetically by the first letter of the citation. In some cases, writers organize entries chronologically by date of publication.

Other schemes include:

- ❖ Sections classified by format (books, journals, films)
- ❖ Sections classified by type of book (encyclopedias, atlases, directories)
- ❖ Sections classified by topic (sculpture, painting, photography)

Can I Read More About This at the Library?

Yes. There are a number of great books in the Information Sciences Library that you can consult when composing an annotated bibliography. Some are especially useful for clarifying citation styles. Check out:

The Ready Reference Handbook (REF PE1408.D595 2003)

On Compiling an Annotated Bibliography (REF Z1001.H33 2000)

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (REF LB2369.G53 2003)

APA Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (REF BF76.7 P83 2001)

How About Web Sites?

How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>

This site, created by Cornell University Libraries, offers relevant and succinct information on understanding and preparing annotated bibliographies. It provides sample annotations.

Writing an Annotated Bibliography

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/annotatebib.html>

This site, maintained by the University of Toronto Libraries, offers superb tips on the bibliographic writing process, covering such areas as research, critical evaluation of sources, and verbs used to talk about texts and arguments. You can also print it out as a PDF from the site.

UCSC Library- How To Write an Annotated Bibliography

<http://library.ucsc.edu/ref/howto/annotated.html>

This site explores the key concepts structuring an annotated bibliography. It's a great place to go if you have questions about the roles and usefulness of annotated bibliographies in scholarship.