

Annotated Bibliography

what it is & how to make one

What is an annotated bibliography?

Bibliography: a list of sources you used to research your topic

Annotation: a summary or evaluation of a source

Annotated bibliography: a list of sources you used to research your topic, with an annotation for each

What is a source?

Any material you got information from for your assignment! This can be reference materials (ex. dictionaries or encyclopedias), magazine or newspaper articles, scholarly journal articles, books, websites, videos, and more!

Why would you make an annotated bibliography?

- It is a way to keep your sources and thoughts organized- sometimes when you read a lot of sources about the same topic, it becomes difficult to remember the main points of each
- Annotations force you to read each source thoroughly, meaning you are more likely to retain important information and understand it better
- Helps you to plan out your paper and choose sources that will support your argument/purpose
- Show the amount of research you did into your topic
- Can be used by other researchers who are interested in your topic and the work you've done

What should I write in my annotations?

Any combination of these ideas!

1. Summarize (surface level)
 - What are the main points/arguments of this source?
 - Did the author have a purpose for writing this (ex. entertainment, education, etc.)?
 - If someone asked you to explain what this source is about, what would you say?
2. Assess (reading between the lines)
 - Is this a useful source?
 - Does the author have any biases, or is the writing objective?
 - How does this source compare to the others in your bibliography?
 - Where did the source come from? Is there a publisher or institution with influences?

- Would you consider this to be a “scholarly” source? Why?
3. Reflect (thinking about your own research)
- How will you use this source in your own research/project?
 - Did this change your opinion about your topic?
 - How did this source enhance your understanding of your topic?
 - Does this author agree/disagree with other authors in your bibliography?
 - Which section of your paper will this source support?

Examples

Sample MLA Annotation:

Porter, Max. *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*. Graywolf Press, 2015.

In *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*, Porter explores a father’s grief following the unexpected and tragic death of his wife. Porter’s novel tackles the mundane, the exciting, the colorful, and the greyscale of grief from a poetic angle. As the point of view (POV) switches between a widower, his sons, and this obscure anthropomorphic Crow, readers see volatile and vulnerable moments of guilt, discomfort, sorrow, growth, and love.

Rather than giving each son their own POV, Porter presents them as one unit, which makes their perspective on grief beautifully warped and inconsistent. The Crow’s POV is exceptionally notable. As a manifestation of grief’s obscurities, the Crow’s voice often weaves between clear advice and cryptic blabbering. Porter has a refreshing and contemporary take on writing about grief. It’s a mix of prose and poetry, which helps emphasize the fluid yet unpredictable grieving process. The POV switches quite frequently, as each section lasts about two or three pages. This dynamism allows the reader to not get stuck on one person’s grief for too long, showing the interconnected experience of grieving as a family.

This novel is a great example of unique strategies for writing about complex emotions. He satirizes a commonly cliché-ridden experience. Many aspects of this novel, specifically the Crow’s POV, could demonstrate new perspectives and tactics for writing about grief.

In the annotation above, the writer includes three paragraphs: a summary, an evaluation of the text, and a reflection on its applicability to his/her own writing, respectively. Note that MLA requires the annotation to have a 1-inch indent, rather than the 0.5-inch indent used in other styles.

Sample APA Annotation:

Evans, D. (Ed.). (2016). *Language and identity: Discourse in the world*. Bloomsbury Academic.
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474242035>

In this book, Evans inquires about the interrelationships between language and identities, focusing on how the expression of languages may influence or "colonize" discourse. He also discusses the links between language and social structure. In the second part of the book, Evans analyzes a plethora of real-world examples of this collision of language and identity. He discusses Quebec's



shift from ethnic to civic national identity, Indigenous communities in the Amazon, and nineteenth-century Irish emigrant language expression.

The author also recognizes many other views on language and identity, all of which are referenced in the book's index. *Language and Identity* targets the idea of embracing new languages and new cultures to encourage cultural allegiances and combat marginalization.

This book, especially chapters two and three, is a great resource to help explain the significance of language in one's identity. It will also help provide an outside example to connect to the other texts in the analysis.

The annotation above both analyzes the book and reflects on its potential uses. The first paragraph summarizes the main arguments and lists some examples the author used. There is also a sentence discussing the book's mention of counterarguments, which aims to emphasize the author's credibility. The second paragraph briefly reflects on the potential uses of the work. This particular annotation evaluates and summarizes the text within one paragraph.

Sample Chicago Annotation:

Tick, Andrea, Mischelle Cyril Fulgence, Aishoola Maratovna Bayazova, Mehreen Aneel, and Francis Andrew

Mwangi. 2022. "Impact of Internet Misinformation on Generation Y and Z." In *MEB — 20th International Conference on Management, Enterprise and Benchmarking. Proceedings (MEB 2022)*, edited by Pál Fehér-Polgár, András Keszthelyi, and Péter Szikora. Budapest: Óbuda University, Keleti Károly Faculty, 145-147. Accessed June 3, 2025.

<https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/impact-internet-misinformation-on-generation-y-z/docview/2755549588/se-2>.

This paper outlines the types of misinformation and how they spread through social media, mainly focusing on its effect on Millennials and Gen Z. The authors argue that the social dynamics of social media have been ingrained into the lives of these generations, as they are the first to be raised with extensive access to the internet. Due to the incredible growth of these platforms, misinformation has become widespread and harder to distinguish from the truth. The authors discuss how sources from friends and family are generally trusted, even if the source itself is unreliable. They also discuss how individuals will intentionally spread misinformation for personal gain. Finally, the authors argue that the motivations of this misinformation can give better insight on how to combat it.

This annotation includes only one paragraph, a summary of the paper. It provides a simple explanation of the authors' main goals and arguments. Be sure to check the specific guidelines for your particular assignment to determine the content of your annotations.

Reminder- the format of your citation depends on which style you are using, so make sure to double check.

Purdue OWL. (n.d.). *Annotated Bibliographies*. Purdue Online Writing Lab.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html

