

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources (books, articles, websites, documents, etc.) relating to a topic which includes a note summarizing and/or evaluating the content of each source in addition to the citation.

Sources should be listed in alphabetical order by the last name of the lead author.

An annotation is a brief, comprehensive—and sometimes evaluative—summary of the contents of a source. A good annotation is:

- **Accurate**—reflects the purpose and content of the article
- **Self-Contained**—defines abbreviations, acronyms, and unique terms
- **Concise & Specific**—makes each sentence maximally informative and can be roughly 40-120 words
- **Coherent & Readable**—written in clear prose, with active rather than passive voice, and verbs rather than noun equivalents

Depending on your project or assignment, your annotations may do one or both of the following:

- **Summarize**—Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main points of the book or article? Which topics are covered? How would you *describe* it?
- **Evaluate**—After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. How useful is it? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is it reliable? Is it biased or objective? What is its goal?

CHOOSING THE CORRECT FORMAT FOR THE CITATIONS

The **MLA** (Modern Language Association) **Handbook**, the **Publication Manual of the APA** (American Psychological Association), and the **Chicago Manual of Style** are the three most commonly followed style guides. Check with your instructor to find out which style is preferred for your class. See corresponding fliers for **MLA**, **APA** and **Chicago** styles.

ANNOTATIONS V. ABSTRACTS

Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are frequently descriptive and critical; exposing the author's point of view, clarity and authority.

THE PROCESS

Cite the book, article, or document using the appropriate style.

Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that:

- (a) Evaluate the authority or background of the author
- (b) Comment on the intended audience
- (c) Compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or
- (d) Explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.

EXAMPLES

Evaluative annotation

Kreie, Jennifer, and Timothy Paul Cronan "Making Ethical Decisions." Communications of the ACM 43.12 (2000): 66-71.

The authors, professors of computer systems, present findings of a study of 300 college students to support their theory that businesses who promote a strong ethical code of conduct can influence employee behavior in certain situations. The paper builds on an earlier study conducted by the authors. While the results of the study appear valid the survey is limited in its scope to a small population. A comparison of a similar survey conducted in a work place would be a valuable addition to this study. While the authors' conclusion that people rely on their personal values when making ethical decisions is perhaps stating the obvious, this article provides a good starting point for additional research on the topic.

Summative annotation

Kreie, Jennifer, and Timothy Paul Cronan. "Making Ethical Decisions." Communications of the ACM 43.12 (2000): 66-71.

The authors present findings of a study of 300 college students to support their theory that businesses who promote a strong ethical code of conduct can influence employee behavior in certain situations. The survey asked participants to read five scenarios then judge whether what the patron did was ethical or unethical. Includes a chart presenting results of the survey and a short bibliography.

*Adapted from Creating Annotations for an Annotated Bibliography: UW, Bothell Writing Center and How to prepare an annotated bibliography: Cornell University Library.