

DEVELOPING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annotated bibliographies are helpful tools when researching or writing a research paper. They allow you to organize your sources in ways that may otherwise be difficult.

With annotated bibliographies, you are able to easily find which source contains the information you need, and the citations are ready for your final paper. This alone makes annotated bibliographies useful.

Writing annotated bibliographies forces you to think about the material closely and summarize it into a short, concise paragraph. In doing so, you are able to better understand the text, which is invaluable making arguments and for source integration.

Components

The *Bibliographic Entry* is the entire entry from one source. The entry is composed of the Documentation and Annotation. The entries should consist of two parts:

Documentation: The source itself, properly documented in MLA, APA, CBE, Chicago, or another style.

Annotation: The paragraph of notes about the source. To be most valuable, annotations should establish credibility, summarize, and show relevancy. Ask your professor if you should include any additional information or if he or she has specific limitations to the assignments.

In your annotated bibliography, you should:

1. **Establish Credibility:** Let the reader know that your source and author are credible. Identify established reputable institutions when authors are employed or affiliated, or identify the reputation of the journal or method of publication. Look for *peer-reviewed* sources, which are journal selections that have been approved by a panel of professionals in the discipline.
2. **Summarize the work:** Identify and state the purpose of the work (paraphrased is fine; you will want to note the page number). Use headings, chapter titles, etc., to reference your discussion of the organization and allow you to quickly find the information within the source.
3. **Demonstrate diversity and similarity by showing relationships between and among sources:** Show how source details or content compare to another source in the bibliography by using *rhetorical modes of thinking*: comparison and contrast, definition, cause and effect, problem and solution, classification and description, or narration.
4. **Establish relevancy by showing the relationship between the source and your research-in-progress:** Use the strategy described in #3.

Sample Bibliographic Entry (cited according to APA format)

Greenhough, B., Jazeel, T., & Massey, D. (2005). Introduction: Geographical encounters with the Indian Ocean tsunami. *The Geographical Journal* 171(4), 369-371.

The authors are professors of Geography at Keele University, the University of Sheffield, and The Open University, respectively. The article is the introduction to a plenary session during the Royal Geographical Society Annual Meeting and is published in an academic peer-reviewed journal. The authors begin the introduction with an overview of the impact that the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami had on geography, not only in terms of the natural disaster, but in terms of relationships within the discipline. They organize the larger discussion into three categories: spatialities (such as geopolitical and socioeconomic identities), temporalities (such as how to record and preserve the record of events leading toward and emerging from the disaster), and responsibilities (to the science, and more importantly to the affected community). The opinions stated in this article clearly conflict with the arguments made by Koch (2008). This article is useful as a research source for an essay on careers in geography because it provides an illustration of the roles geographers play in a community, from preservers of history to representing a social and economic conscience.

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Reading Book-length Works for an Annotated Bibliography:

1. Print out the catalog page or copy the page that provided library book information.
2. Identify all documentation material on the text and write your documentation first.
3. Scan the Preface, front matter, and back pages for information about the author(s) to establish credibility.
4. Scan the Table of Contents and the Index of books to find your topic and to learn about the organization of the text. Read the Introduction and Conclusion, as well as relevant pages in the body. Look for the author's thesis (argument) and organization in the Introduction. These will help you create a summary.
5. Consider the role of content relevant to your topic, and where it might provide you support in your own research. This is what you will discuss to show relevancy.

Reading Shorter Works for an Annotated Bibliography:

1. Print out the entire work, if possible, or save the file to disc or your flash drive. Try to select peer reviewed journals and professional websites as sources.
2. Identify all documentation material on the text and write your documentation first.
3. Scan the Preface, front matter, and back pages of the journal, as well as the beginning and end of the article, for information about the author(s). These will help you establish credibility. If none is available, do a web search of the individual to find out where they work and what they have published.
4. Read the article, paying attention to the Introduction (find the thesis) and any headings. These will help you create a summary.
5. Consider the role of content relevant to your topic, and where it might provide you support in your own research. This is what you will discuss to show relevancy.

Formatting Reminders

- The Annotated Bibliography will be alphabetized the same way a standard Reference List, Works Cited, or Bibliography is done, by the lead author's last name or, if there is no author, by the first word of the title (excluding a, an, and the).
- Annotated Bibliographies are generally singles spaced. However, citations for the different styles require documentation to be double spaced. Ask your professor if your formatting should be done differently.
- Paragraph Indentation is always 1/2 inch. Use hanging indentation for the Documentation, and first line paragraph indentation for the Annotation. It will be much easier to read.
- White space makes Bibliographic Entries easier to read: Skip one space between the Documentation and the Annotation. Usually, each bibliographic entry appears on a new page. Ask your professor if he or she would prefer a different format.