Annotated Bibliography

A bibliography or works cited provides readers with the author, title and publication details of a source, whereas an annotated bibliography adds a brief summary or annotation, and an evaluation of each source (book, magazine, journal, etc.). Placed just below the facts of the publication, the annotation describes the content of the work so that future reference to the entry by a researcher will provide essential data.

When writing the annotation, provide enough information in approximately three to five sentences for readers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the source's purpose, content, and special value. Be sure to use complete sentences and to avoid wordiness.

Process for Writing an Annotated Bibliography

1. List the completed bibliographical citation.
2. Explain the main purpose of the work.
3. Briefly describe the content.
4. Indicate the possible audience for the work.
5. Evaluate the relevance of the information to your topic.
6. Note any special features.
7. Warn readers of any defect, weakness, bias, or confusing language.

There are two different types of annotative bibliographies: argumentative and referential. Each type will vary according to the source used. Both types can be present in the same assignment. Note: be consistent with the style of citation (APA, MLA, Chicago) used within the paper (do not mix styles).

Argumentative

Annotations take different forms, depending on the type of source and on the audience. Articles are often argumentative; in these instances, the writer should incorporate the author's position on the particular issue being addressed. The writer may choose to include quotes and/or references to individuals or to specific experiments for emphasis.

Referential

In longer works, the material may often be more referential than argumentative in nature. In these cases, the writer may choose to give a brief chapter-by-chapter sketch or to focus on one or two chapters. The focus of the annotation is dependent upon the focus of the paper.

Example (MLA style)

Dembart claims that fears of "Andromeda Strain" are unfounded. An interesting quote by James D. Watson, co-discoverer of DNA, asserts his scientific opinion about the genetic controversy: "I think the whole thing is lunacy. . . . I helped raise these issues, but within six months I was acutely embarrassed. There's no evidence that anyone has gotten sick from any of this" (3). On a more speculative note, Dembart quotes Robert Sinsheimer, who acknowledges fears are less justified than originally thought, but also suspects that genetic engineering could conceivably result in a new route for the transmission of cancer (5). This article seems to provide a fairly balanced, up-to-date overview of the whole issue.

**Example (Chicago Style)**


Davidson's book provides a thorough examination of the major roles filled by the numerous pagan goddesses of Northern Europe in everyday life, including their roles in hunting, agriculture, domestic arts like weaving, the household, and death. The author discusses relevant archaeological evidence, patterns of symbol and ritual, and previous research. The book includes a number of black and white photographs of relevant artifacts.

**Example (APA style)**


Franklin argues that student financial aid is not enough to equalize opportunity for post-secondary education; Federal Support Service Programs, Talent Search, Upward Bound, and Special Services for Disadvantaged Students (Known as the "Trio" Programs), as well as the more recent Educational Information Centers, are critical to the achievement of this goal. The heart of this publication is Chapter 3, which assesses issues and options that span the Title IV support service programs. These involve (1) level of authorization, (2) inter-program overlap and duplication, (3) inter-program integration and/ or coordination, and (4) eligibility. The final chapter contains program-by-program recommendations intended to help clarify the purpose and scope of Trio Programs and enhance their respective operations. This publication is an illuminating discussion of the policy options for the "other" provision of Title IV.

To properly cite, follow the same rules used when compiling a Works Cited (MLA), References (APA), or Bibliography (Chicago Manual of Style) normally found at the end of an essay. For an annotative bibliography, however, the citations are placed above the summary.