

Writing an Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents that also explains the relevance of the citations in regards to the author's purpose. Each citation is followed by a brief description and evaluative paragraph, which is the annotation - or explanation - of the citation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

Core Elements of an Annotated Bibliography:

Citations: include the APA citation that you would use if you were to cite this source in a reference list.

Annotation/Explanation: include a paragraph in which you explain the contents of the source

What are the Contents of the Source?

- The objective or purpose: was it to convince readers, inform readers, etc.
- The main idea: what was the thesis in the source? What was the main information the author wanted readers to take away from their source?
- Strengths & weaknesses: what strengths does the author have to make readers side with them? What weaknesses do they have? Is there any counter-arguments to their information/perspective?
- The findings: what did the author of the source claim to have found? What did their data show? What was their evidence that support their claim or main idea?
- The method: how did the author gather this evidence? Did they survey people? Did they investigate? Did they have any case studies?
- The results: What did they conclude with?

Things to Include in an Annotated Bibliography:

- An introduction: this is not just a bibliography with explanations. Be sure to introduce your topic of research in a paragraph before you begin listing your sources.
- A thesis: a thesis is a great starting point to begin your research and understanding the relevance of the source. Be careful that your thesis does not express your own claim/perspective on the topic too broadly and make your annotated bibliography more of a persuasive argument. That is not the point of the assignment.



Things to Avoid in an Annotated Bibliography:

- Writing in first person: do not use “I” to express your personal view. Keep the explanation of the source unbiased and objective.
- Avoid vague statements: do not use large words or give a general statement, (for example, “This source is good”), as it is unclear and does not support your statements. Instead, use examples or highlight specific parts of the source that can clearly support your statements, (for example, “The large population of over two hundred people surveyed by the author allowed for a wide range of data collection.”)

An Example of an Annotative Bibliography:

O'Connor, B. N., & Cordova, R. (2010). Learning: The experiences of adults who work full-time while attending graduate school part-time.

Journal of Education for Business, 85(6), 359-368. DOI: 10.1080/08832320903449618

In this study, the researchers examined how employed adults dealt with the addition of part-time graduate studies to work schedules and life demands. This study is distinct because very little research has been done about part-time graduate students. Using a modified phenomenological research approach, the researchers gathered qualitative data through both face-to-face interviews and phone interviews. The major finding was that, despite pursuing degrees relevant to their professional lives, all students found their workplaces resistant to proposals learned in school. However, the researchers surveyed only 6 individuals; therefore, these results may not be statistically significant. However, this study is relevant because it provides future researchers with a methodology for determining the impact of adding part-time graduate studies to the schedule of fully-employed adults.

← APA Citation for the source. The citation should be in full and follow the APA guide for how the source would be cited on a reference page

← The example annotation attached to the citation includes:

- What the researchers examined
- How is the study unique
- How did the researchers gather the information/data
- What was the major finding
- What was the limitation/weakness of the source/authors
- Why is this study relevant

APA Format:

APA format has several requirements, including a title page and specifically formatted pages. The title page should include a page number in the top right corner. There should be no information in the footer. The title page should include the title of the assignment in bold, the name of the student, the name of the institute, the course code and name, the instructor's name, and the due date. Some instructors prefer that the word count is also included on the title page.

