Information about Annotated Bibliographies

LibGuides—How to Write an Annotated Bibliography: [http://calstatela.libguides.com/](http://calstatela.libguides.com/), select Annotated Bibliography

What’s an annotated bibliography?
An annotated bibliography is a list of books, articles, or other documents, consisting of a citation followed by a brief evaluation of each work listed. The citation is a description of the essential elements of the work (including author, title, year of publication, publisher, and publication date), listed in a certain style with specific capitalization, indentation, and punctuation.

The annotation is a short critical review of the work and its author. The annotation may include: a brief summary of the content and usefulness of the item; a note of any limitations that the item may have, e.g. level, timeliness etc.; a description of what audience the item is intended for; an evaluation of the methods of research used; comment on the reliability of the item; a description of the author’s background; a summary of the author’s conclusions; commentary on how the item may be useful for your research.

An annotated bibliography, like any list of works cited, should be presented in alphabetical order by author’s last name.

Are annotations, abstracts and summaries the same things?
No! A summary, often called an abstract, is simply a short retelling of the work. A summary does not include an interpretive statement about the work. An annotation is a critical analysis and interpretation of the work in relation to one’s own research.

Why write an annotated bibliography?
Writing an annotated will help you kick-start research for a final paper by helping you get a handle on what research is available to support your own thesis. It will also illustrate to your professor the scope and quality of your work and will show that you read and understand the research in your area of study.

Questions to ask yourself when writing your annotation.
If you think about the following questions as you begin to write your annotation, the process will be much easier. Answer as many of the questions as you can.

- Who is the author and why should I pay attention to what he/she has to say? What are the author’s credentials?
- For whom is the book/article intended? College students? Scholars? Popular readers? Children?
- What is the focus and scope of the book or article? Is it generalized or does it focus on a specific topic or idea? Are any important ideas missing?
- Is the author biased in any way?
- What is the author's thesis statement? What are the author's main ideas?
- How does this work support or influence your topic? Would you use this work to write a final paper?

Content adapted from Dickinson College [http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/CitingRes/ChicAnnotated.html](http://lis.dickinson.edu/Library/Research/CitingRes/ChicAnnotated.html)

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How can I write an annotated bibliography without reading the whole book?
To write an effective annotation, you need not necessarily read the entire work. For a book, you should read the introduction and the conclusion. You should also read any notes provided by the author, and look carefully at the table of contents and index to see what topics the author covers. Read the authors credentials and any notes he or she provides about the work. Look also at the sources the author uses to draw conclusions.

Steps to write an annotated bibliography

1. Using the library catalog or database, search for citations to books, journal articles, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic
2. Export your citations to RefWorks
3. Briefly examine and review the actual items. Then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic. You can use book reviews to help with your book selection.
4. Finalize your list of sources in Refworks. Then choose a citation style (Chicago Manual Style, APA, MLA, etc.) and have Refworks prepare your bibliography
5. Open your bibliography/list onto Microsoft Word
6. Write an annotation for each entry