

## Script – How to Write an Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography gives an overview of the research that has been done on a given topic. Like any bibliography, it's an alphabetical list of research sources. But what makes it unique is it includes a concise summary of each source and some assessment of its value or relevance to your specific project.

For your project specifically, the annotated bibliography will act as an organizational tool, give record to your research and give your professor evidence that you have a good grasp on your topic of choice.

The Annotated Bibliography may just be one stage of a larger research project or it may stand independently but regardless it should showcase your skill in summarizing the key concepts of each reference you choose to annotate

### **Selecting Your Sources:**

Understand that a major part of a successful Annotated Bibliography depends on a well thought out research strategy and a targeted selection of sources. While you research make sure you define its scope. Deciding on what to include and exclude based on your research parameters is vital!

Consider these questions as you evaluate what sources are most relevant.

- What problem am I investigating and what questions am I trying to pursue?
- What kind of material am I looking for?
- Am I finding the most essential studies on my topic?

### **Summarizing Your Sources**

An annotation briefly restates the main argument of a source. An annotation of an academic source, for example, typically identifies its central argument, its major methods of investigation, and its main conclusions. Keep in mind that identifying the argument of a source is a different task than describing or listing its contents. Rather than listing contents, an annotation should account for **why** the contents are there.

Knowing you'll be evaluating a lot of resources that may or may not be applicable to your research topic, its important to develop a strategy in reading.

- Identify the author's thesis (central claim or purpose) or research question. Both the introduction **and** the conclusion can help you with this task.
- Look for repetition of key terms or ideas. Follow them through the text and see what the author does with them. Note especially the key terms that occur in the thesis or research question that governs the text.
- Notice how the text is laid out and organized. What are the main divisions or sections? What is emphasized and why? Accounting for the why will help you to move beyond listing contents and toward giving an account of the argument.

The other important thing to remember is that Annotated bibliographies come in many variations so pay close attention to the requirements of your assignment.

- Some assignments may require you to summarize only and not to evaluate.
- Some may ask you to notice and comment on patterns of similarity and dissimilarity between sources.
- Some assignments may require or allow you to preface the bibliography (or its sections) with a paragraph explaining the scope of your investigation and providing a rationale for your selection of sources.