

CREATING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

In this video we'll see how to do an annotated bibliography. We'll look at what an annotated bibliography is, how to select good sources for one, and how to write one.

An annotated bibliography is a list of sources on a topic, just like a bibliography you would put at the end of a paper. The difference is that each source has an annotation, or a short paragraph that describes the content, evaluates it, and points out how it fits in or differs from other research on the topic.

SELECTING SOURCES

A good annotated bibliography requires good sources, so we'll look at how to select the right ones.

First, you need to choose a good, focused topic. The more specific your topic is, the easier your bibliography will be to research and write.

Let's say you're interested in the topic of sleep problems. It's better to focus on one specific aspect, like sleep problems in university students.

If you put your topic in the form of a question, it will help you find sources more easily. For example, we could ask, What contributes most to sleep problems for university students?

Most annotated bibliography assignments require you to use scholarly or peer-reviewed articles and books. Always assume that's what you need, unless your instructions say something different.

You need to pick the best sources for your assignment, not just the first ones you find. Make sure the sources you choose are relevant--they should help you answer your question. They should also be representative of the research on your topic. That means you will need to read quite a few, think about them, and pick the ones you think best represent the research you find. This may include sources with different opinions or approaches.

WRITING AND CITING

Now that you have a topic and have selected some good sources, you need to write your annotated bibliography.

To do that, you need two things for each source. The first is a citation for the source, formatted properly in a standard citation style like MLA, APA, or Chicago. This part is just like the bibliography you would normally create at the end of your paper. The second is an annotation, which is a short paragraph that describes your source. Usually annotations have two parts.

The first is a short summary of the source's content, usually 2-3 sentences long. This is a short outline of the main findings in the source, but only as they relate to your topic.

The second part of the annotation evaluates the source and puts it into the context of other research on your topic. You might discuss how the source contributes to your understanding of the topic, whether it has any limitations or flaws, or how it is similar or different from other research. This part is also 2-3 sentences long. You'll need to be very concise when writing your annotation to be sure you can fit all the important points into only a few words.

The summary and evaluation parts of your annotation go together into a single paragraph. The annotation comes after the citation for the source. The whole bibliography is organized in alphabetical order by author last name.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

Check out our annotation worksheet on this page to try it yourself. Also check out our other videos on topics related to annotated bibliographies, which include picking a topic, finding scholarly articles, evaluating your sources, and citing.

If you have any questions, ask us at library.wlu.ca/help/askus.

Let us know whether or not this video was helpful. Go to library.wlu.ca/videofeedback to give us feedback and help us improve.