

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES



Much like the References or Works Cited section of a research paper, an annotated bibliography is an **alphabetically organized list of research sources** with a focus on a limited area of study in any discipline. The difference is that the writer of the annotated bibliography briefly summarizes the **purpose, key findings or arguments**, and **conclusions** of each source and often evaluates its **relevance** or **merit**. Annotated bibliographies may be part of a larger document, or they may be requested as an individual document by an instructor as a part of the research process.

Annotated bibliographies have four important functions, and any individual annotated bibliography may fulfill one or more of the following roles:

- 1 Introduce readers, including instructors, to **new and important studies**.
- Help students develop a thorough **understanding** of the sources related to their topic.
- Encourage students to consider the **usefulness** of the chosen sources to their own research and writing work.
- Allow students to assess the **connections** between sources in a related field.

Annotations in the document must include the following elements:

- 1 A citation in the **appropriate bibliographic style** (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).
- An **annotation** that summarizes and analyzes the chosen source.



Most individual annotated bibliography entries are short, sometimes only about 150 words; other entries can be longer, depending on the length and complexity of the source itself. In either case, they tend to **avoid excessive detail** and focus on **one or two points of significance**.



How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography

Find Sources and Read Them Critically

After carefully selecting the best sources for your topic, take accurate and specific notes by asking these important questions:

- 1 Is the source **credible**? Is it a peer-reviewed academic journal, an industry periodical, or another kind of source? What biases might the author hold as a result?
- What does the source say about the topic? Note the **main arguments** and **supporting evidence**.
- What is the **author's viewpoint** or **position**?
- How is this source useful? Note its **strengths** and **limitations** as a source.

Write


Construct each annotation by answering the following questions:

- **Identify** the author's affiliation and the credibility of the source, if relevant.
- **Summarize** the key arguments or, if this is a study, its goals and structure.
- **Discuss** the strengths and/or weaknesses of the text.
- **Explain** how the text is useful or not useful for your work.

Revise and Proofread

Revise your draft. Consider the following questions:

- Do you have **accurate** bibliographic information?
- Is the annotation **clear** and **concise**?
- Have you represented the sources **fairly** and with **academic integrity**?
- Do you use a **consistent tense**?
- Do you use an **academic tone** and **style**?



See the University of Manchester's Academic Phrasebank for examples of academic words and phrases you can use to add analysis to your annotated bibliography.



Sample Annotated Bibliography Entries

Example 1: APA Format

Nodrav, J. (2013). Statistical anomalies in standard olfactory-thrognosis incidence studies. [Electronic version] *Stat1cruncher Monthly*, 7, 34-58 ● .

Nodrav, a biometricist working for an industry financed research institute called Pangalactic Biometrics, in Waterloo, Ontario ● , applies a series of new algorithms to statistical analyses used for over a decade as standard measures for assessing the incidence of olfactory thrognosis among individuals aged 65 or over ● . His findings uncover several computational errors in the traditional assessment methods, particularly the statistical pattern tools developed by Marsh and Mallow (2001). His conclusion is that the previously accepted assumption of an excessively high disease incidence in this age demographic is unwarranted and misleading. His approach and methodology appear credible, but until his results are replicated by independent groups, one cannot dismiss bias possibly resulting from industry financing; therefore, this article is of limited use in this research ● .

- **A** Bibliographic information
- Identification of author and affiliation because author works in industry and source is an industry publication
- Summary of the main goal of the study
- Elaboration of strengths and limitations of work, as well as usefulness to project

Example 2: MLA Format

Connor, Daniel. "Imagistic Density in the Short Stories of Margaret Laurence." *Can-Con Currents* 13 (2009): 158-87 .

Daniel Connor is one of the very few scholars to focus exclusively on Margaret Laurence's short stories instead of her novels, the more common topic of inquiry for critics . In this study, he coins the term "imagistic density" to describe the Laurence's selective clustering of images as a way that reinforces thematic and symbolic associations important to plot and character development. Focusing particularly on her beginnings and endings, he reveals how these images act as motifs that lead to what he terms a "subliminal resonance" in the response of readers . Though there is clearly some merit in his approach, at times the grouping of images seems more inadvertent than intentional, and his claim that Laurence rivals James Joyce in artistic accomplishment appears exaggerated. Nonetheless, this article is useful in considering Laurence's choices of imagery .

- Bibliographic information
- Relevant information about author. Because article is a peer-reviewed academic journal, its credibility is already established.
- Summary of main arguments and their development
- Elaboration of strengths and limitations of work, as well as usefulness to project

Example 3: Chicago Notes and Bibliography Format

Kobayashi, Audrey. "The Japanese-Canadian Redress Settlement and Its Implications for 'Race Relations'." *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques Au Canada* 24, no. 1 (1992): 11-19. ^A
<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/docview/1293139767?accountid=14906>

Kobayashi examines the 1988 redress settlement between the Government of Canada and the National Association of Japanese Canadians to establish two things: how it speaks to the progress of human rights in Canada; and how the establishment of the Race Relations Foundation in the agreement connects discussions about racism to practical actions in eliminating it . Kobayashi's first objective is most relevant to my discussion of the history of human rights in Canada. In particular, Kobayashi offers an excellent context for the redress settlement, summarizing the history of racist government policies against the Japanese-Canadian community, and the impact of these policies . However, the establishment of the Race Relations Foundation was postponed indefinitely at the time of the article's publication in 1992, a fact that is noted in a postscript to the article. The Race Relations Foundation was finally established in 1997, impacting Kobayashi's discussion of the role of the Foundation and leav it open for further analysis .

- Bibliographic information
- Summary of main argument
- Discussion of usefulness to project
- Elaboration of strengths and limitations of work