



Talk about writing

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a research tool used to summarize, evaluate, and reflect upon sources. Depending on the purpose of your bibliography (and your instructor's guidelines), yours may address just some or all of these elements. An annotated bibliography is more or less a list made up of bibliographic entries followed by short paragraphs that comment upon each source in question.

Why Write An Annotated Bibliography?

As a writer, you can gain a better perspective of your topic and figure out how your secondary research fits into your overall study through the critical thinking and reading practices that writing an annotated bibliography requires. In writing your annotated bibliography, you are creating an organized place to easily access this information and analysis. YOU are the audience.

How Should I Structure My Annotated Bibliography?

As implied within its name, an Annotated Bibliography consists of two main elements: bibliographic entries and annotations. The bibliographic entries will include information such as the author, title, date, publisher, etc. Typically, this information will be formatted in whatever style you are writing in (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago, AMA, etc.). The annotations typically include a summary, evaluation, and/or reflection.

Bibliographic Entries:

This includes information such as the name of the author/organization/group, date, title, publisher, editors, edition, chapter, and more. The information that you include will depend on the type of source you have and the format you are writing in.

- See individual reference guides on how to cite your sources correctly (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago, AMA, etc.).
- Note that your entries should be alphabetized by the first word in each bibliographic entry.

Annotations

Summary:

The summary will give a succinct overview of your source (main arguments, central findings, how data was collected and analyzed, author information/credentials). Focus on the information that applies most directly to your topic. Remember that an annotation should be succinct; avoid repeating minor details or individual steps in an argument.



Evaluation:

This evaluation is written by you, the writer, with the purpose of helping make decisions about your research and your overall writing project. The foremost focus should be on what makes your source important and credible:

- **The CRAAP Test**- This test provides a structured method by which you can evaluate your source. When analyzing the credibility and value of your source, you can use this acronym to assist in narrowing your focus.
 - **Currency** - When was the information published? Has the information been revised or updated? Does your topic require newer sources?
 - **Relevancy** - Does the information relate to your topic? Who is the intended audience? Is this information appropriate for your audience?
 - **Authority** - Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor? Is the author qualified to write on the topic? Is the source peer-reviewed?
 - **Accuracy** - Where does the information come from? What methods were used to collect this information? Has the information been reviewed or referenced? Can the information be verified?
 - **Purpose** - What is the purpose of the information? Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?

Reflection:

Your reflection should be a short analysis of what the source contributed to your research and writing process. You might also include how you can incorporate the information from your source into a newer, more refined research question. Ideally, you want your reflection to go deeper than just, "This is useful for my project because..." For example, you might ask the following:

- "This source makes me think differently about..."
- "This source relates to others that I've read by..."
- "This source led me to consider information I could gather from other texts/data collections such as..."
- "This source challenges me to think about how I can refine my research question because..."



APA Example

Wang, X., Hegde, S., Son, C., Keller, B., Smith, A., & Sasangohar, F. (2022). Investigating Mental Health of US College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Cross-Sectional Survey Study. *JOURNAL OF MEDICAL INTERNET RESEARCH*, 11.

This article explored the presence of negative effects on students' mental health at Texas A&M University as a means of collecting data pertaining to the mental health spectrum of ailments caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was conducted online through two different sets of surveys and an option for a follow-up survey that consisted of open-ended questions to provide any additional information. Out of nearly 2,000 responses to the surveys, over 80% of students reported having signs of depression at some point during the pandemic; meanwhile, over 70% of the students reported having mild to severe anxiety pertaining to effects of Covid on their lives (in areas like academics, future employment, and personal mental and physical health--due to the possibility of contracting the virus). In addition to depression and anxiety, nearly 1 in 5 students reported having suicidal thoughts at some point during the pandemic.

This article is a great resource to help explain the significant effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on students' mental health. What surprised me was how widespread depression and anxiety became due to Covid's influence. Additionally, this source caused me to consider the question of what concrete effects depression and anxiety can have on a person's life beyond the classroom and how that relates to what goes on inside the classroom. While my original research question focuses on the general effects on students, it may be beneficial to narrow my question to focus more on performance in the classroom.

Tips for Writing an APA Entry

APA formatting style is primarily used in the social sciences in fields like nursing, education, and sociology. As a result, an entry written in APA will generally have less literary analysis and more focus on the methods, credibility, and results of the study.

MLA Example

Bachmann, Abbey, and Aimee Tellez. "The War on Books: Educator and Parent Perspectives." *Study and Scrutiny: Research in Young Adult Literature*, vol. 6, no. 1, 26 Aug. 2023, pp. 65-76, <https://doi.org/10.15763/issn.2376-5275.2023.6.1.65-76>.

In this article, Bachman, a lecturer at the University of Houston, and Tellez, a former secondary ELA teacher, explore the increase in book banning legislation through the lens of a Texas parent as well as a former English teacher and literary scholar. The situation described in the article centers around the removal of the book, *New Kid*, from her son's school library, and the cancellation of a scheduled virtual talk with the author of the book. Tellez recounts her personal experience as a parent, describing the long and in-depth discussions she and her 5th-grade son had about the book. This article can be useful to me because it directly offers a parent's perspective on book bans and censorship in the classroom. Many articles and sources tend to focus more on either the consequences of book challenges and bans on teachers and students, or on what teachers can do to fight against censorship in their classrooms. While Tellez was against the removal of this specific book's censorship, the personal positive experience she had with her son because of this book is an important perspective to have. The views and experiences of parents are something for me to keep in mind, particularly when thinking about and talking with teachers. Have they had similar positive (or, conversely, negative) experiences?

Tips For Writing an MLA Entry

The MLA formatting style is used frequently in the humanities and liberal arts. This means that while methods, credibility, and results are still important when writing an annotation, there are also cases where you'll be analyzing literature. In these cases, your focus will likely lean more toward literary and rhetorical analysis. Depending on what you determine to be relevant, the historical significance of the piece and the political climate that was present at the time your source was written may also come into play.



Chicago Style Example

Reid, Darren. "Indigenous Rights, Philanthropy and Humanitarian Governance across the Anglo World, 1837–1951." *The Historical Journal*, 2026, 1–21.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X25101027>.

This article examines how three nineteenth- and twentieth-century philanthropic organizations – the British Aborigines' Protection Society (APS), the American Indian Rights Association (IRA), and the Australian Association for the Protection of Native Races (APNR) – functioned simultaneously as opponents of colonial violence as well as instruments of colonial governance. These groups were vociferous advocates for Indigenous rights and welfare, yet they also directly contributed to building administrative structures of empire. The APS worked to generate metropolitan interest in Indigenous affairs, framing protectorates as both economically beneficial and a matter of national security. The IRA positioned itself as a fact-finding body, supplying the US government with on-the-ground surveillance that enabled more precise administrative control. The APNR acted as a public relations arm for Australian settler governments, deflecting criticism of state violence while promoting assimilationist policies. All three organizations reinforced colonial authority by outsourcing key governmental functions to private actors, and their reliance on voluntary labour and philanthropic donations underscores the contingency of imperial rule on non-state institutions. Bridging historiographies of humanitarian activism and colonial governance, this article argues that these groups were not merely critics or collaborators but infrastructural components of empire.

Tips For Writing a Chicago Style Entry

Chicago Style has two distinct citation systems: the Notes-Bibliography System (NB), which is used in the arts and humanities, and the Author-Date System (AD), which is used in physical, natural, and social sciences. Thus, make sure you clarify which system you should use before you write your bibliographic information to ensure the correct formatting. Similar to MLA, this citation style will have more focus on the analysis of events and significance; however, literary analysis generally isn't needed.



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Sources Consulted

Purdue University. "Annotated Bibliography Samples". Purdue Online Writing Lab, n.d.,

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Student Contributions

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Further Assistance

For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.