

Annotated Bibliographies

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, & publisher), listed in a certain style with specific capitalization, indentation, and punctuation. The annotation is a short critical review of the work.

The annotation should include: • a brief summary of the content and usefulness of the item (for this assignment, the usefulness in your own research); • a summary of the author's thesis and conclusions • a description of the evidence the author used to support the thesis; • a statement about how and why the source will be helpful for your own research.

What makes up an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliographic citation is made up of two parts.

- The citation describes the essential components of the work. For this course (and most history classes), citations should be written using the Chicago format. Complete rules are in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, call number: REF Z253 .U69 2003. Watch out for correct punctuation and capitalization. Following are basic Chicago style formats.

(Book)

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of the Book*. City of Publication: Name of Publisher, Date of Publication.

(Multiple Authors)

First Author's Last Name, First Name, and Second Author's First Name and Last Name. *Title of Book*. City of Publication: Name of Publisher, Date of Publication.

(Multivolume Work)

Author's Last Name, First Name. *Title of Work*. Edited by Editor's First Name and Last Name. Vol. Number. City of Publication: Name of Publisher, Date of Publication.

(Entry in Anthology)

Author's Last name, First Name. "Title of Entry." *Title of Book*. Ed. Name of Editor. City: Name of Publisher, Date of publication. Start page – End page.

(Article)

Author's Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Title of Journal*. Volume, Number (Date): start page – end page.

- The **annotation** is a 2 – 3 sentence critical summary of the work. The annotation should summarize the central theme of the work, describe the author's authority or background on the subject, and describe his or her bias toward the topic.

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Give me an example of an annotation.

***** Note: Many online databases provide abstracts or summaries of the articles they index. You may not copy those abstracts and present them as your own annotations. Doing so counts as plagiarism.**

Student Sample

Smith, Wayne. "Pennsylvania and the American Civil War: Recent Trends and Interpretations". *Pennsylvania History* 51, no. 3 (1984): 206-231.

In this article, Mr. Smith addresses the fact that as the practice of studying of history has changed and evolved in the past 20 years, it has presented us with fresh perspectives on the Civil War, particularly with in Pennsylvania. Smith argues that new information and interpretation has had a notable impact on our understanding of the Civil War and has changed Pennsylvania historian's intellectual insights. After addressing how interpretations of Pennsylvania's Civil war history and changed, Smith concludes by stating that it is history which determines our present trends and attitudes. However, contemporary "intellectual and social changes" have caused us to raise new questions and attitudes on Civil War history and fact.

Professional Sample

Liston, Robert A. *Terrorism*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers, 1977.

Terrorism is a diatribe against terrorism by states, terrorism by revolutionaries, and terrorism by criminals. Liston tells us very little about the phenomenon other than the "fact" that it is almost always unnecessary. The attentive newspaper reader will find very little new information in this book, although a chapter – anecdotal in focus – which treats efforts to combat terrorism may be marginally useful.

(from: Norton, Augustus R. and Martin H. Greenburg. *International Terrorism: An Annotated Bibliography and Research Guide*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1980.)

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. You should always read the introduction and the conclusion. You should also read any notes provided by the author. Read the authors' credentials and look at the sources the author uses to draw conclusions. For a book, look carefully at the table of contents and index to see what topics the author covers and check the footnotes for references to other helpful material.