



Writing an Annotated Bibliography

What is an annotated bibliography?

“An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited” (Cornell University Libraries).

Annotated bibliographies serve to illustrate the quality of research that you have done.

What information is in an annotated bibliography?

Annotations may consist of all or part of the following items, depending on the assignment:

- describe the content (focus) of the item
- describe the usefulness of the item
- discuss any limitations that the item may have, e.g. grade level, timeliness etc.
- describe what audience the item is intended for
- evaluate the methods (research) used in the item
- evaluate reliability of the item
- discuss the author's background
- discuss any conclusions the author(s) may have made
- describe your reaction to the item

What does an annotated bibliography look like?

You write and arrange the citations just as you would any other bibliography. This is usually arranged alphabetically by the first word, which is typically the author's last name. The annotation may then immediately follow the bibliographic information or may skip one or two lines depending on the style manual (e.g. MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) that is used. Remember to be brief and include only directly significant information and write in an efficient manner.

Following are two examples of what an APA annotated bibliography may look like.

Keefe, F. J., (1996) Pain in arthritis and musculoskeletal disorders. *Journal of Orthopedic & Sports Physical Therapy*, 2, :279-290.

I got all the facts about exercising with arthritis and the different types of exercise from this source. The author is very readable and includes a detailed bibliography.

Sewell, W. (1989). *Weaving a program: Literate programming in WEB*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Sewell explains the code language within these pages including certain lines of code as examples. One useful idea that Sewell uses is to explain characters and how they work in the programming of a Web Page. He also goes through and describes how to make lists and a title section. This will be very useful because all Web Pages have a title section. This author also introduces Pascal which I am not sure if I will include in my manual but after I read more about it I can decide whether this will be helpful to future users. This book will not be the basis of my manual but will add some key points, which are described above.

For more information:

OWL at Purdue University: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_annotatedbib.html>

Contact a Librarian