



Academic Writing Guide: How to Write an Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a **short summary** of some or all your research sources and a **brief evaluation** of how relevant or helpful each resource was/will be for you. Depending on the assignment, the annotated bibliography may be one of the stages of your research/writing process, or it may be all you have to do. Your annotations should follow the guidelines of your assignment.

Steps to Write an Annotated Bibliography

1. List your sources in alphabetical order.
2. Use the appropriate Citation Style Guide for your course to format your sources.
3. Below each resource, write relevant background information and the author's key ideas.
 - Ask yourself:
 - What was their **research question**? What was the author researching?
 - What was their specific **methodology**? How did the author conduct their research?
 - What were the **results**? What did the author find from their research?
 - What are the **limitations**? What did the author not study, or what did their research fail to consider?
4. After the author's key ideas, identify one or two reasons why you think this source is helpful to you and your research project.
 - Ask yourself:
 - Is this source reliable? Is it relevant?
 - How will this resource help you understand your research topic?
 - What specific aspects are useful to your paper? How so?
 - Are there any gaps of knowledge in these articles that you would like to address?

Sample MLA Annotated Bibliography Entry

Latham, Don, and Jonathan M. Hollister. "The Games People Play: Information and Media Literacies in the Hunger Games Trilogy." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 45, no. 1, 2014, pp. 33-46. EBSCOhost, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-013-9200-0>.

MLA Citation

In *The Hunger Games* trilogy, Suzanne Collins creates a narrative of resilience and rebellion under a totalitarian government. Latham and Hollister's paper examines information and media literacies as Katniss's forms of power and resistance against the oppressive powers in Panem.

Background information

Summary of key ideas

This resource is useful for studying Katniss as a persuasive strong female character by understanding information and media literacies as avenues for her to develop her agency and independence from societal powers. Specifically, the paper's use of French philosopher Michael Foucault's ideas of powers in society and scholar James Paul Gee's notion of critical learning will provide invaluable insight.

Usefulness of source

Sample APA Annotated Bibliography Entry

Joseph, L. (2023). *Held by the land: A guide to Indigenous plants for wellness*. Wellfleet Press.

APA Citation

L. Joseph is an ethnobotanist and an Indigenous woman living in Squamish, British Columbia. Sharing her academic research and Skwxwú7mesh cultural knowledge, *Held by the land* explores how to identify and utilize plants native to the Pacific Northwest. Joseph emphasizes the importance of building relationships with plants and respecting those that rely upon them.

Background information

Summary of key ideas

This text is highly valuable to my study of how people can sustainably utilize local resources to improve their lives and save money. Joseph outlines various culinary, cosmetic, and medicinal uses for many plants in her region. Her discussion of how to harvest respectfully provides an important perspective that I had neglected to consider before reading her work.

Usefulness of source

Sample CMS (Chicago) Annotated Bibliography Entry

Parker, John, and Richard Rathbone. *African History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

CMS Citation

Summary of key ideas

Background information

Most people in the West are familiar with one account of Africa’s identity—a continent devastated by its colonial past. However, they tend to be unaware of the resilient culture and rich history that has survived over the millennia. Parker and Rathbone draw on examples from both Africa and the African diaspora to examine how Africans and historians have perceived and presented African history.

Parker and Rathbone present a view of African history that moves beyond the stereotypes of the continent being out of step with the rest of the world. It provides both an interesting insight into African history as well as the craft of being a good historian. The book paves the way for a critical re-evolution of Africa’s history and place in the contemporary world.

Usefulness of source

For additional help, please make an appointment with a WLC Academic Writing Specialist at:



<https://alexander.mywconline.com/>