

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

An annotated bibliography is a list of references with comments after each entry. These comments (or annotations) typically consist of the writer's summary of the source author's ideas and details about why the writer finds those ideas useful for their paper. They may also ask questions and/or note new ideas and vocabulary.

Writing an annotated bibliography can help a writer prepare for a research project. Annotating each source that may be used in a paper invites the writer to read more carefully and can often make the work of writing a paper easier: An annotated bibliography helps writers remember what they find useful in a source and how they anticipate incorporating that information into their paper.

At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow writers to see what has been covered in the existing literature and where their own research or scholarship fits. Additionally, annotated bibliographies can assist other writers and peers researching the same subject.

HOW TO WRITE AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Typically, each bibliographic entry is an MLA, APA, or other style manual reference of the source, followed by one or more of the following (some annotated bibliographies only include summaries):

A summary: Give a brief overview of your source's main points.

- What are the main arguments presented by the author?
- What is the point of this source?
- What topics are covered?
- Who is the author?
- What is the source type and date?

An assessment: You should evaluate your source by checking its credibility and relevance.

- Is it a useful source for your paper topic?
- How does it compare with other sources you have read on the topic?
- Is the information reliable? How do you know?
- Is this source biased or objective? How do you know?
- What is the author's background? Are they an expert on this subject?
- Is the publication credible/reliable? How do you know?

A reflection: Consider how the source fits into your research.

- How is this source helpful to you and the argument(s) in your paper?
- How can you use this source effectively in your research project?
- Has it changed how you think about your topic? Why? How?

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Example

Below is an example of an annotated bibliographic entry in MLA format. You'll notice that the annotation begins with a reference entry and then includes the summary, assessment and reflection in cohesive paragraphs. Annotations are typically 150 words, but check with your instructor and assignment prompt for specific direction.

Remember to format your pages as required by your style guide (MLA, APA, CMS, etc.) with appropriate titles and page numbers.

In this example, the assessment and reflection portions are blended together in one paragraph. While writers can separate the three elements, more often they are integrated.

MLA style
reference

Watkins, Susan. *Contemporary Women's Post-Apocalyptic Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Summary
of source

Susan Watkins examines the themes found in women's post-apocalyptic fiction and how they differ from men's writing. Where male writers typically focus on restoration of the nostalgia of pre-apocalypse, women writers present alternatives and possibilities for humanity. Watkins' focus in this text is that women writers' positions on contemporary movements influence their engagement with their apocalyptic ideas. The specific themes analyzed are issues of nationality, race and ethnicity, and she specifically examines how they intersect with gender and sexuality.

Assessment
and
reflection of
source

Watkins is a feminist and contemporary works researcher who has studied at the School of Cultural Studies, Leeds Beckett University in Leeds, UK. This text is relevant because it examines the work of women in the Late Twentieth and Twenty-first Century in literary criticism. Chapter six looks at the ways existing spirituality and religion can influence society, and how new religions or beliefs can emerge. Watkins analyzes a variety of women authors from different cultural backgrounds and makes use of the unpublished works of Octavia Butler to support her claims. It adds to my work because I will be analyzing the work of Octavia Butler and how she uses religion in her post-apocalyptic novels.