

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: to learn how to distinguish the quality of on-line sources and how to write an annotated bibliography

ASSIGNMENT: to write an annotated bibliography on web sources available for the disease you are assigned and a brief essay on what you have learned about the disease. Your bibliography should include a minimum of 6 sources and should be numbered in the order of usefulness for a patient recently diagnosed with the disease. Your essay should be a brief (1-page) analysis of what you have learned.

TYPING: An annotated bibliography is typed with double spaces between the entries. The entries are single spaced with the full citation at the top. The entry is then indented directly underneath and single spaced. Your essay should be double spaced.

EXTRA CREDIT: You may receive extra credit for this assignment by writing additional bibliography entries (up to 12) and/or by writing a somewhat longer essay on what you have learned.

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

An annotated bibliography, which summarizes each work and indicates its usefulness and distinctive features, enables the reader to understand the particular uses of each item. The ideal annotated bibliography also indicates the relationships of one item to another.

An annotation is a brief description of a book, article, web site, or other publication. Its purpose is to characterize the publication in such a way that the reader can decide whether or not to read the work itself. It is marked by condensation, sound construction, and effective phrasing.

Annotations vary according to their intended use and their content.

1. Descriptive Annotations—describe the content or article and indicate distinctive features
2. Evaluative Annotations—express the usefulness of a book or article for particular situations.
3. Combination of 1 and 2.

ELEMENTS:

1. Begin with the complete bibliographic entry.
2. Some or all of the following should be covered in your annotation:
 - Authority and qualifications of the author

- Scope and main purpose of text. Do not try to summarize the whole work.
- Audience and level of reading difficulty. Such a comment warns readers of writings that are too elementary or scholarly for their purpose. ("This book is meant for scholars, but any informed layman can follow the arguments.")
- Major bias or the position of the author in relation to his topic ("This study concentrates on the romantic aspects of the eighteenth century rather than the scientific and rational ones.")
- The relationship, if any, to other works in the field ("This corroborates the findings of . . .")
- Findings, results, and conclusions
- Special features, such as a bibliography, glossary, index, survey instruments, testing devices, web links, etc.
- Summary comment ("a popular account directed at educated adults")

Not all of the points listed above need to be addressed in every annotation, but they should be kept in mind and included when appropriate.

WRITING TIPS

- Brevity and clarity are essential. Although simple phrases and lists are generally acceptable, for this project you should write in whole sentences. Vary sentence length to avoid a "choppy" style.
- Avoid abbreviations.
- Do not refer unnecessarily to "the author."
- Avoid repeating the words of the title, giving the same information in different phrasing, or offering information that an intelligent person could readily infer from the title itself.
- Condense wording. Convey a maximum amount of information with a minimum number of words. Nevertheless, you need to be complete, and I would expect most entries to be sizable paragraphs.
- Remain objective; do not include personal prejudices unless they are those of the author.

FORMAT

Annotations should be one paragraph long and should contain a statement of the work's major thesis. The remaining sentences should support the thesis statement. You can avoid writing a paragraph that is a series of unconnected sentences summarizing separate ideas by following the order of the author's presentation of ideas, arguments, and information.

STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

The following approach to annotating will help you to use your reading time most efficiently:

1. Familiarize yourself with the contents of the book, article, or web site. Be sure to examine the table of contents, the forward, and the introduction.
2. Read as much of the work as is necessary to understand the content.
3. Outline or make notes of the information that you think should be included in the annotation.
4. Write a paragraph that covers the spirit of the work without undue emphasis on any one or more particular points.

Adapted from King's College Study Guide #14.