



Creating an Annotated Bibliography

This resource document provides guidance to help DP18-1815, 1816, and 1817 grant recipients understand the utility of annotated bibliographies in developing their written products. It explains the purpose of an annotated bibliography, different types of annotated bibliographies, information that should be included in the annotated bibliography, and citation formats used for annotated bibliographies.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is an organized list of reputable sources. Each source listed in the annotated bibliography includes a formatted citation (reference) followed by a brief synopsis in paragraph format. The length of the annotation can vary and have different purposes. Annotated bibliographies can be descriptive and informative or analytical and critical.

Descriptive/Informative Bibliography. This type of annotated bibliography summarizes the material and describes why the source is relevant for a specific topic. Descriptive and informative bibliographies highlight the author's main arguments and conclusions without further critical analysis or evaluation.

Analytical/Critical Bibliography. This type of annotated bibliography goes beyond summarizing the content of a source and examines the strengths and weaknesses of the information presented. Analytical and critical bibliographies often make an evaluation of the author's conclusions.

What information should be included in the annotated bibliography?

A good annotated bibliography helps the reader learn about a topic, determine if there is sufficient valid information about a topic, and evaluate how one might contribute to the existing research about a topic. Annotated bibliography entries should include a citation and annotation for each listed source.

Citation. The citation should be at the beginning of each individual entry. The citation should be consistent for each source and use the preferred format (e.g., APA, MLA, AMA, etc.) of your publication outlet.

Annotation. The annotation is a paragraph of approximately 100-250 words in length that highlights the purpose of the work, summary of material presented, research methodology, relevance and special contribution to the topic, information about the author, intended audience, and strengths and weakness of the material.

What is the step-by-step process?

There are three basic steps to complete your annotated bibliography: choosing a source, summarizing the source, and assessing relevance of the source.

- 1.) **Choosing a source.** The first step of the process is to locate and record citations that you think might contain valuable information on your topic. This requires reading the source material and evaluating the perspectives presented and the background of the author. You should also evaluate the material based upon similar work that covers your topic.



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2.) *Summarizing the source.* Your summary should be a concise explanation of the central idea or thesis of the work, the population being studied, the methodological approach, and the author(s) findings or conclusions.

3.) *Assessing relevance of the source.* Be certain that the source is relevant to your field of study. Evaluate the research methodology presented and its relation to similar studies in your field. In most instances, it is necessary to consider timeliness as much as the conclusions drawn from the source and explain how this work expounds upon your topic.

Which citation format should I use?

Annotations will vary in length but should be written in paragraph form. Scientific journals typically have a selected citation format indicated in their author guidelines section, which may include APA, MLA, AMA, and many others.

Annotated bibliographies have a variety of formats and styles. Your citation style should be formatted in the bibliographic style of the publication outlet. For instance, if the journal uses APA style format, then you should follow conventions for APA style citations. Depending on the style format, the structure of your citations will vary. An example of an annotated source for APA style format (7th edition) is below. The annotation should begin as a paragraph following the citation entry.

Example annotation using APA 7th edition

Ssemata, A.S, Gladding, S., John C.C. et al. (2017). Developing mentorship in a resource-limited context: a qualitative research study of the experiences and perceptions of the Mackerere University student and faculty mentorship programme. *BMC Med Educ* 17, 123. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-017-0962-8>

This article highlights results from interviews with mentors and mentees following their participation in a mentorship program. Six key themes were identified for mentorship: (1) define the role of the mentor; (2) top desired characteristics in a mentor and mentee relationship are trust and mutual respect; (3) overlap in mentor and supervisor roles can lead to ethical challenges; (4) the process of identifying a mentor, (5) Current barriers to effective mentoring; and (6) recommendations for the future development of mentoring programs.

References

[Fair Use of this Guide - How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography - LibGuides at Cornell University](#)

[Annotated Bibliographies // Purdue Writing Lab](#)

[Prepare an Annotated Bibliography - Citing Sources - Library at Edgewood College](#)

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