

Short Paper 1.4: Annotated Bibliography

engl 111 / sec. Q / fall quarter 2006-07 / chang



Part of the academic and scholarly enterprise is research. Unfortunately, not all research nor references nor sources are created equal. Organizing, evaluating, and selecting research materials is just as important as finding relevant books, articles, studies, reports, images, videos, and artifacts. The critical thinking and close reading skills you have been developing become necessary tools for finding and choosing quality references. For example, simply Googling a keyword or phrase and taking the first fifteen entries does not a critical or useful bibliography make. Sources, particularly those found online, must be treated with attention, respect, and a little bit of healthy skepticism. Choosing solid and useful references can influence the authority and strength and exigence of your writing, your argument, and your evidence.

It is good habit to make notes about your sources as you discover them and read through them. What are the main arguments of the source? What are the main points and the main examples or evidence? Is the source relevant to my research, my claim? Is the source credible, timely, and useful? Attach your notes to a copy of your source (if possible). Your notes may save you time and effort during your writing process as you sift through what you need and use in your work.

Your notes can also be used to generate an annotated bibliography. Each entry of the bibliography is given a note—as short as a few sentences or as long as several paragraphs. In many academic disciplines, annotated bibliographies published with essays or articles help readers (potential researchers) with a summary and brief evaluation of a source. In a sense, an annotated bibliography is way to “pay it forward” for future researchers, who will use your annotations to decide whether a source is useful or relevant to their own work. Furthermore, in creating an annotated bibliography for yourself you are crystallizing the main points of your research, which may serve as points for review, revision, support, interrogation, challenge, discussion, and exploration.

Annotated bibliographies come in many different forms, with many different conventions. In this class, you will be required to write-up an MLA style annotated bibliography. However, all annotations across disciplines require: critical analysis of the source and summary of the source. A basic annotated bibliography may follow the following format (each entry contains):

- 1) standard MLA-format bibliographic entry.
- 2) two to five sentences of summary; summarize main ideas, main points, main arguments; identify the writer’s main position; directly quote useful portions or information.
- 3) one to three sentences of critical evaluation or analysis; why is the source useful or relevant; how does the source relate to your research topic.

For this short assignment, you will research **one** of the authors or readings read in class. Choose an author or reading that you would be interested in researching further, perhaps for your upcoming major paper. Using the research methods introduced to you (e.g. MLA Bibliography, Expanded Academic Index, ProQuest, and Google Scholar), **find and choose three pertinent and quality references**, preferably from three different sources. Then, using proper format, generate a bibliography and annotations for each reference. Appropriate resources for annotation can include books, newspaper articles, journal articles, pamphlets and brochures, documentaries, films, news stories, and websites. However, **select sources with care**—do not just take the first that you find. Consider how each provides a **different kind of evidence** and how each may be appropriate in certain **writing contexts**. You may wish to group references around a central theme, idea, claim, or research question.

Targeted outcomes: 2, 3

Turn in: 1-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, MLA format, stapled

Due: Tuesday, October 17