Annotated Bibliography

The main purpose of an annotated bibliography is to demonstrate your research and analysis of sources. It can be an effective way to compare sources and record the development of your views about a topic. By summarizing and discussing the usefulness of a source for your paper, readers can also learn whether a source may be useful for their purposes as well.

Content

Generally, an annotated bibliography consists of a list of sources, presented in the documentation style to be used in a works cited or references list, with a summary and evaluation written about each. An annotation typically summarizes a source in as little as a few sentences or as much as a paragraph. It then presents your evaluation of the source as it relates to your research project. You may explore any number of questions about your source. For example, will it be a useful source for you? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Does the source indicate a bias? If the source is useful, how will you use it in your research project? Has it changed the way you approach your argument? Your instructor is likely to give you guidelines for what to include in your annotations.

Style and Formatting

In the Modern Language Association style, according to *MLA Handbook 9th Edition,* the title may be Annotated Bibliography or Annotated List of Works Cited (depending on whether it is a bibliography or a list of works cited in your document) at the top, centered. If your paper is double-spaced, then the whole bibliography should be double spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs. The sources may be arranged alphabetically by author or title, as in typical works cited lists, or by their subject or date of publication.

You can arrange your entries based on criteria that will best help you decide which sources to use in your paper—by most current research or relevance. Provide a *full* works cited entry for each source, formatted with the usual hanging indent as it would appear in your final works cited list. You then have two choices for annotation: short phrases (very brief) or complete sentences in longer paragraphed format. Consult your instructor for the specific assignment expectations.

Example MLA 9th Style Annotated Bibliography Entry (full sentence annotation):

Annotated Bibliography

Brown, Ophelia, and Cynthia Chu. "Do We Need an Excuse to Exist?" *Journal of Excuses and*

Existence, vol. 23, no. 2, 2021, pp. 214-218.

MLA 9:
Indent
your
annota-
tions
1 inch
from
the left
margin

The authors give an overview of their upcoming book exploring the history of one of humanity's persistent questions, "Why are we here?" from the skeptical eye of those who wonder why we should even ask. For thousands of years, philosophers and clerics have pondered the origins of human existence and its purpose in the universe, writing closely-read texts that have led to religions, changes in language, and geopolitical conflict. Brown and Chu, professors of comparative religion at Spencer Davis University, approach the canonical texts of the ancients with a critical analysis of the purposes behind the question of our purpose. This article will help illustrate my discussion of the importance of analyzing the assumptions commonly made when philosophers establish their premises.

APA Style

The American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition style now has format guidelines for students' annotated bibliographies, but be sure to follow any specific directions your instructor may assign. In general, the bibliographic entries will follow APA style guidelines, including arranging the list in alphabetic order by the lead author's last name and using the .5-inch hanging indent format. The annotation then begins on the next line after the bibliographic entry, with the left margin aligned with the half-inch hanging indent. Do not indent the first line of the annotation. However, if an annotation has multiple paragraphs, indent the first line of the second and any subsequent paragraphs. The next line after an annotation will be the next bibliographic entry, with no extra line spacing between.

Example APA 7th Edition Style Annotated Bibliography Entry:

(A journal article without a DOI, from an academic database)

Annotated Bibliography

Brown, O. & Chu, C. (2021). Do we need an excuse to exist? *Journal of Excuses and Existence, 23*(2)*,* 214-218.

The authors give an overview of their upcoming book exploring the history of one of humanity's persistent questions, "Why are we here?" from the skeptical eye of those who wonder why we should even ask. For thousands of years, philosophers and clerics have pondered the origins of human existence and its purpose in the universe, writing closely-read texts that have led to religions, changes in language, and geopolitical conflict. Brown and Chu, professors of comparative religion at Spencer Davis University, approach the canonical texts of the ancients with a critical analysis of the purposes behind the question of our purpose. This article will help illustrate my discussion of the importance of analyzing the assumptions commonly made when philosophers establish their premises.

APA 7:

Indent your annotations 0.5-inch from the left margin.

3

Bibliography

"Annotated Bibliographies." Example of APA 6th edition, *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, 4 Jan. 2021,

    https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_

    bibliographies/annotated_bibliography_samples.html.

"APA Annotated Bibliography (Haddad)." Web search result, example of APA 6th edition,

    http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/webpub/English/Rules7e/Model%20papers/Hacker-

    Haddad-APA-AnnBib-2010.pdf.

MLA Handbook, 9th ed. Modern Language Association, 2021.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition, American

    Psychological Association, 2020.