

Writing an Annotated Bibliography – APA Style

WHAT IS AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?

An annotated bibliography is a series of sources (either books or journal articles) followed by a description of each publication. Entries in annotated bibliographies are usually between 50 and 150 words long.

TYPES OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

DESCRIPTIVE: A summary of the book or article's content. Outlines the book's hypothesis, main findings and conclusion.

ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL: Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument. Evaluate the work in terms of its usefulness and quality.

COMBINATION: This is the most common type of annotated bibliography. Write one or two sentences describing the content of the book or journal and then another few sentences analysing it.

STEPS IN WRITING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Read the book(s) or article(s) that pertains to your topic.
2. Choose a selection of sources that have a variety of perspectives on your topic.
3. Be sure to cite your sources in the appropriate format (see examples of APA format below and refer to the library's APA handouts for additional examples).
4. Give full bibliographic information for your sources (see examples).
5. The text of the annotation:

DESCRIPTIVE ANNOTATION

- ~ Describe the source's contents and special merits.
- ~ Indicate the scope, treatment, authority and point of view.

ANALYTICAL/CRITICAL ANNOTATION

- ~ Give the authority of the author and the point of view from which he/she writes. Indicate the nature of the book or article's content, its scope and quality.
- ~ Point out the source's strengths and weaknesses.
- ~ You may compare it to other books or articles on the same subject matter.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ~ Write from the point of view of an objective third person.
- ~ Be succinct; avoid unnecessary words and long involved sentences.
- ~ Be specific and use direct language – avoid general or vague statements like “the book is interesting” or “the article is good”—explain why it is interesting or good.
- ~ Unless the author is well known, state his or her qualifications and particular point of view.

APA AND ANNOTATION

- ~ The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.; *APA Publication Manual*) does not discuss the formal use of annotation in a bibliography/reference list. The method prescribed here outlines official APA techniques for adding supplementary information to academic papers.
- ~ Create and list citations on the references page. Assign them a footnote indicator using a superscripted Arabic numeral. Start with number 1 unless you used footnotes earlier in your paper. See section 2.12 (pp.37–38) of the *APA Publication Manual* for additional details.

EXAMPLES OF ANNOTATED APA BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRIES

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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References

London, H. (1982). Five myths of the television age.¹ *Television Quarterly*, 10(1), 1/2" 81–89.

Taylor, M., & Leicester, M. (1992). *Ethics, ethnicity and education: A new perspective*.² Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis.

Footnote indicator.

Place the footnote indicator after the title of a section (e.g., periodical articles, book chapters, etc.) OR a standalone work's title (e.g., book, film, report, etc.).

Footnote indicator.

SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Footnotes

1/2" Herbert London, the Dean of Journalism at New York University and author of several books and articles, explains how television contradicts five commonly believed ideas. He uses specific examples of events seen on television, such as the assassination of John Kennedy, to illustrate his points. London uses logical arguments to support his ideas, which are his personal opinion. He does not refer to any previous works on the topic; however, for a different point of view, one should refer to Joseph Patterson's, "Television is Truth" (*The Journal of Television*, 45(6) November/December 1995: 120-135). London's style and vocabulary would make the article of interest to any reader. The article clearly illustrates London's points, but does not explore their implications, leaving the reader with many unanswered questions.

²This book is an important and inherently controversial collection of papers that discusses the major moral issues in multicultural school education. Topics discussed include the ethical aspects of the separate schools debate, strategies for establishing democratic school and preparing teachers to be more moral educators, and consideration of the values implicitly antiracist/multicultural education.

Footnote corresponding to reference list entry.

Type = Combination

Type = Descriptive

NOTES:

- The title of "Footnotes" will appear at the top of this section—centered, plain-text font.
- Use standard formatting in this section: double-space lines, two spaces after sentence periods, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and indent each annotation by 1/2 inch (1.27 cm).
- This section will be immediately after the references page(s) and precedes any tables, figures, or appendices.
- These pages are scaled to 75% of actual size and the bottom portion of "page 10" is cropped to fit this page.