

Writing an Annotated Bibliography – MLA 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 MLA formats below and refer to the library's MLA 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.
- ~ The annotation for the citation will begin immediately after the citation is completed—you will not start the citation on a subsequent line.
- ~ For more information on annotation in the MLA format, see sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.3 in the 7th edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Page header and number—unique to each paper.

Works Cited

McEwan, Cheryl. "Paradise or Pandemonium? West African Landscapes in the Travel Accounts of Victorian Women." *Journal of Historical Geography* 22.1 (1996): 68-83. Print. McEwan analyses four 19th century British women travel writers' geographical descriptions of African landscapes to determine how these images were influenced or challenged by the British myth of the "Dark Continent." Further, McEwan argues that two factors, the developing British ideology of imperialism and the romanticism of the concepts of "wilderness" and "sanctuary," influenced these landscape descriptions. Though McEwan adequately explores the regional and temporal contexts influencing the four authors' geographical descriptions, she does not directly address the relationships among these accounts, nor make a strong case for their influence on British imperialistic public policy. However, McEwan does establish the broad popular interest in European explorer's travel accounts and their power to influence British perceptions of Africa and Africans, suggesting a plausible correlation between public perception and British imperialistic policy.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1999. Print. In this book the history of the United States is seen from the viewpoint of people who were not necessarily beneficiaries of American democracy. The book concentrates on the experiences of slaves, American Indians, women, and other disenfranchised groups and how they were affected by the major events in American history. Zinn emphasizes in the introduction that his intent is not to demonize figures such as revolutionary leaders, but to portray them in a more realistic light, as people who, while contributing to the development of the United States, were influenced by the prejudices of their time. As a source of information that is usually not included in history books, *A People's History of the United States* is invaluable to the study of American History.

1/2 in.

Type = Combination

Type = Descriptive

NOTES:

- Use a 1/2 inch (1.27 cm) hanging indent for each citation.
- The annotation begins immediately after the conclusion of the citation entry.
- This page is scaled to 75% of actual size.