



How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography

What is an Annotated Bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (+/-150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to summarize and may also be used to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. (Cornell URIO, 2009).

Annotations vs. Abstracts

Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority. (Cornell URIO, 2009).

Guidelines

Offer a brief summary the book or journal. Depending on your instructor's directions, after a brief summary it may be appropriate to assess the source and offer some criticisms of it. Does it seem like a reliable and current source? Why? Is the research biased or objective? Are the facts well documented? Who is the author? Is she qualified in this subject? Is this source scholarly, popular, some of both? After summarizing and assessing, you can now reflect on this source. How does it fit into your research? Is this a helpful resource? Too scholarly? Not scholarly enough? Too general/specific? Has this source helped you to narrow your topic? (Online Writing Lab at Purdue, 2008).

The Process

Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research.

1. Locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic. Briefly examine and review the actual items. Then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic.
2. Cite the book, article, or document using the appropriate style.
3. Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or (d) explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic. (Cornell URIO, 2009).

*This example uses the **APA format** for the journal citation:*

Waite, L. J., Goldschneider, F. K., & Witsberger, C. (1986). Nonfamily living and the erosion of traditional family orientations among young adults. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

*This example uses the **MLA format** for the journal citation:*

Waite, Linda J., Frances Koblin Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." American Sociological Review 51 (1986): 541-554. Print.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.



HELP WITH APA OR MLA FORMAT

Library Web site:

Go to www.butte.edu/library → Web Resources → Web Links → Citation Formats → APA Online

Go to www.butte.edu/library → Web Resources → Web Links → Citation Formats → MLA Online

We recommend the *Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)* and *Research and Documentation Online*.

Library article database citation generator: You can also use the citation generator in many of our databases when you find an article you like. Remember that they are machine-generated and therefore prone to error; you are responsible for proper formatting in MLA, APA, etc.

Library print resources: Circulating, Reserve, Reference and Ready Reference copies of the style manuals are available at the Library.

- Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th edition. Call Number LB2369 .G53 2009.
- The APA, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th edition, 2nd printing. Call number BF76.7 .P83 2010

In person help:

The *Center for Academic Success* offers workshops and one-on-one tutoring on MLA & APA style every semester on Main Campus in the LRC, 2nd floor and at Chico Center, Room 219.

Library staff can help refer you to resources to find information on style, and sometimes offer drop-in or online workshops on term papers and citations:

<http://www.butte.edu/departments/library/infolit/workshops.html>

Source of Content: Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University (2001-2010). *Annotated Bibliographies*. West Lafayette, IN. Retrieved October 4, 2010 from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/02/>.

Cornell University Reference, Instruction & Outreach (2009-2010). *Annotated Bibliography Tutorial*. Ithaca, NY. Retrieved October 4, 2010 from <http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citing/bibtut>.