Ms. Preciado
English 12
Research Paper

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography is a list of cited sources about a particular topic, in which each citation is followed by a brief annotation, or discussion of the source. The annotation usually consists of just one paragraph, but your instructor may require more. **An annotated bibliography is useful for documenting your research in a specific area, exploring varying viewpoints, and summarizing main points from different sources.** *Format requirements of an annotated bibliography vary greatly from one documentation style to another; please refer to a style manual for specific format requirements (ex: MLA, APA, CBE, Chicago, etc.).* There are two parts to every entry in an annotated bibliography: the **citation** and the **annotation**.

The Citation:

The citation includes the bibliographic information of the source. The documentation style required for this information depends upon your particular academic field and will usually be assigned by your professor (some common styles include MLA, APA, CBE, and Chicago). Follow the instructions for the assignment, and the guidelines in the appropriate documentation handbook. Citations are organized alphabetically.

Sample Journal Citation in MLA format:

Gilbert, Pam. "From Voice to Text: Reconsidering Writing and Reading in the English Classroom." *English Education* 23.4 (1991): 195-211. Print.

The Annotation:

The annotation is a brief paragraph following the citation. **Purpose of the Annotation:** The annotation of a source can serve several different purposes; your professor may require your annotations to do some of the following:

- condense the content of the source (write a brief summary of the information)
- evaluate the credibility of the source (analyze for authority, accuracy, currency, objectivity)
- assess the usefulness or relevant application of the source
- discuss the writer's background (examine expertise or layman knowledge ability)
- analyze the intended audience (education, age, experience, needs, bias)
- describe your reaction (credible source? value of source? analytical/emotional reaction?

The length of an annotation depends upon the assignment. **Shorter annotations will most likely cover only main points and themes; longer annotations may require a more in-depth description, discussion, or evaluation of the source**.

Writing an Annotated Bibliography
from *Writing Across the Curriculum* by Sandra Nagy

Why write an annotated bibliography?
You can discover what your source contains (analysis).
You can discover how best to use that information in your paper (organization).
You can discover how to restate your topic into a "working" thesis (purpose).

Rules to follow:
Take your sources one at a time.
Answer the questions in COMPLETE SENTENCES.

The first 3 questions:
What is the main, or most significant idea of this source?
What is the author trying to do (purpose)?
Who do you think is the author's intended audience?

Combine the Answers:
Example: Smith focuses on the dropping illiteracy levels among school children, categorizing socioeconomic levels, racial groups, and parents' educational background. Aiming at a general audience, Smith attempts to convince his readers that most children do poorly in school because their parents don't work with them in home study sessions.

The next two questions:
What parts of the subject does the source emphasize or de-emphasize?
What assumptions does the author make about the topic or audience?

Again, you combine the answers:
Example: The author emphasizes that parents need to be more involved in their children's education and assumes that these parents have the time, the expertise, and the inclination to do so.

The final three questions:
Is there any bias or slant in the source?
Are there obvious omissions that seem important to the ideas being discussed?
Does the evidence clearly support the author's main points?

The last sentences:
Example: While Smith's data supports his position, his solutions seem too simplistic and very general. Because he ignores the busy schedules, as well as the attitudes and expectations of some parents, his "just do it" advice doesn't seem likely to change the situation.

Extra Tips:
Write SHORT paragraphs.
Combine answers where possible.
Have 5-8 sentences that accurately describe the information and ideas from each source in your bibliography.
Use an MLA type Works Cited page with a paragraph of analysis for each source.

Last Points:
Use alphabetical order.
Double space everything.
Leave two double-spaces between sources.

Sample Annotated Bibliography (MLA)

Gilbert, Pam. "From Voice to Text: Reconsidering Writing and Reading in the English Classroom." *English Education* 23.4 (1991): 195-211. Print. Gilbert provides some insight into the concept of "voice" in textual interpretation, and points to a need to move away from the search for voice in reading. Her reasons stem from a growing danger of "social and critical illiteracy," which might be better dealt with through a move toward different textual under-standings. Gilbert suggests that theories of language as a social practice can be more useful in teaching. Her ideas seem to disagree with those who believe in a dominant voice in writing, but she presents an interesting perspective.

Greene, Stuart. "Mining Texts in Reading to Write." *Journal of Advanced Composition* 12.1 (1992): 151-67. Print. This article works from the assumption that reading and writing inform each other, particularly in the matter of rhetorical constructs. Greene introduces the concept of "mining texts" for rhetorical situations when reading with a sense of authorship. Considerations for what can be mined include language, structure, and context, all of which can be useful depending upon the writer's goals. The article provides some practical methods that compliment Doug Brent's ideas about reading as invention.

Murray, Donald M. *Read to Write: A Writing Process Reader*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1987. Print. Murray's book deals more specifically with the ways writers read other writers, particularly the ways in which writers read themselves. *Read to Write* provides a view of drafting and revising, focusing on the way a piece of writing evolves as an author takes the time to read and criticize his or her own work. Moreover, the book spotlights some excellent examples of professional writing and displays each writer's

own comments on their own creations, in effect allowing the student reader to learn (by reading) the art of rereading and rewriting as exemplified by famous authors.

Newell, George E. “The Effects of Between-Draft Responses on Students’ Writing and Reasoning About Literature.” *Written Communication* 11.3 (1994): 311-47. Print. This study reflects the advantage of teacher responses on student papers. When reflected upon as “dialogue” questions to the student, these comments can lead to further interpretation and deeper understanding of a text. Newell found that responses which prompted students to work from their initial drafts brought about more final papers than teacher responses that led them away from their initial drafts with “directive” remarks.