



# Annotated Bibliographies

A common assignment that starts the research process is an annotated bibliography. This assignment involves researching and interacting with secondary sources surrounding the topic to understand the discourse. This handout provides important considerations for creating strong annotated bibliographies

## Reading the source

Before you begin writing about a source, you need to read it entirely to understand the claims and arguments. Don't just read the abstract, or the introduction and conclusion, as these sections do not have the details surrounding the entire claim. Give yourself time to closely and carefully read through the source. When reading, pay attention to the details. Look for the following:

- What is the thesis?
- How does the writer put their arguments together?
- What evidence and analysis are used to support the author's arguments?
- What conclusions does the author draw

When reading, you may find it helpful to take detailed notes, create a matrix, or annotate the source to help you understand. Taking the time to read and understand the source will help your summary.

## Structuring Annotated Bibliography Entries

While your instructor will provide guidelines for expectations and details that are specific to individual assessments, annotated bibliographies typically have three major sections. Along with bibliographic entries themselves, annotated bibliography to be divided into paragraphs devoted to 1) summary of the source, 2) evaluation of the source's quality and relevance to the topic, and 3) connection of the source to your research or project.

## Citation

Begin each entry with the full citation of the source, correctly formatted according to the citation style required by for your assignment.

## Summary

Summarise the source as an introduction to tell your audience how it contributes to the topic. Depending on the requirements of your assignment, the level of detail in this section can vary. This section could be either a detailed description of the topic, methodology, argument, findings and conclusions; but more often the summary paragraph focuses primarily on the thesis, main arguments, and conclusions.

### Example:

“Looking specifically at chapters four and eight, the focus on modernization of speech and language shifts throughout Shakespeare’s time and as audiences now continue to engage with his texts. The chapters look at the effect language shifts had from Middle English (specifically the late 1300s) to Early Modern English (from 1550s until the 1600s), and how language shifts lead to drama being “framed” differently to the audience through word choice and sentence structure.”

## Evaluation

After the summary, discuss the relevance of this source and what it brings to your topic. Also consider the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s arguments, analysis, and conclusions. Just as each source brings insight to the topic covered, in the same way, each source has limitations. Some questions to consider when evaluating a source include:

- How does this work relate to other scholarship on the topic?
- How does the author prove their claims?
- What does the source do well?
- What are the weaknesses and how does it approach these?
- Is the author responding to anyone in particular? Do they agree or disagree?
- Are there any specific theories or methodologies the author uses? How does that impact the work?
- Does the author acknowledge any limitations in the work?
- Is the evidence used sufficient to support the authors’ claims
- Is the author’s reasoning/analysis sound?
- Does the conclusion logically follow from the arguments and evidence presented?

## Link to your Research

Think of how the source contributes to your understanding of the topic. The final part of your annotated bibliography should link it back into key ideas and the impact it has on the topic, helping your reader get an idea of how you plan to implement and respond to the source. Not only does linking the source to your topic and key ideas help your reader understand the path your research will follow, but it will also help you think of how you can best implement and utilize the source within your work.

## Final Considerations

When reviewing your annotated bibliography, carefully read each entry and ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I provided the full citation as it appears in the works cited page?
- Does the summary discuss the source's thesis and supporting evidence?
- Do I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the source and its relevance to the topic I am researching?
- Does my annotation give insight into the source's impact and how it links into my own research?

## Works Consulted

Knott, D. (n.d.). *Writing an Annotated Bibliography*. University of Toronto Writing Advice.  
<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography/>

*Annotated Bibliographies*. (2024). Purdue University Purdue Online Writing Lab.  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/reference\\_list\\_electronic\\_sources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html)