

Annotated Bibliography

Definitions

Annotation: a concise summary or evaluation of the value or relevance of a source

Bibliography: an alphabetical list of sources

What is it?

An annotated bibliography is a combination of the two elements above. It provides bibliographic information on a particular source, plus a paragraph that summarises and evaluates its content. When set as an assessment, an annotated bibliography allows you to become more familiar with material published on a particular topic.

Why write one?

Depending on the assessment, your purpose for writing an annotated bibliography may be to:

- review the literature of a particular subject
- demonstrate the quality and depth of reading that you have done
- show the range of sources available, such as journals, books, websites and magazine articles
- highlight sources that may be of interest to other readers and researchers
- explore and organise sources for further research

Structure

An annotated bibliography generally contains *five* parts:

1. A full citation of the source (using the referencing style relevant to your course)
2. A general statement about the author's purpose for writing the source
3. A short summary of the content
4. An evaluation of the content
5. Your reflection on the usefulness of the source

The five parts of an annotated bibliography

Parts	Example
CITATION Citation information is in the same format as the reference list, including the hanging indent. Leave a line below the citation.	Stewart, M. (2030). <i>Being awesome: A guide for students</i> (2nd ed.). Pearson.
PURPOSE Write a short statement of the author's viewpoint or purpose for writing.	• This article examines ... • The authors describe ... • The author's purpose is to challenge ...
SUMMARY Write a short summary of the theory, research findings or argument.	• The main ideas expressed are ... • Support for these claims are documented... • The author's research focuses on ...
EVALUATION Comment on the usefulness and/or limitations of the text. Critique its objectivity, reliability, and the strength of the evidence supporting its claims.	• The author provides a strong theoretical ... • The writing style considers a range of audiences ... • There is a lack of supporting evidence ... • The main limitation of the study is ...
REFLECTION Reflect on how this source fits into your research by considering its usefulness, its contribution to your understanding of the topic, and its value for others in the field.	• As the information is up-to-date and from a reliable source ... • It is relevant to my essay because ... • In particular, this article will assist ...



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Sample annotations

The following table contains a sample annotated bibliography. Refer to the key that lists the necessary parts of the structure and examine each corresponding number to see how they can be combined into a paragraph. Follow this pattern for each source to create an annotated bibliography. Sample given in APA7.

Key	Sample Annotation
(1) Citation (APA style)	(1) Mallett, C., & Hanrahan, S. (2004). Elite athletes: Why does the 'fire' burn so brightly? <i>Psychology of Sport and Exercise</i> , 5, 183-200. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1469-0292(02)00043-2
(2) Short statement of authors' viewpoint/ purpose	(2) Mallett and Hanrahan examined Self Determination Theory (STD), which identifies the social and contextual conditions that create a motivational climate, to discover what motivates elite athletes to perform at such a high level. Athletes usually experience either intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors to inspire them to demonstrate their competence at an elite level. (3) The authors conducted qualitative interviews with 11 track and field athletes (who had received medals in the Olympics and Commonwealth Games) to gather data on motivational forces. Data from these interviews indicated that all the elite athletes were mainly intrinsically motivated. They were highly driven by personal goals; had strong self-belief; and their sport was central to their lives. From the findings of this study, Mallett and Hanrahan concluded that when elite athletes accomplished their goals, it enhanced their perception of their competence, which positively influenced self-determined motivation. (4) Although the study supported earlier research in the area, the authors acknowledged that further studies on motivational influences are necessary to provide more substantial documentation. (5) This article will be useful for my research into the factors that shape motivation, especially around personal goal setting.
(3) Short summary of the research	
(4) Evaluative comment on the usefulness to your discipline and/or limitations	
(5) Reflective comment showing how it will fit into your research	

Key	Sample Annotation
(1) Citation (APA style)	(1) Trevor, C. O., Lansford, B., & Black, J. W. (2014). Employee turnover and job performance: Monitoring the influences of salary growth and promotion. <i>Journal of Armchair Psychology</i> , 113(1), 56-64. https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.282
(2) Short statement of authors' viewpoint/ purpose	(2) In this article, Trevor et al. review the influences of pay and job opportunities in respect to job performance, turnover rates and employee motivation. (3) The authors use data gained through organisational surveys of blue-chip companies in Vancouver, Canada, to try to identify the main causes of employee turnover and whether they are linked to salary growth. Their research focuses on assessing a range of pay structures such as pay for performance and organisational reward schemes. (4) The article is useful to my research topic, as Trevor et al. suggest that there are numerous reasons for employee turnover and variances in employee motivation and performance. The main limitation of the article is that the survey sample was restricted to mid-level management, thus the authors indicate that further, more extensive, research needs to be undertaken to develop a more in-depth understanding of employee turnover and job performance. (5) This article will not form the basis of my research; however, it will be useful supplementary information for my research on pay structures.
(3) Short summary of the research	
(4) Evaluative comment on the usefulness to your discipline and/or limitations	
(5) Reflective comment showing how it will fit into your research	

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