



Annotated Bibliography

The following is adapted from the Queensland University of Technology Cite Write website:

<http://www.citewrite.qut.edu.au/write/annotatedbibliography.jsp>

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography, just like the bibliographies you are used to submitting with your assessments, is an alphabetical list of your sources. The difference is that with each entry you also provide a brief summary and/or evaluation of the value or relevance of the source.

Why do we write annotated bibliographies?

You may be asked to write an annotated bibliography for several reasons:

- to provide a review of the literature on your subject
- to demonstrate the quality and depth of your reading
- to show the scope of sources or research available, e.g. journals, books, websites
- to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy and quality of sources that may be of interest
- to explore and organise sources for further research.

How to write an annotated bibliography

There are two main sections to each annotated bibliography entry:

1. The bibliographical information (the reference).
2. The explanatory paragraphs (the annotation).

Parts of the annotation

The annotation must provide

1. A summary of the main arguments or ideas presented by the author, depending on your assessment requirements (please check your assessment task information or with your teacher for clarification).
2. An evaluation of how useful you found the source. Assess its objectivity, reliability and bias, and compare it with other sources you have used.
3. A reflection on how you used the source in your assessment.

1. The summary section

This provides a summary of the research findings or the main arguments or ideas presented by the author.

You can use the structure of the article or chapter you are reviewing to structure your annotation, e.g. "This chapter focuses on three issues which are ..."

If the author has a specific purpose behind her/his writing, specify this, e.g. "The author's intention is to present an overview of ..."

If the source is reporting on data, describe the research methods and summarise the results. Explain what type of study it is, e.g. survey, interview; the participants and any limitations of the study, e.g. sample size or geographic area. e.g. "This article presents findings from a study into the use of social network sites for educational purposes. Surveys were conducted with 300 students to evaluate whether this medium is an appropriate way to disseminate unit assessment requirements and support information. The participants in the sample were aged between 18 and 50, included 120 males and 130 females."

2. The evaluation section

This provides an evaluation of how useful you found the source. Evaluate its reliability or objectivity.

ASK: Is the text descriptive or analytical and use this in your evaluation? e.g. "Although an interesting chapter, it is mainly descriptive and doesn't discuss options for prevention or treatment".

Look for evidence the author may have used to support his or her ideas, e.g. "The author supports this claim with statistics from the World Health Organization".

3. The reflection section

This provides a reflection of how you used the source in your research.

ASK yourself:

- How useful was this source for my assessment task?
- Did it add to my understanding of the topic?
- Was it easy to read?
- Are there any useful references to follow up?
- How could other researchers use this source?

e.g. "Although the guidelines on this website for infection control are very detailed, they are written in plain English and clearly articulate the message of thorough hand washing as the main defence against the spread of germs."

e.g. "While the focus of this chapter was very broad, the authors supply some useful references for readers to pursue for more specific information."

Checklist for an annotated bibliography

Have I:

- Used the Harvard referencing style?
- Given a brief overview of the main ideas of the source, using features such as the structure, the purpose or the research methodology of the text as discussion points?
- Evaluated the source for its objectivity and reliability, if required by the assessment task?
- Commented on whether the source was useful for my task if required by the assessment task?
- Ensured my spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct and my writing is set out in a logical format.

A Complete Entry for an Annotated Bibliography

1. Cho, S. 2000. 'Selflessness: toward a Buddhist vision of social justice'. *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 7: 25-35.

This article deals with developing a Buddhist theory of social justice. It explores the Buddhist theme of 'selflessness' and discusses how this can be used as a basis for such a theory. Cho discusses the theoretical contradiction in Buddhism between being socially engaged and pursuing a goal of individual salvation. The article is good as a source because it applies Buddhism to modern times and modern issues. It also discusses the challenges modern citizenship brings to Buddhism theoretically. It is relevant to the rest of the sources as a result of this. Despite attempts by Cho to explain the theory behind the aspects of Buddhism, some broader background knowledge is helpful to better explore some of the specific Buddhist ideals he raises. Furthermore, one of the most interesting points that Cho raises, that of social engagement versus individual enlightenment, is not developed as fully as it could have been and would be useful to pursue.

From: <https://academicsskills.anu.edu.au/resources/handouts/writing-annotated-bibliography>