Annotated Bibliography

The main purpose of an annotated bibliography is to demonstrate your research and analysis of sources. It can be an effective way to compare sources and record the development of your views about a topic. By summarizing and discussing the usefulness of a source for your paper, readers can also learn whether a source may be useful for their purposes as well.

Style and Formatting

Generally, an annotated bibliography consists of a list of sources composed in the appropriate documentation style with a summary and evaluation written about each.

In the MLA style, according to the website The MLA Style Center: Writing Resources from the Modern Language Association, the work is titled Annotated Bibliography at the top, centered. If your paper is double-spaced, then the whole bibliography is double spaced with no extra spaces in multi-paragraph annotations (“Should I”). The works may be arranged alphabetically by author or title, as in typical works cited lists, or by their subject or date of publication (“What Guidance”). Provide a full works cited entry for each source, formatted with the usual hanging indent. Then, continue from the end of the entry with a summary phrase. If you use complete sentences to annotate your sources, then start your annotation as a new paragraph with an extra line space after the entry and an indented first line.

Officially, the American Psychological Association style does not use annotated bibliographies, but other online sources indicate one may format an APA-like annotated bibliography by starting the annotation on a separate line, which may or may not be indented another half-inch, and maintaining the margins of the hanging indent to keep the author’s name prominent in the bibliographic entry.

Bellevue College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, language, ethnicity, religion, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, including gender identity or expression, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Please see policy 4150 at www.bellevuecollege.edu/policies/. The following people have been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Title IX Coordinator, 425-564-2641, Office C227, and EEOC/504 Compliance Officer, 425-564-2266, Office R130.

www.bellevuecollege.edu
Content

An annotation typically summarizes a source in as little as a few sentences or as much as a paragraph. It then presents your evaluation of the source as it relates to your work. You may explore any number of questions about your source. For example, will it be a useful source for you? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Does the source indicate a bias? If the source is useful, how will you use it in your research project? Has it changed the way you approach your argument? Your instructor is likely to give you guidelines for what to include in your annotations.

Example MLA Style Annotated Bibliography Entry

The authors give an overview of their upcoming book that explores the history of one of humanity’s persistent questions, “Why are we here?” from the skeptical eye of those who wonder why we should even ask. For thousands of years, philosophers and clerics have pondered the origins of human existence and its purpose in the universe, writing closely-read texts that have led to religions, changes in language, and geopolitical conflict. Brown and Chu, professors of comparative religion at Spencer Davis University, approach the canonical texts of the ancients with a critical analysis of the purposes behind the question of our purpose. This article will help illustrate my discussion of the importance of analyzing the assumptions commonly made when philosophers establish their premises.
Example APA Style Annotated Bibliography Entry


The authors give an overview of their upcoming book that explores the history of one of humanity’s persistent questions, “Why are we here?” from the skeptical eye of those who wonder why we should even ask. For thousands of years, philosophers and clerics have pondered the origins of human existence and its purpose in the universe, writing closely-read texts that have led to religions, changes in language, and geopolitical conflict. Brown and Chu, professors of comparative religion at Spencer Davis University, approach the canonical texts of the ancients with a critical analysis of the purposes behind the question of our purpose. This article will help illustrate my discussion of the importance of analyzing the assumptions commonly made when philosophers establish their premises.

**Bibliography**


“Should I double-space between paragraphs in my annotated bibliography? Should I double-space the paragraphs themselves?” *The MLA Style Center: Writing Resources from the Modern Language Association*, 10 Nov. 2017, style.mla.org/annotation-and-paragraphs/


*Handout written by Kayleen Doornbos*