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Writing an Annotated Bibliography

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The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how to create an annotated bibliography for a diverse audience of readers. While an annotated bibliography may seem more complicated than a references page, it is quite simple, allowing both writer and reader to situate a given source within the broader context of scholarship.

Reflecting on Your Sources

An annotated bibliography can be described as a references page with brief, descriptive paragraphs below each citation, giving the reader a general overview of the source. This helps the writer to organize and summarize sources.

To start an annotated bibliography, begin with a references page, with each citation listed. Since the goal is to organize and summarize, your annotations will follow the rough outline and arguments within the sources. It is essential that you only include the necessary information in your annotation. Your annotation should begin with an introductory sentence that briefly explains the source's **topic and scope**. Then, include a paraphrase of the **thesis** and **main points**, stating the aim and purpose of the source so that the importance of the article and its argument is made clear. The next part of the annotation will be an **evaluation** of the relevance of the source to your paper. This is also the section where you want to assess the source's argument, organization, and use of other sources. The final portion of your annotation is the **conclusion**, which should clarify how you intend to use the source and summarize the overall points made in the annotation.

Example

If a student wanted to annotate a journal article called "History of CBU and its Growth as a University" by John Doe in the journal *Interesting Facts About CBU* to support the ideas argued in their paper, the annotated bibliography entry might look like this:

(Citation)

Doe, John. "History of CBU and its Growth as a University." *Interesting Facts About CBU*, Vol. 1, No. 4, May 2024, pp. 227-30. <https://doi.org/0000000/00000000000>

(Introduction) This article discusses the evolution of CBU from a small college to the thriving university it is today and the difficulties the school has faced to achieve this distinction. (Thesis) John Doe argues that the school's success is owed to the strategic planning of executives, as well as the community support offered from the school's inception. (Key Points) The article covers key milestones in the school's history

and the challenges it overcame in order to succeed. It also references the importance of expanding the innovative academic programs offered to garner more interest from students and establish the school as a leading institution. (Relevance) This source is useful for my paper as a secondary source to support the idea that the evolution of scholarly institutions is a complex process. (Conclusion) Doe's article is a necessary source for evaluating my thesis, as he discusses each stage within the evolutionary cycle of universities or colleges.

Conclusion

Though an annotated bibliography takes more time than a standard references page, it helps the writer reflect on each source and know whether and how that source may be used in their research project. Not only does an annotated bibliography help a student compile research effectively, but it also helps an interested reader understand the purpose of each source and determine if it fits with the direction and limitations of their own research project. While annotated bibliographies may seem daunting at first due to the length and time required, they can help any writer organize their thinking and prepare them to write their paper.

Tips

1. When writing annotations, consider several key questions: What is the purpose of the article? How does this fit into your research? How will you use it within your paper?
2. Be clear and concise throughout each annotation, which should rarely exceed a paragraph. Use full sentences and write with an academic tone.
3. Remember to reflect on the purpose of the article and include the reasoning behind adding it to your paper.

Works Consulted

"Annotated Bibliography." *UNSW Sydney*, 21 June 2023, <https://www.student.unsw.edu.au/annotated-bibliography>.

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